

IUCN's position on technical issues

Convention on Biological Diversity

Fifteenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15)

7 – 19 December 2022, Montreal, Canada

IUCN's Main Messages

Marine and coastal biodiversity

- ✓ IUCN encourages Parties at COP15 to agree on the procedures and modalities described in the annexes of CBD/SBSTTA/REC/24/10 for modifying descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and for describing new areas.
- ✓ IUCN highlights the urgent need for a relevant and strengthened Programme Work on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity so that it fully supports the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) in relation to marine issues.
- ✓ IUCN calls on Parties to ensure that language addressing threats to marine and coastal biodiversity, as well as its conservation and sustainable use, is appropriately included in the Post-2020 GBF.
- ✓ IUCN recalls its Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-122](#) on the protection of deep-ocean ecosystems and biodiversity through a moratorium on seabed mining and urges Parties to consider the provisions therein.

Invasive alien species

- ✓ IUCN and its Species Survival Commission (SSC) Invasive Species Specialist Group welcome the invitation to assess the magnitude of negative impacts from alien pathogens or parasites and invasive alien species that may transmit pathogens or parasites that may affect biodiversity.
- ✓ IUCN recommends a systematic and consistent reference to Nature-based Solutions throughout the decision text

Biodiversity and climate change

- ✓ IUCN recommends to considerably update the draft decision in light of all scientific and political developments since this item was last discussed. For example, recognising the findings of the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report, the UNEA Resolution defining Nature-based Solutions and the recent [decisions](#) adopted by UNFCCC and Paris Agreement Parties at UNFCCC COP27/CMP17/CMA4 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.
- ✓ IUCN recommends a systematic and consistent reference to Nature-based Solutions throughout the decision text.

Biodiversity and agriculture

- ✓ IUCN invites Parties to consider its report [Common Ground restoring land health for sustainable agriculture](#) that provides clear recommendations in relation to the importance to recognize biodiversity as a key asset for agriculture production systems and conversely the crucial role these systems can play in biodiversity conservation, among others.
- ✓ IUCN globally supports the draft plan of action 2020-2030 of the international initiative

Nature and culture

- ✓ IUCN welcomes the Elements and Tasks related to the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Nature and Culture in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and fully supports the proposed draft decision including its Annex, as previously agreed at the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2019.

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Marine and coastal biodiversity

(Agenda item 20)

EBSAs

IUCN supports efforts carried out so far in clarifying concepts and modalities, and encourages Parties to ensure the EBSA process continues based on the most up-to-date science, with the full participation of relevant experts and knowledge holders. In this regard, IUCN is ready to contribute knowledge for the identification of marine Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs), on Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) and other relevant knowledge and tools that can provide valuable input into the EBSA process, including with respect to informing marine protected areas identification, as well as strategic direction and priorities to the development of area-based conservation measures.

IUCN encourages Parties at COP15 to agree on the procedures and modalities described in the annexes of CBD/SBSTTA/REC/24/10 for modifying descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas (EBSAs) and for describing new areas. This is necessary to keep the EBSA process scientifically sound, up-to-date, relevant and legitimate.

The distinction between the EBSA repository and the information sharing mechanism incorporated in the current annexes 1 and 2 of CBD/SBSTTA/REC/24/10 is key to solving issues that Parties did not manage to move forwards on at the previous COP. IUCN believes this is a useful way to express the two-fold process that distinguishes EBSAs that have been considered by SBSTTA and those that reflect the outcomes of internal national processes.

Conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity

Marine and coastal biodiversity is a cross-cutting element of the post-2020 GBF and is critical to achieving the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.

In light of the current draft of the post-2020 GBF, **IUCN highlights the urgent need for a relevant and strengthened Programme Work on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity so that it fully supports the implementation of the framework in relation to marine issues.** In this regard, IUCN suggests the draft update to

the programme of work be considered by SBSTTA and adopted by COP16, as follows:

1. ~~TTakes note of~~ Welcomes the report of the Thematic Workshop on Marine and Coastal Biodiversity [...] and *requests* the Executive Secretary to conduct a strategic review and analysis of the programme of work on marine and coastal biodiversity in the context of the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and to prepare a draft update to the programme of work [...] for consideration by the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice and **adoption by** the Conference of the Parties **at its sixteenth meeting**;

IUCN further encourages Parties **to ensure that language addressing threats to marine and coastal biodiversity, as well as its conservation and sustainable use, is appropriately included in the Post-2020 GBF** goals and targets. This should be consistently reflected in a comprehensive monitoring framework, with relevant headline, component/complementary indicators. On this point, IUCN brings to the attention of Parties, a guidance on coastal and mangrove related indicators, targets and their relevance to national reporting¹ and recommendations on indicators for coral reefs².

