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Global biodiversity narratives contingent on values-based interpretations of the Global Biodiversity Framework

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The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) was adopted in 2022 as a global strategy to address the worsening biodiversity crisis and the widespread degradation of ecosystems. Acknowledged within the Framework is the diversity of worldviews and value perspectives on nature's roles in different societal and cultural contexts that embody the plurality of human-nature relationships. These value perspectives could influence how the GBF is interpreted and also play a critical role in how these targets are operationalised and implemented, potentially leading to diverging pathways to meet the same targets. To explore this interpretive variability, we employ the Nature Futures Framework (NFF) as a conceptual and analytical lens. The NFF offers a structured approach to capturing the diversity of positive human-nature relationships, represented through three stylised perspectives: nature for nature (intrinsic and existence values), nature for society (instrumental values) and nature as culture (relational values and non material benefits). We present a set of global narratives that were developed with a global network of experts in various domains of conservation science. The narratives illustrate divergent visions of the future, underscoring the need for critical reflection and inclusive debate on the legitimacy of associated policy choices. We also offer semi-quantitative expert-elicited estimates of change in 22 indirect drivers spanning social, technological, economic and environmental domains to characterise how the wider world would look if society held each NFF value perspective. Additionally, we present a collection of real world case studies that we map onto the NFF value space and link to specific GBF targets, indicative of alternative, value pluralist conservation models. This conceptual reframing of the GBF as a values-contingent convention provides a foundation for both policymakers and researchers, including modellers, to consider nature protection policies and actions that reflect the plurality of nature values, helping to sustain public legitimacy in policy formulation and facilitating further research to address uncertainties in future trajectories for people and nature.

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