

22 May 2020, via email

Dear Minister,

Population Matters is a campaigning charity working to achieve a sustainable global population to protect the natural environment and improve people's lives. We are based in the UK but our supporter base is global. We are contacting you today, the International Day for Biological Diversity, to ask you to use your government's influence to ensure that the post-2020 targets and mechanisms of the Convention on Biodiversity address the impact of unsustainable human population.

As you will know, it is very unlikely that most of the Convention's existing Aichi biodiversity targets will be met. While there are many reasons for this, their failure to address human population growth is certainly among them. Multiple scientific papers and authoritative reports establish this. The most significant of these is the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

IPBES is the intergovernmental body established to advise governments on this issue. Its global assessment, published in May 2019, identifies population growth as one of four "indirect drivers" of biodiversity loss, and its policy recommendations are absolutely clear: **"changes to the direct drivers of nature deterioration cannot be achieved without transformative change that simultaneously addresses the indirect drivers."**^{iv}

Despite this, at this stage in the process of developing the Convention's post-2020 framework, no language or content addressing human population has yet been included. We therefore write to you now to urge you to use your government's influence in the negotiations to address this issue, in preparation for and at the next Subsidiary Implementation Meeting taking place 24 – 29 August, 2020 in Montreal.

Specifically, we ask you to press for the inclusion of language and measures supporting ethical choice-based family planning policies, women's empowerment and education on benefits of smaller families in the National Targets discussions set to take place in Montreal. Many conservation bodies around the world are already integrating such approaches in their work (see notes), and embedding these principles within the post-2020 framework will encourage and enable states to do so. Whilst of value everywhere, these measures are particularly effective in less developed countries where population pressure on biodiversity can be acute, and where they help states to meet their national targets utilising mechanisms that also help speed up progress towards many other Sustainable Development Goals.

It is imperative that the post-2020 CBD framework includes mechanisms to ethically and sustainably ensure rapid progress towards local and global human population levels that are sustainable and compatible with its goals. I urge you to ensure that measures to reduce human population growth are included in discussions, and to press for their inclusion in the final agreement.

We would be happy to discuss these matters further with you or your officials if helpful. I may be contacted at robin.maynard@populationmatters.org.

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Every choice counts

Thank you for your consideration of the requests set out above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "RM", enclosed within a hand-drawn blue oval.

Robin Maynard, Director

Notes

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem services, *Global assessment summary for policymakers* (2019) <https://www.ipbes.net/news/ipbes-global-assessment-summary-policymakers-pdf>

The [Population Health Environment](#) model recognises the synergies and mutual benefits of improving the conditions of human communities in achieving local conservation goals, including through the provision of family planning services to reduce local human population pressures on biodiversity. Organisations successfully implementing this approach include [Blue Ventures](#) (Madagascar), [Nature Uganda](#) and the [Cheetah Conservation Fund](#) (Namibia).

Patrons: Sir David Attenborough ▪ Gordon Buchanan ▪ Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta ▪ Professor Paul Ehrlich ▪ Dame Jane Goodall
Professor John Guillebaud ▪ Susan Hampshire ▪ Adrian Hayes ▪ James Lovelock ▪ Leilani Münter ▪ Professor Norman Myers
Chris Packham ▪ Sara Parkin ▪ Jonathon Porritt ▪ Malcolm Potts ▪ Lionel Shriver ▪ Sir Crispin Tickell

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