

IUCN position paper for UNFCCC COP29

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP29)

11 – 22 November 2024, Baku, Azerbaijan

UNFCCC COP29 will be held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 11 to 22 November 2024. It takes place against a backdrop of toppling temperature records and unprecedented extreme weather events – heatwaves, storms, floods and droughts – that have wreaked havoc and devastation across the planet, with mounting losses and damages on people and nature.

It is crucial that COP29 be a high-ambition, high-impact COP. As Parties convene in Baku, there is an urgent need to accelerate progress across all the pillars of the Paris Agreement – particularly finance – guided by the latest science and building on the outcome of the landmark first global stocktake concluded last year.

In this context, IUCN would like to emphasise **10 main messages**:

1. Recent breaches of the 1.5°C temperature rise threshold serve as an alarming warning of a world getting dangerously close to overshooting this agreed long-term limit. ***IUCN urges Parties to significantly increase their ambition in cutting greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, close the existing implementation gap, and immediately start phasing out all fossil fuels in a just, orderly and equitable manner in order to prevent the 1.5°C temperature rise threshold from being permanently breached.***
 - The most recent analysis shows that the implementation of current Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) only reduces emissions by 2 per cent, on average, below 2019 levels by 2030 against the 43 per cent that is needed to limit global warming to 1.5°C ([UNFCCC 2023](#), [IPCC AR6](#)). Implementation of early and ambitious mitigation will mean that fewer hard and soft adaptation limits are hit, lower the risks of crossing critical thresholds and triggering tipping points, and minimise permanent losses and damages ([AGR 2023](#), [Wunderling et al 2023](#), [McKay et al 2022](#)).
2. Noting that the next round of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) due to be communicated by Parties by 10 February 2025 will be the most consequential climate policy documents produced so far this century, ***IUCN calls on all Parties to ensure that their new NDCs are at the level of their highest possible ambition, fully aligned with the 1.5°C goal, and anchored, where possible, within national legislation and regulatory frameworks.***
 - IUCN reminds all Parties that Article 4.3 of the Paris Agreement requires their 2025 NDCs to represent a *progression* beyond their current NDCs and to reflect their *highest possible ambition*. All Parties should strongly endeavour to include within their 2025 NDCs, ambitious, economy-wide emission reduction targets with a timeframe of 2035, which cover all greenhouse gases, sectors and categories, are aligned with limiting global warming to 1.5°C, and are informed by the latest science, while taking into account different national circumstances.
3. ***IUCN calls on all Parties to enhance their national adaptation efforts with a view to implementing long-term and transformational adaptation actions and to ensure the timely achievement of all the 2030 targets agreed to under the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience.***

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- IUCN also encourages Parties that have not yet done so to put in place their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) by 2025, and to reflect their adaptation policies and priorities, as appropriate, also within their new NDCs. IUCN particularly notes that one of the 2030 targets agreed to under the *UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience* focuses on ‘reducing climate impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity and accelerating the use of ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions’.¹ These should be fully integrated within both NAPs and NDCs.
4. ***IUCN calls on all Parties to establish an ambitious new collective quantified goal (NCQG) on mobilizing climate finance at COP29 that increases concessional and grant-based financing for developing countries, utilises a wide variety of funding sources, and prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable.***
- Finance remains central to the achievement of all climate goals. The NCQG must be adequate to the urgency and scale of the challenge, cover the entire spectrum of mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, and fully take into account the needs and priorities of developing country Parties, particularly of vulnerable communities and ecosystems. This must also be accompanied by the full and timely delivery of the previously agreed US\$100 billion per year climate finance goal through to 2025, as emphasised in the first global stocktake outcome.
 - Noting that adaptation finance flows to developing countries are currently 10-18 times below estimated needs ([AGR 2023](#)), the NCQG should enable a rapid and substantial increase in adaptation financing, building on previous CMA decisions,² to achieve a balance between mitigation and adaptation finance as called for in the Paris Agreement. The NCQG should also transparently channel greater climate finance through the multilateral operating entities that serve the financial mechanism of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, ensuring that they are fully resourced and operate in a well-aligned and mutually supportive manner to effectively meet the climate funding needs of developing countries.
- IUCN stresses the need for greater climate financing to flow towards high-integrity nature-based solutions for adaptation and mitigation, and, particularly, for significantly increased funds to be made more easily and directly accessible to Indigenous peoples and local communities, noting that they are presently the custodians and stewards of the world’s most intact ecosystems, including over a third of the world’s remaining irrecoverable carbon, yet have received less than the equivalent of 1 per cent of climate change funding to date ([Noon et al 2022](#), [CI and IUCN 2023](#), [RFN 2021](#)).
5. ***IUCN urges all Parties to include concrete and quantified targets on nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches within their forthcoming NDCs, and to make these as ambitious as possible with a view to maximizing the benefits for both mitigation and adaptation and for biodiversity conservation.***
- The vital importance of nature and ecosystems for effective and sustainable climate action – and the urgency of addressing the interlinked climate and biodiversity crises in a comprehensive and synergetic manner – has been repeatedly recognized by Parties in recent UNFCCC COP/CMA decisions.³ Latest analysis shows that while many countries have included nature-based solutions to varying degrees within their NDCs to date, much scope still remains for strengthening them ([NDC Partnership/ GIZ 2024](#)). In particular, the new NDCs need to reflect the outcome of the first global stocktake, which, inter alia, emphasized both the importance of enhanced efforts to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 and of conserving biodiversity in line with the *Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework*.⁴
 - A new forthcoming *Guide for Including Nature in NDCs* co-developed by IUCN as part of the Nature4Climate coalition offers updated recommendations on how Parties can effectively and appropriately integrate nature-based solutions within their 2025 NDCs. In

