

Panorama Perspectives

Conversations on Planetary Health

Global Policy Opportunities for Planetary Health
A Review of Existing Policy Frameworks

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PANORAMA

The *Panorama Perspectives: Conversations on Planetary Health* report series aims to inspire new thinking, conversations, and engagement with planetary health and other integrated concepts. Collaboration and open knowledge sharing across sectors are necessary to solve the complex global health and development problems of today.

The *Conversations on Planetary Health* series is comprised of five reports:

- Planetary Health 101: Information and Resources
- The Planetary Health Landscape: From Concept to Action
- Global Policy Opportunities for Planetary Health: A Review of Existing Policy Frameworks
- Issue and Policy Intersections for Planetary Health: Finding National Entry Points
- The Philanthropic Funding Landscape for Integrating Health and Environment

These reports are intended as practical tools, presenting actionable opportunities to advance planetary health. Each report expands on knowledge gathered from many sources, including analysis of publicly available reports and data; forums and events; group discussions; and individual conversations. All content represents Panorama’s opinion unless otherwise noted.

We welcome continued dialogue on the report topics. To receive the reports directly, please write to info@panoramaglobal.org or visit us at panoramaglobal.org/planetary-health.

Panorama is an action tank working to solve global problems through audacious thinking and bold action. We bring together diverse perspectives to spark new ideas that create change. We partner with ambitious leaders to strengthen their organizations and achieve their goals, and we initiate projects when we see gaps that need to be filled. Our work on planetary health is supported by a grant from The Rockefeller Foundation.

Global Policy Opportunities for Planetary Health

A Review of Existing Policy Frameworks

Overview

To help move planetary health from nascent concept to action, the planetary health community is considering how the concept can be translated into a decision-making framework to help global and national policymakers enact policies that balance and sustain the health of people and the planet.

To support the planetary health community’s efforts, Panorama undertook a review of existing global policy frameworks to:

1. Assess the alignment of existing global policy frameworks with the concept of planetary health; and
2. Identify the most immediate opportunities, within those aligned frameworks, to engage with government decision makers on health and environment.

By applying these two learnings, the planetary health community has an opportunity to position the concept of planetary health as a pathway to achieve existing goals, rather than starting from scratch or presenting a competing agenda. This will help the concept resonate and gain credibility with policymakers, hopefully leading to greater and quicker uptake of the concept.

The findings of our assessment are laid out in the following sections of this report:

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Approach

For the purposes of this work, we relied on *The Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on Planetary Health* definition of planetary health as “the health of human civilization and the state of the natural systems on which it depends.”¹ We maintained an intentional emphasis on the fact that the concept of planetary health is ultimately concerned with human health and well-being.

¹ Sarah Whitmee et al. “Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: report of The Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on planetary health.” *Lancet* 386, 10007 (2015).

While it is still unclear how the concept of planetary health will be applied in practice, for this review, we accepted that the concept has significant potential as a new way to approach issues, make decisions, and ultimately, solve problems.

Additionally, because the concept of planetary health is so broad and there is not a consensus on what makes something relevant to planetary health – whether in the context of a framework, a goal, or an issue – we took the liberty to make some assumptions and generalizations when evaluating the frameworks. We note that others who have tried to assess the relevancy of global policy frameworks to planetary health have encountered similar challenges.

Evaluating Frameworks

We began our assessment by gathering eight frameworks that appeared to align with planetary health based on scope or issue area, as listed below along with effective dates:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992: Aichi Biodiversity Targets, 2010
- International Health Regulations (IHR), 2005
- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2015
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD): Land Degradation Neutrality Targets, 1994
- United Nations Environment: 10-Year Framework of Programs on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), 2012
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): Paris Climate Agreement, 2015
- UNFCCC: Warsaw Framework for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD+), 2013

We then carefully reviewed each framework against the following six criteria to assess its relevance to the concept of planetary health:

- Governs issues presented in *The Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on Planetary Health*,² as the definitive report on planetary health
- Applies to multiple global issues
- Encompasses human health
- Encompasses natural systems
- Encompasses anthropogenic changes to the earth
- Applies globally as an international agreement or treaty with the majority of nations participating (regional or national frameworks may come later)

This review is detailed in Table 1.

