



Summit of the Future

United Nations HQ, 22-23 September 2024, New York, United States of America

Key messages

- The impact of humanity on our ecosystems is reaching irreversible tipping points. As there can be no future without nature, the Summit of the Future needs to speak to the concerns of future generations and must include a strong commitment to **take urgent action on the triple planetary crisis through a rights-based approach**.
- Environment and climate need to be mainstreamed across the agenda for the Summit of the Future – which requires a step change in the process given the marginal attention given to these topics in the process to date. The Pact for the Future should send a clear message of a commitment to realize a **fossil-free and nature-positive future**.
- The Summit should not only reaffirm agreements made elsewhere, but add value to the multilateral agenda **by reflecting ambition that goes above and beyond existing commitments**. This includes, for instance, the time-bound commitments to accelerate the achievement of targets and goals set out in the Kunming-Montreal GBF and in the Paris Agreement, as well as the swift ratification of the BBNJ agreement.
- It is essential to include a commitment to turn ambition into reality, through enabling the private sector, civil society and governments to **measure and track progress in a verifiable and consistent manner, and implement an evidence-based approach to decision-making, based on the best available science**.
- IUCN also stresses the need to go Beyond GDP, by not only agreeing on metrics that capture measures not included in GDP but by also **expanding GDP measurement to incorporate nature and the environment more generally**.

Humanity is deeply intertwined with nature, and up to 50% of our global GDP is linked to nature and biodiversity. Despite global commitments and efforts to conserve nature and abate greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), biodiversity is declining at rates unprecedented in human history and average temperatures have already risen by over 1 C. In addition, species are disappearing at a rate one hundred to a thousand times above the background rate. According to the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, some 28% of the more than 140,000 species assessed are threatened with extinction. As standard-setter in the areas of conservation and sustainable development, generating data through widely-used knowledge products and metrics, IUCN places great emphasis in evidence-based decision-making. IUCN stands ready to promote and support implementation of the Pact for the future, and looks forward to continuing to provide technical support and expertise. IUCN considers an equitable and effective multilateral system as a precondition for the achievement of a just world that values and conserves nature.

The science and evidence on which IUCN's work is based shows that many of the planetary systems that regulate climate and support life on Earth are suffering major impacts from human activities. A fundamental change in the way we produce and consume goods and resources is required, so that the tipping point is not crossed. It is therefore imperative that economic growth is decoupled from unsustainable resource use.

Environmental issues have so far been largely absent from the Our Common Agenda process, and have not featured prominently in the discussions on the scope for the Summit of the Future, with none of the policy briefs produced to inform the summit focusing on environmental issues.

As there can be no future without nature IUCN considers it essential that environment and climate is mainstreamed throughout the text of the Pact for the Future and also feature prominently in the

agenda of the Summit of the Future. **IUCN emphasizes the need to make the Summit and the negotiations of the Pact a truly inclusive process**, that includes all stakeholders, especially scientists, Indigenous peoples, youth, and most of all: the communities and people who are most at risk.

The below are the concrete proposals from IUCN for inclusion in the Pact for the Future:

1. The fabric of our ecosystems is weakening and the services that they provide to societies are threatened. Evidence shows that some ecosystems are close to collapse due to climate change – such as the Arctic, Antarctica, high mountain ecosystems, coral reefs and wetlands amongst other¹. This, in turn, means that more than 50% of our global GDP is exposed to risks which have been insufficiently analyzed. **In the chapeau**, we consider it essential to include a general commitment by member states to effectively address the triple planetary crisis **through a nature-positive² and rights-based approach**, with a specific reference to the need to realize the human right to a clean, safe and healthy environment³. Specific text proposals include:

- a. *"We commit to work towards a nature-positive future, which means that we, as a global society, halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity measured from its current status, reducing future negative impacts alongside restoring and renewing nature, to put both living and non-living nature measurably on the path to recovery."*
- b. *"We reaffirm our commitment to effectively address the triple planetary crisis through a rights-based approach, and commit to promote, protect and fulfil the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment"*.