¹ [Decision 1/CMA.5](#), paragraph 63(d) and [Decision 2/CMA.5](#), paragraph 9(d).

² [Decision 1/CMA.3](#), paragraph 18 and [Decision 1/CMA.5](#), paragraphs 86 and 100.

³ See, for example, [Decision 1/CP.25](#) (paragraph 15), [Decision 1/CP.26](#) (preamble and paragraph 21), [Decision 1/CP.27](#) (paragraphs 1 and 18) and [Decision 1/CMA.5](#) (preamble and paragraph 33).

⁴ [Decision 1/CMA.5](#), paragraph 33.

- addition, the *IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions* provides a concrete operational framework to support the high-integrity implementation of these important solutions on the ground, which Parties are encouraged to reflect in their new NDCs. IUCN also invites Parties to join the *ENACT Partnership on Nature-based Solutions* to advance practical collaboration and sharing of best practices and experiences on the topic.
- IUCN welcomes the ‘*Roadmap to Mission 1.5*’ launched last year under the guidance of the COP Presidencies Troika of UAE, Azerbaijan and Brazil to significantly enhance the international enabling environment to stimulate ambition in the next round of NDCs. IUCN stresses the importance of strongly integrating the role of nature and inclusion in this important Mission and stands ready to support the COP Presidencies Troika in this effort.
 - Noting that Parties will be considering further guidance on the features of NDCs at COP29/ CMA6,⁵ IUCN stresses that this offers them a concrete opportunity to systematically integrate biodiversity and ecosystem integrity considerations within the core design features required in any future NDC. This will help to ensure the integrity of all ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity when taking action to address climate change, as explicitly called for by the Paris Agreement. For example, a concrete feature could be: ‘*NDC objectives and measures to implement them shall/ should complement and be consistent with the objectives of national and relevant international conventions and agreements on nature and biodiversity conservation and its sustainable use*’.
6. Noting the mutual supportiveness of the climate and nature agendas, and the need to safeguard nature in the energy transition, ***IUCN calls on Parties to systematically incorporate the role and contribution of nature in all relevant UNFCCC work programmes, processes, frameworks and reporting arrangements that are currently supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement.***
- Under the *Sharm el-Sheikh Mitigation Ambition and Implementation Work Programme (MWP)*, Parties could, for instance, mandate the organization of a dedicated session in 2025 to discuss how ecosystems and nature-based solutions can contribute to achieving the Paris Agreement temperature goal and also of how they may be adversely affected by mitigation actions in other sectors.⁶
 - Under the *Sharm el-Sheikh joint work on implementation of climate action on agriculture and food security*, Parties can call for in-session workshops to promote integrated management of natural resources within agriculture and food systems to maximize benefits for both climate and biodiversity.
 - Noting that Parties are required to submit their first-ever *Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs)* by end-2024,⁷ including to share information on progress in implementing and achieving their NDCs to date, this offers them a concrete opportunity to showcase their achievements in implementing nature-based solutions for adaptation and mitigation, and in jointly addressing the climate and biodiversity crises.
7. ***IUCN urges Parties to ensure the highest levels of environmental and ecosystem integrity in the operationalisation of Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, and to maintain strong ecological and social safeguards, particularly in the use of any nature-based sinks and removals, including to prevent any adverse impacts on the stability of ecosystem-based carbon reservoirs.***
- Methodologies and tools developed to guide removals under Article 6.4 must incorporate strong safeguards to ensure permanence/ non-reversibility, non-leakage, ecosystem and environmental integrity, and the protection of the rights and interests of Indigenous peoples and local communities. A recent IUCN publication that can serve as a resource for this is: ‘*Climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation: A review of progress and key issues in global carbon markets and potential impacts on ecosystems*’ ([Shah et al 2024](#)).
 - IUCN stresses that the use of nature-based options in Article 6 can only be justified if such actions enhance, and not diminish, the overall mitigation in global emissions and cause no ecological and social harm. Furthermore, any explicit use of nature-based solutions within