² Whitmee, "Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch."

Table 1: Evaluation of Framework Alignment with Planetary Health

Framework	PH Commission	Multi-issue Application	Human Health	Natural Systems	Anthropogenic Changes	International Agreement
CBD: Aichi Biodiversity Targets	X	X	X	X	X	X
IHRs	X		X			X
Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction	X		X		X	X
SDGs	X	X	X	X	X	X
UNCCD: Land Degradation Neutrality Targets	X		X	X	X	<i>Integrated into SDG target 15.3</i>
UN Environment: 10YFP	X			X	X	<i>UNEP program, not stand alone</i>
UNFCCC: Paris Climate Agreement	X	X	X	X	X	X
UNFCCC: REDD+	X			X	X	<i>UNFCCC program, not stand alone</i>

Against these criteria, most frameworks were too narrowly focused on one issue or geography. However, three frameworks encompassed the scope that the concept of planetary health envisions: the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the SDGs, and the Paris Climate Agreement.³

Therefore, these three frameworks are the most closely aligned with the concept of planetary health. With this knowledge, we then sought to identify the most immediate opportunities within these aligned frameworks to engage government decision makers.

Entry Points

While conceptually aligned with planetary health, in practice these three frameworks are broad-reaching and complex. To overcome this challenge and find the most immediate opportunities for engagement with global and national policymakers, particularly health and environment ministries, we then examined each framework through the perspective of key entry points.

While there may be other more nuanced entry points to explore, for this review we began by focusing on the most conventional entry points, as laid out in the following:

- *Established*: The framework has matured enough in its life cycle to be effective.
- *Realistic*: Meeting goals is achievable when considering seen and unseen forces beyond the control of the UN.
- *Accountable*: Established leadership exists to guide and promote the framework.
- *Implemented*: Substantial uptake of the framework exists, including with civil society and other actors outside the UN.

³ See Appendix I for profiles of the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the SDGs, and the Paris Climate Agreement

- *Accessible*: Regular opportunities exist for knowledge-sharing and engagement with key actors.
- *Connected*: Relationships exist between framework leadership and the planetary health community.
- *Measurable*: Established and robust processes have been set for tracking and measuring outcomes.

The following table outlines each framework against these entry points, by color ranking:

- Dark green = strong
- Light green = moderate
- Yellow = fair

Table 2: Evaluation of Frameworks By Entry Points⁴

Framework	Established	Realistic	Accountable	Implemented	Accessible	Connected	Measurable	Average Score
CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets	Dark Green	Light Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Dark Green
SDGs	Yellow	Yellow	Light Green	Dark Green	Dark Green	Light Green	Yellow	Dark Green
Paris Climate Agreement	Yellow	Yellow	Dark Green	Yellow	Dark Green	Light Green	Light Green	Light Green

We acknowledge that these rankings and the supporting evidence are debatable; and healthy debate is essential for a nascent concept. However, even if such a debate resulted in some changes to the above rankings, the basic principles and stratification of this evaluation would hold true.

Thus, through this exercise, the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets emerged as the framework representing the strongest immediate opportunity to engage global and national government decision makers. As the most mature framework, the targets have been developed and honed through an iterative process that includes engagement from countries and technical scientific bodies.

Furthermore, while most commonly viewed as an environmental and conservation framework, there is significant integration of human health into CBD’s strategic plan to meet the Aichi Biodiversity Goals. This is evident through its biodiversity and health mandate, Decision XIII/6,⁵ which has resulted in a unique UN collaboration, the CBD-World Health Organization (WHO) Interagency Liaison Group on Biodiversity and Health. The Group brings together experts from the health and environment sectors, and represents the kind of collaboration other UN groups will need to foster to meet the SDGs and Paris Climate Agreement.

