



Permanent Mission of the
International Union for Conservation of Nature
to the United Nations

High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2026

*“Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for a
sustainable future for all”*

Informal negotiations

Statement delivered by the Permanent Observer of IUCN to the UN, Dr Sofie Jaffe

New York, 2026

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

First let me congratulate the Permanent Representatives of Albania and Sierra Leone on your appointment as co-facilitators in this process.

As the world approaches the final stretch toward 2030, accelerating implementation requires placing nature at the centre of sustainable development, climate action, and human wellbeing. This year’s HLPF offers a critical opportunity to advance integrated, nature-positive solutions that deliver across the 2030 Agenda and the Rio Conventions.

With all three Rio COPs convening in 2026, the HLPF must send a clear political signal: coherent, operational synergies across the Rio Conventions are essential to achieving the SDGs. IUCN urges Member States to commit to concrete, implementable linkages across climate, biodiversity and land agendas, strengthen cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements and UN entities and ensure that national planning is aligned, mutually reinforcing, and supported by coherent finance.

Taking place just a few months ahead of the UN Water Conference the review of SDG 6 must serve as a stepping stone toward a strengthened global water architecture. HLPF must send a strong political message supporting an intergovernmental process to close the global water governance gap – for instance through the agreement to take steps towards agreeing on a Global Framework for Water. The water conference also needs to result in concrete outcomes to strengthen transboundary cooperation, data sharing and early warning systems and mobilise finance for Nature-based Solutions that enhance water security, resilience and human health. Water is the foundation of sustainable development; governance must match the scale of the challenge.

With regards to SDG7 The global shift to renewable energy must not come at the expense of nature or people. IUCN calls on the HLPF to establish a clear pathway for a nature-positive, rights-based energy transition, ensure that all energy solutions—renewables, grids, storage and minerals—deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity, while guaranteeing meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and youth in energy planning

and decision making. A just transition is only possible when energy security, climate mitigation and biodiversity conservation advance together.

Urban areas are on the front lines of climate impacts, biodiversity loss and social inequality. With regards to SDG11 the HLPF should empower cities to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban planning, support local governments with tools, finance and capacity to drive ecologically informed, transparent and accountable development and promote Nature-based Solutions that reduce risk, enhance liveability, and reconnect people with nature. Cities can be powerful drivers of a nature-positive world when equipped with the right enabling conditions.

IUCN stands ready to support Member States with science-based knowledge, tools and partnerships to accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Delivering on SDGs 6, 7 and 11—and on the Rio Conventions—requires transformative action that places nature, equity and resilience at the heart of sustainable development.

Thank you.
