

David Niyonsaba's statement on how the implementation of the global protection goal can succeed with the involvement of governments and those directly affected as well as other stakeholders in the Global South.

I would like to thank the German Government's commitment and leadership towards biodiversity conservation and climate change in General. A historical agreement to ensure that at least 30 per cent globally of land areas and of sea areas are protected by 2030, was not to be achieved without the German and Rwandan Governments working together to push negotiations in financing.

The agreement of governments in Montreal to accelerate the speed of nature restoration and stop biodiversity loss was highly appreciated by global south countries that before were seen to bear the burden of conservation of biodiversity even though their benefits are globally shared and sometimes tend to benefit global north more. The world adopting to protect 30% of land and 30% of seas by 2030 became a shared commitment of both global south and global north. Countries like Rwanda, even before COP15 demonstrated commitment and urgency to protect and restore areas of high biodiversity. For example, Rwanda pre-COP15 had started to expand Volcanoes National Park approximately 23%, increasing its size by 37.4 square kilometers to ensure the future for the mountain gorillas. At the same time in 2022 Rwanda restored the Nyandungu wetland from a degraded wetland to an educational and recreational eco-park by planting 17,000 trees made up of 55 indigenous species.

As a civil society organization, we learned that the protection of biodiversity cannot happen without community involvement. Rwanda shows an example of how community involvement from tourism revenue sharing to community conservation initiatives that benefits people can contribute to biodiversity protection. To reach 30 by 30 will require hard and painful decisions; It means to change the lifestyle of people from clothing, transportation and food consumption. For the global south especially, it will mean to convince smallholder farmers to stop farming in marshlands where there is water for irrigation while agriculture was the only source of food and income. It means to convince the same smallholder farmers to stop cutting a tree for firewood while it was their only source of energy. While these painful decisions must be taken by the global south, we do believe that the global north also can do more and better not only in financing the global south but to reduce or stop activities that harm biodiversity and change consumption patterns that have enormous implications on Biodiversity Conservation. Global north should push dialogues that promote efficient use of biodiversity and natural resources that will require a change in lifestyle. For example, eating less meat can reduce dependence on natural resources (land, water, energy) than a plant-based diet, thus affecting more habitat area and emitting more CO₂.

For the global south to be able to implement targets and milestones for 2030 more financing is needed. As we appreciate the financial contribution of the German Government, we do

believe the financial gap is still huge from the needed 700 billion to 30 billion dollars committed. We believe that the German Government can use its influence to bring in more private sector, to convince the European Union to do more in terms of availing more resources, sharing technologies and knowledge with Global south. For the global south to be able to implement targets and milestones for 2030 there is a need to ease access to funding that is set to be available. Instead of countries from the global south asking how they can access financing to protect biodiversity, countries from the global north should be asking how they can support countries from the global south to protect biodiversity that we all share.

To achieve 30 by 30 stakeholders from the global south need to be more involved and trusted that they have knowledge to share and use their existing policies, Laws, and systems. Projects and programs can be funded and implemented directly through Civil society organizations, governments and existing funds established without going through the banks or UN Agencies to ensure sustainability of Biodiversity conservation mechanism and to assure adequate financing to maintain natural capital as well as clearly articulate the links between biodiversity, ecosystem services and economic benefits to decision makers responsible for long term planning and budget allocation. To achieve 30 by 30 there is a need for equal sharing of biodiversity benefits between global north and global south.

In conclusion, as civil society we see a need to urge the involvement of youth as the main stakeholders to achieve this ambitious goal since they will live to witness either the success or the failure from this commitment.

Note: This statement does not represent either the Government of Rwanda or Prime Biodiversity Conservation position . It represents purely the views of the speaker.