⁴ See Appendix II for assessment reasoning

⁵ See [Decision XIII/6](#) from the Thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Parties to the CBD, December 4-17, 2016 in Cancun, Mexico

Findings

By focusing this review on two distinct aspects, we first substantiated the general assumption among the planetary health community that a new global policy framework is not needed. Instead, there are three existing frameworks – the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the SDGs, and the Paris Climate Agreement – that already closely align at the highest levels with the concept of planetary health.

Second, we identified that the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets represent the most immediate opportunity to engage government decision makers with the concept of planetary health. The CBD Parties consist of ministers of environment from more than 180 countries that are not only responsible for adherence to the CBD, but are also now grappling with the ramifications of achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and the SDGs. Additionally, the CBD-WHO working group is now bringing health ministries to the same table.

As such, the planetary health community should leverage the CBD as an immediate opportunity to start building relationships with these national ministries. Getting a foot in the door with any relevant ministries responsible for health, environment, or development is worthwhile to advance the concept of planetary health. It takes significant time and effort to get on any political agenda, and these efforts will open doors for longer-term influence around the other two frameworks.

In contrast to the CBD, the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement are so young that they are still experiencing growing pains and substantial challenges to implementation, so there is not a direct line to ministries for the planetary health community. For both these frameworks, the articles themselves are complex and challenging; a large portion of indicators have never previously existed or been tracked. Furthermore, there is speculation that completely achieving some of the SDGs could have a neutralizing or even a canceling effect on other goals. The Paris Climate Agreement and the SDGs represent extensive political agendas, and as such, planetary health, in its maturing state, will struggle to cut through the noise to reach policymakers.

Therefore, the community should take advantage of immediate opportunities within the CBD to build relationships with environment and health ministries worldwide, while also continuing to engage in the dialogue around the implementation of the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement.

Recommendations

We recommend three key activities for the planetary health community to leverage the immediate opportunities with the CBD and start engaging environment and health ministries.

1. *Expand relationships*

Currently, the planetary health community has some strong individual relationships within the CBD Secretariat. Expanding these relationships to reach across the organization, especially beyond the science and research aspects, is needed for the planetary health community to

engage the national ministries involved with the CBD. Also, the planetary health community should prioritize individuals within the CBD who are working toward aligned health and environment agendas.