IUCN notes there is a large number of multilateral environmental agreements, global and regional organizations that can also support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework with respect to marine and coastal biodiversity, and fully supports enhancing cooperation and synergies with MEAs and organizations, including but not limited to those mentioned in paragraph 4 of CBD/SBSTTA/REC/24/9. In this sense, IUCN suggests including a reference to relevant biodiversity-related conventions, the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

IUCN notes with concern paragraph 9 of SBSTTA recommendation, and draws Parties' attention to its Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-122](#) on the protection of deep-ocean ecosystems and biodiversity through

¹ <https://www.iucn.org/sites/default/files/2022-07/guidance-on-mangrove-indicators-in-post-2020-global-biodiversity-framework.pdf>

² <https://icriforum.org/post2020/>

a moratorium on seabed mining and urges its State Members of the provisions therein³.

Finally, IUCN and its Fisheries Expert Group are committed to pursue its collaboration with FAO and the CBD on the topic of mainstreaming in fisheries, assessing the progress toward Aichi Target 6 and Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECMs) and to work towards greater capacity-building and context specific guidance on the topic, including on gender inclusion and responsiveness.

Invasive alien species

(Agenda item 21)

IUCN support the findings of the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Invasive Alien Species and welcomes the draft guidance in Annexes I to VI of the draft decision.

IUCN welcomes the work undertaken by the Inter-agency Liaison Group on Invasive Alien Species and by the World Customs Organization to address the risks posed by e-commerce of living organisms, and will continue to support the development of a globally harmonized classification and labelling system for consignments of environmentally hazardous living organisms.

In 2020, IUCN launched its standard for classifying alien species in terms of their environmental impact, the Environmental Impact Classification for Alien Taxa (EICAT), and the IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group (IUCN ISSG) continues to develop and apply its sister scheme the Socio-Economic Impact Classification for Alien Taxa (SEICAT). In addition, IUCN ISSG has led the development of the Global Register of

³ IUCN calls on its State Members to support and a moratorium on deep seabed mining unless or until: i) rigorous and transparent impact assessments have been conducted, the environmental, social, cultural and economic risks of deep seabed mining are comprehensively understood, and the effective protection of the marine environment can be ensured; ii) the precautionary principle, ecosystem approach, and the polluter pays principle have been implemented; iii) policies to ensure the responsible production and use of metals, such as the reduction of demand for primary metals, a transformation to a resource-efficient circular economy, and responsible terrestrial mining practices, have been developed and implemented; and iv) public consultation mechanisms have been incorporated into all decision-making processes related to deep-sea mining ensuring effective engagement allowing for independent review, and, where relevant, that the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples is respected and consent from potentially affected communities is achieved.

Introduced and Invasive Species (GRIIS), a product of the Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership (GIASI Partnership) launched during CBD COP11. This register presents verified national checklists of introduced and invasive species, available on the CBD country profile page. IUCN also serves as the custodian agency for SDG Indicator 15.8.1 on policy responses to invasive alien species, and urges the strengthened application of this indicator in the CBD, including in the GBF.

Through IUCN's tools, datasets and networks of experts, IUCN is ready to support Parties and others in developing and implementing science-based national strategies, action plans, policies and regulatory mechanisms required to meet a post 2020 target on IAS, and to help monitor its progress.

In line with the above, **IUCN and its SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group welcome the invitation to assess the magnitude of negative impacts from alien pathogens or parasites and invasive alien species that may transmit pathogens or parasites that may affect biodiversity** and encourages Parties to lift the brackets from paragraph 12 of the draft decision.

Biodiversity and climate change

(Agenda item 23)

Biodiversity loss and climate change are inseparable and interdependent challenges that must be coherently and consistently addressed urgently in an integrated manner. Since 2019, when this item was discussed at SBSTTA23, further scientific assessments report on the exacerbation of these twin crises, but also highlight that safeguarding biodiversity and ecosystems is fundamental to climate resilient development. IUCN welcomes the note from the Executive Secretary (CBD/SBSTTA/23/3) and concurs with the key messages emerging from the review of new scientific and technical information on biodiversity and climate change and invites Parties to take note of findings of the *IPCC Sixth Assessment Report* and the *2021 IPBES-IPCC Co-sponsored Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Climate Change*.

IUCN recommends Parties that are also Parties to the UNFCCC to strengthen their efforts to integrate nature-based solutions (NbS), including ecosystem-based approaches into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and their domestic climate actions, in

support of the Paris Agreement, and proposes to strengthen paragraph 5 as follows:

5. *Encourages* Parties and *invites* other Governments, with the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities, in accordance with national legislation, when pursuing domestic climate action under the Paris Agreement,⁴ to strengthen and upscale their efforts to integrate biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and **nature-based solutions, including** ecosystem-based approaches to climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction into national and other planning processes, {including existing, new and updated nationally determined contributions} and national adaptation plans, as appropriate ...