2. We have laid the governance ground, we have numerous international treaties on climate, on biodiversity, on chemicals, on waste. Implementation is where progress is lagging. In Chapter 1, IUCN would like to propose the

inclusion of time-bound commitments towards achieving the targets and goals set out in the GBF and in the Paris Agreement, reflecting the principle of common but differentiated responsibility as suggested by the High-Level Advisory Board. Specific text proposals include:

- a. *"We reaffirm our commitment to limit global warming to 1.5C to minimise climate-related losses to people and nature and we commit to a time-bound phase-out of all fossil fuels, including oil and gas, within a framework that ensures a just transition"*
 - b. *"We call for the accelerated implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its targets, which set out an ambitious plan to implement broad based action to bring about a transformation in our societies' relationship with biodiversity by 2030, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, and ensure that, by 2050, the shared vision of living in harmony with nature is fulfilled. We call on all Parties to update their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) or set ambitious national biodiversity targets aligned with the GBF as soon as possible, and through a participatory process to foster ownership by the whole of society."*
3. IUCN's data, standards and guidance have been instrumental in supporting evidence-based decision-making in conservation and sustainable development. Through the work of the entire Union – Members, Commissions and the Secretariat – IUCN has a long history of establishing standards and tools to track and measure the conservation of nature. For Chapter 1, IUCN considers it essential to include a commitment to turn ambition into reality, through enabling the private sector, civil society and governments **to measure and track progress in a verifiable and consistent manner using well-established standards, tools and methodologies**.
- a. *We commit to measure and track contributions towards protecting and*

¹ [IPCC reports](#)

² Summary – [Towards an IUCN nature-positive approach](#)

³ United Nations General Assembly [Resolution 76/300](#) on The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

restoring nature and achieving sustainable development goals and applying an evidence-based approach to decision-making, using the best available science. We will work to expand collaborative and inclusive approaches, and strengthen science-policy interfaces at all levels.

4. Nature underpins our economies, with recent estimates that more than half of global GDP, or over \$40 trillion, is dependent on nature and the services that it provides⁴. Just this year, building on studies conducted by the Dutch and French central banks, the European Central Bank found that 72% of companies are highly dependent on at least one ecosystem service, and 75% of all bank loans to companies in the euro area are granted to such companies, making nature-related risks highly material in the region⁵. Yet we do not value nature in our current measurements of GDP. Therefore, in Chapter 5, Transforming Global Governance, **IUCN stresses the need to go Beyond GDP, by not only agreeing on metrics that capture measures not included in GDP but by also expanding GDP measurement to incorporate nature** and the environment more generally as recommended in the UN Secretary-General's policy brief on Beyond GDP. Specific language therefore includes:

- a. *We confirm our political commitment to develop a conceptual framework to “value what counts”, anchored in the 2030 Agenda. The framework should be designed to achieve the following outcomes: (i) well-being and agency; (ii) respect for life and the planet; and (iii) reduced inequalities and greater solidarity⁶.*

Background references and source materials

- **Chapter 1: Sustainable Development & Financing for Development**
 - [Towards an IUCN nature-positive approach: a working paper](#)
 - [Guidelines for planning and monitoring corporate biodiversity performance](#)
- **Chapter 2: International Peace and Security**
 - [Conflict and conservation](#)
- **Chapter 3: Science, Technology and Innovation and Digital Cooperation**
 - [IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria, Global Standard for the Identification of Key Biodiversity Areas,](#)
 - [IUCN Red List of Ecosystems Categories and Criteria,](#)
 - [Guidelines for Applying Protected area Management Categories,](#)
 - [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions,](#)
 - [Species Threat Abatement and Restoration](#)
- **Chapter 5: Transforming Global Governance**
 - [Seven years to save nature and people: a proposed set of policies and actions for the SDG Summit](#)

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⁴ World Economic Forum, 2020: [Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy](#),
Swiss Re Institute, 2020: [Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services – A business case for re/insurance](#)

⁵ Elderson F., 2023: [The economy and banks need nature to survive](#)

⁶ Our Common Agenda Policy Brief 4, [Valuing What Counts: Framework to Progress Beyond Gross Domestic Product](#)