2. *Engage and track*

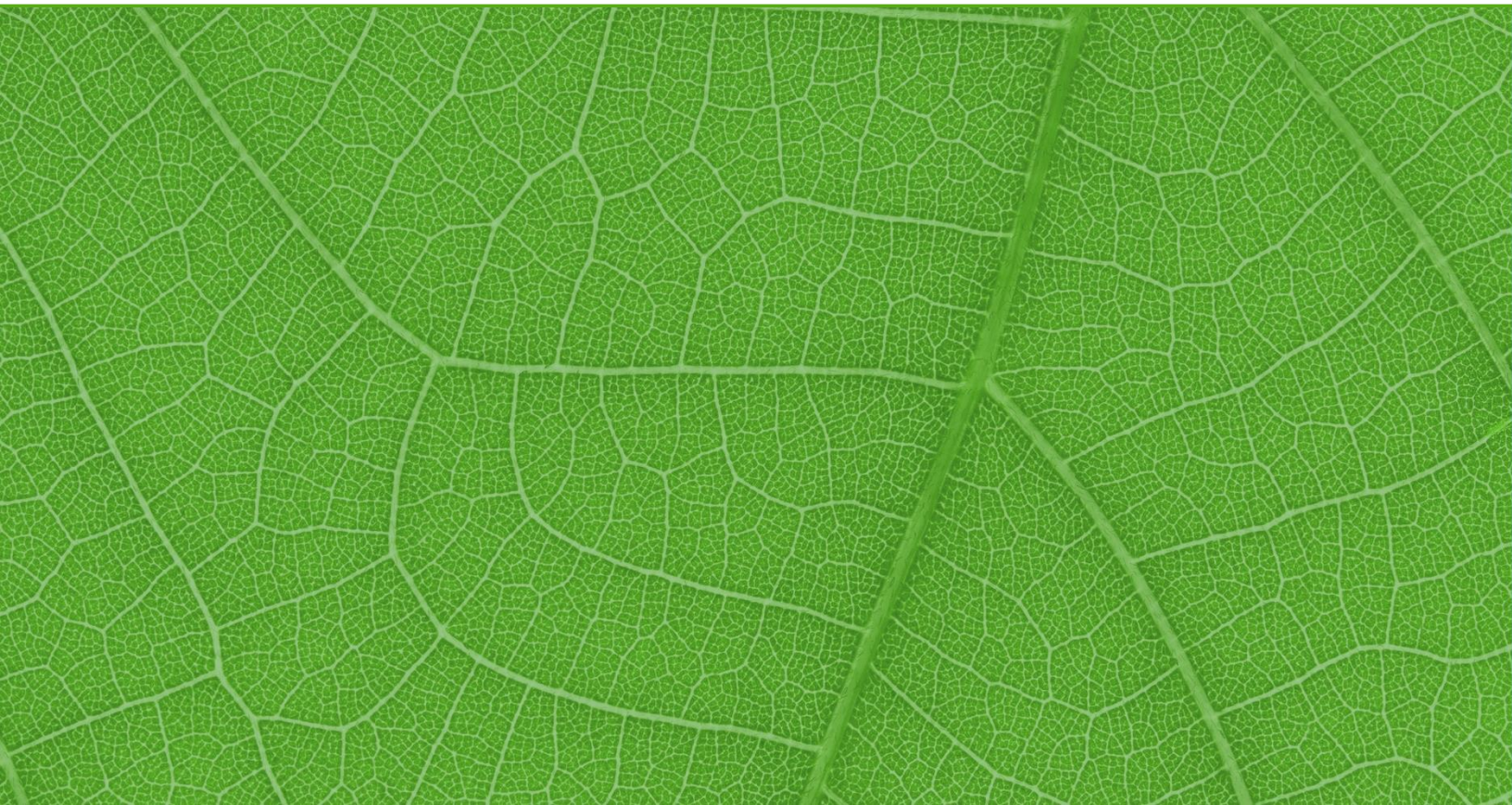
The CBD has well-established processes for engagement, including its biennial Conference of Parties (COP), regional meetings, and technical advisory forums. The planetary health community should consider which of these activities offer the best opportunity to engage with policymakers and to track progress towards the Aichi Biodiversity Targets over time. Prioritizing these activities will ensure that new opportunities with global and national policymakers, and related influencers, are leveraged to help the concept of planetary health gain traction.

3. *Consider country-level implementation*

While this review is focused on global levels, the tangible outcomes of the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the SDGs, and the Paris Climate Agreement will ultimately have impact at the national and subnational levels. Therefore, it is important for the planetary health community to gain more knowledge about how the goals, targets, and indicators within each framework align with the concept of planetary health. To do this, the community should consider deepening this review to reach the more granular levels. Doing so will not only reveal further opportunities to influence policy, but also help to clarify the nascent concept of planetary health.

By taking these three steps, the planetary health community can more effectively engage government actors across the health and environment sectors. Leveraging the focused, tangible nature of the CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets will help move planetary health from concept to implementation as a decision-making framework, and urgently enact the changes needed to preserve our human health and the planet.

Appendix



Appendix I: Overview of Primary Global Policy Frameworks

The following provides an overview of each primary framework for reference.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

Background: The CBD is an international, legally-binding treaty with three main goals: the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of biodiversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the use of genetic resources. Arising from The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, it was signed by 196 parties. After the establishment of the CBD, under the umbrella of UN Environment, two additional international agreements, the Cartagena and Nagoya Protocols, were enacted to oversee specific aspects of biodiversity. Many methods of tracking biodiversity exist, including progress reviews of national strategic plans and reports along with decisions made at the biennial COP.