In this regard, IUCN and Oxford University released a report on [Nature-based Solutions in Nationally Determined Contributions](#), with recommendations for enhancing climate ambitions and action through NbS. However, IUCN stresses that while nature-based solutions should be pursued wherever possible, these efforts should not substitute or detract from the overarching, urgent need for rapid, deep and sustained reduction of anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from all their current sources and from the ambitious decarbonisation of the global economy across all sectors.

IUCN recommends a systematic and consistent reference to Nature-based Solutions throughout the decision text, noting that this is now also supported by a multilaterally-agreed definition adopted by the United Nations Environmental Assembly in March 2022 ([UNEP/EA.5/Res.5](#)). In this regard, it **also draws attention to the recent decisions adopted by UNFCCC and Paris Agreement Parties at UNFCCC COP27/CMP17/CMA4 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt**, which “Encourages Parties to consider, as appropriate, nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches, taking into consideration United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/5, for their mitigation and adaptation action while ensuring relevant social and environmental safeguards”.

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, Registration No. I-54113.

IUCN further highlights the [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#), which offers 8 specific criteria and 28 indicators to enable the coherent design, execution and evaluation of Nature-based Solutions. Such a framework is essential to increase their scale and impact, to prevent unanticipated negative outcomes or misuse, and to help funding agencies, policy makers and other stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of interventions.

Biodiversity and agriculture

(Agenda item 24)

IUCN welcomes the Note from the Executive Secretary (CBD/SBSTTA/24/7/REV1) on the International Initiative for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Soil Biodiversity and updated Plan of action, which contains useful data on measures that promote soil biodiversity in NBSAPs, and thought-provoking insight on the contribution of soil biodiversity's to the Sustainable Development Goals and to sustainable land use options for the post-2020 Framework.

IUCN invites Parties to consider its report [Common Ground restoring land health for sustainable agriculture](#) that provides clear recommendations in relation to:

- The importance of shifting away from thinking of agriculture in terms of 'food, fibre and fuel' (and other products), towards thinking in terms of 'production, water, climate and nature';
- The importance to recognize biodiversity as a key asset for agriculture production systems and conversely the crucial role these systems can play in biodiversity conservation.
- The need to adopt policies and programmes that contribute to develop agroecological and regenerative practices that are beneficial for both land and soils biodiversity. We highlight the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions in that regard
- The necessity to consider soils as a critical natural capital, requiring protection and long-term reorientation of public and private financial flows;
- The importance of establishing clear targets, including for soils biodiversity, aiming for a net-positive impact on key indicators of biodiversity by 2030;
- And last but not least, the importance of a renewed dialogue between agriculture and conservation actors to improve inter-sectoral coordination and inclusive governance.

IUCN globally supports the draft plan of action 2020-2030 of the international initiative. It is comprehensive and covers the most relevant field of activities to promote soil health into policy, practice, knowledge and monitoring.

Nature and culture

(Agenda item 26)

Recognising that the connection between culture and nature provides a crucial, untapped potential for achieving life for humanity in harmony with nature, **IUCN welcomes the *Elements and Tasks related to the Joint Programme of Work on the Links between Nature and Culture in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework*, and fully supports the proposed draft decision including its Annex, as previously agreed at the Working Group on Article 8(j) and Related Provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2019.**

IUCN recalls the proposals for a “Global Alliance for Nature and Culture” made at COP14, and welcomes the pragmatic approach in framing priorities for work and inviting a significant broadening of the Joint Programme on the Links between Biological and Cultural

Diversity, as a crucial element of the post-2020 Framework. In this regard, inviting additional partners in the culture sector, including ICOMOS and ICCROM to contribute to the work programme is crucial in operationalizing these ideas.

Concerning the integration of nature and culture in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, it is important to ensure that the framework is conceived using language that resonates with the different ways in which cultures perceive their relationship with nature, and to support coordinated actions that respond to the diverse connections of nature and culture at the local level. The post-2020 global biodiversity framework needs to ensure the conservation of biological diversity, while supporting the diversity of cultures. This includes, as a priority, the conservation of co-evolved bio-cultural diversity of indigenous peoples and local communities, and the traditional and local knowledge that infuses and is reflected by most landscapes and seascapes of conservation significance. Conservation approaches in urban and peri-urban areas also reflect a response to the connection of nature and culture, as part of nature’s contributions to people.