⁵ In pursuance of [Decision 4/CMA.1](#) (paragraph 20).

⁶ In accordance with [Decision 1/CMA.5](#) (paragraphs 33 and 186).

⁷ As required by [Decision 18/CMA.1](#), paragraph 3.

Article 6 should require the obligatory application of the *IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions*.

8. Noting that the COPs of all the three Rio Conventions are being convened in 2024, ***IUCN urges the COP Presidencies of the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD (Azerbaijan, Colombia and Saudi Arabia) and the respective Convention secretariats to jointly identify and promote concrete actions to strengthen cross-Convention collaboration, build synergies and effectively address the interlinked challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation. Looking ahead to 2025, IUCN also calls on the incoming Brazilian COP Presidency to make ‘Climate and Nature’ a central theme of UNFCCC COP30 in Belém.***
 - Concrete opportunities exist to significantly strengthen operational linkages across the three Rio Conventions, especially at the regional and national levels. These include, for example, exploring and mandating joint work programmes, common reporting frameworks, and closer coordination and alignment in the preparation of the key national instruments under each of these processes, i.e. between the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the NDCs of the Paris Agreement/UNFCCC. IUCN also supports the building of stronger synergies across other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and processes.
 9. ***IUCN strongly urges Parties to promote and implement inclusive, just and equitable climate policies and actions that incorporate the core priorities, concerns, needs and rights of the most vulnerable, particularly of Indigenous peoples, women, youth and children, and to ensure their full and meaningful participation in all UNFCCC processes.***
 - IUCN looks forward to contributing to the final review of the implementation of the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG) and its Gender Action Plan at COP29. Noting the continued relevance of gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and the importance of consensus-building, IUCN calls on all Parties to support the mainstreaming of gender-responsive climate policies and actions across all levels of implementation of the Paris Agreement. There is also a need for building robust systems that can enable disaggregated monitoring of climate-related vulnerabilities and of the gender inequalities that they may generate.
 - IUCN calls on all Parties at COP29 to support the adoption of the draft work plan of the UNFCCC Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) for 2025-2027, as prepared by its Facilitative Working Group. IUCN urges Parties to support the full and meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples and local communities in all relevant UNFCCC processes, and to fully acknowledge and support Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems and rights, especially in relation to the management of natural resources and ecosystems.
 - IUCN emphasises the importance of ensuring intergenerational and intragenerational equity while addressing the interlinked climate and biodiversity crises. It especially underscores the importance of encouraging citizen engagement and of equitably integrating the voices and concerns of youth and children in climate policy development and decision making across all levels.
10. ***IUCN calls on the private and financial sectors to establish, implement and transparently disclose ambitious corporate policies and measures that are GHG emissions neutral, nature positive and socially just, and directly contribute to the 1.5°C goal and to the effective implementation of NDCs in the jurisdictions where they operate.***
 - Notwithstanding some good examples of corporate leadership, IUCN remains concerned that corporate climate actions still tend to be underpinned by public relations rather than focus on delivering tangible and lasting contributions to net-zero and nature-positive outcomes. This raises the risks of greenwashing and of delaying and undermining genuine efforts, which the world can no longer afford. Well-designed and coordinated regulatory frameworks at the national, regional and global levels can help enhance and ensure the credibility and accountability of corporate and investor commitments and actions on both climate and nature.