Goals: The Aichi Biodiversity Targets,⁶ consisting of five goals and 20 targets, are the primary resource provided to guide national targets. They were established in 2010, at the 10th COP in Nagoya, Japan, as a part of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity and are meant to be achieved by 2020. Other specific targets are determined at the nation-state level based on the specific biodiversity issues of that country.

- Goal A: Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society (Targets 1-4)
- Goal B: Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use (Targets 5-10)
- Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity (Targets 11-13)
- Goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services (Targets 14-16)
- Goal E: Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management, and capacity building (Targets 17-20)

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Paris Climate Agreement

Background: The Paris Climate Agreement is the subsequent framework to the Kyoto Protocol, the first international effort to address global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. While signed in 1997, due to a complicated ratification process, the Kyoto Protocol took effect in 2005 and established goals through 2020. Therefore, the Paris Climate Agreement is focused on GHG emissions post-2020 with the primary goal of mitigating global temperature rise by 2030. The Paris Climate Agreement was negotiated by 195 parties; and to date, 141 of the 197 Parties have ratified the agreement. The Paris Climate Agreement was adopted in December 2015 at the 21st COP in Paris, and became effective in November 2016. Mechanisms to track progress on global GHGs are complicated and emergent, but all parties agreed to a global stocktake every five years starting in 2020.

Goal: The Paris Climate Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

⁶ Overview of the [Aichi Biodiversity Targets](#)

Targets:

- Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) represent the policy actions that individual nations commit to achieving, starting in 2020, to mitigate GHGs and climate change. Most relate to targets for GHG reduction.
- More than 150 countries have submitted their NDCs.⁷
- While NDCs are country specific, UNFCCC has created a Summary for Policy Makers⁸ that highlights how the Paris Climate Agreement can be used to generate national policies.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Background: The SDGs are the subsequent framework to the Millennium Development Goals, which aimed to achieve eight international goals by 2015. Building on this, the SDGs were agreed upon in 2015 and consist of 17 goals with 169 targets to achieve by 2030. The SDGs are voluntary and nation-states can decide which ones to prioritize. The UN Secretary-General produces an annual SDG progress report, and the UN High-Level Political Forum⁹ meets each July to track progress on the goals.

Goals:

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

⁷ See the UNFCCC [interim registry of NDCs](#)

⁸ UNFCCC [Climate Action Now: Summary for Policymakers](#)

⁹ [High-Level Political Forum website](#)

Appendix II: Framework Assessment Reasoning

Framework	Established	Realistic	Accountable	Implemented	Accessible	Connected	Measurable
CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets	Entered force in 1993	Widespread global adoption by national governments and civil society	Governed by the CBD Conference of the Parties and Secretariat	Consists of 196 Parties to the Conference, in addition to established subsidiary bodies on implementation and technical guidance	Annual subsidiary bodies meetings, COP meetings	Key relationships with core planetary health community exist, but more is needed	While some data are difficult to obtain (e.g. species count), the scientific community has developed sophisticated modeling and established indicators
SDGs	Entered force in 2015	17 goals and 169 targets and indicators make the SDGs diffuse and even at innate odds with each other in some circumstances	Governed by the UN Secretariat and High-Level Political Forum, but dependent on national-level adoption	As sequel to the MDGs, there is widespread excitement about the broader SDG approach. As of June 2017, there have been 43 voluntary national reviews	Annual High Level Political Forum meetings, UNGA	Key relationships with core planetary health community exist, but more is needed	Indicators established for Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3. However, Tier 3 - which makes up 1/3 of all indicators - have never been tracked before
Paris Climate Agreement	Entered force in 2016	Most scientists confer that GHG emissions match the Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP) 8.5 trajectory - the most severe and least curbed forecast for climate change	Governed by the UNFCCC Conference of Parties and Secretariat	The Climate Action Tracker assesses how countries are progressing toward their NDC commitment. Currently, 45% of countries assessed have been rated as inadequate and only 15% rated as sufficient	Annual Climate Change Conference, COP meetings	Key relationships with core planetary health community exist, but more is needed	GHGs are tracked in various ways and by many global groups, but tracking NDCs and progress on local policy is more challenging and limited



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