

Opening Statement from the Open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders (ONet) and stakeholders present at Stakeholders Days prior to the IPBES-8 Plenary - Opening Session.

Thank you chair for giving us the floor, this is Ismael Ocen from Ocean One Social Research Centre, Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Open-ended Network of IPBES Stakeholders (ONet) and stakeholders present at Days prior to the IPBES-8 Plenary.

We would like to EXPRESS our appreciation to the IPBES Secretariat for providing an opportunity for consultation prior to and during the IPBES 8 Plenary, and for the opportunity for broader engagement with the stakeholder community.

ONet has 341 members. We have tripled our membership since the last plenary. We are committed to support IPBES processes and to encourage other stakeholders to do so. We invite the IPBES members to take advantage of the skills and capacities of ONet members. We are confident that by working in a more coordinated manner we can collectively achieve a successful global program.

We CALL on IPBES member states to urgently create and improve diverse, equitable and inclusive capacity building mechanisms, including communication technologies, that promote and foster the relevance and reach of IPBES assessments, work programs, and products with a focus on the Global South, breaking down cultural, economic, and gender barriers.

We URGE IPBES members for the protection and restoration of natural resources and the conservation of species to be fair within and between countries. To change the paradigms of economic growth, we need just and systemic changes in policy, the economy, and civic engagement for more inclusive, transparent political participation.

We WELCOME and ENCOURAGE the steps taken by IPBES to work closely with the social sciences and humanities to acknowledge the inseparable linkages between nature and culture.

We ENCOURAGE IPBES members to improve multidisciplinary approaches into efforts aimed at building decision-making capacities that contribute to bend the curve on biodiversity and ecosystem loss.

We ENCOURAGE IPBES members and donors to secure the necessary funding for biodiversity data, **research** and monitoring, information, knowledge generation and communication through direct support to experts and knowledge holders at national and local levels.

Finally, addressing the biodiversity conservation funding gap is needed for transformative changes. We CALL on IPBES members to mobilize the global community, especially the private sector, to step up and extend financial resources.

Thank you Chair!