

Views on enhancing the inclusiveness of cooperation with other international organizations as well as on the cooperation with other Rio Conventions secretariats

Submission by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

May 2026

In response to the invitation extended by the UNFCCC COP in [FCCC/CP/2025/12](#) (paragraph 73), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) welcomes the opportunity to submit its views on enhancing the inclusiveness of cooperation with other international organizations as well as on the cooperation with the other Rio Conventions secretariats. This submission draws on IUCN's previous work on the topic and takes into account relevant resolutions adopted by its 1,500+ government, civil society, and Indigenous Peoples' Organization (IPO) members at recent IUCN World Conservation Congresses.¹ The submission is also aligned with and builds on IUCN's submission to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in response to notification 2025-005.²

The need for enhanced cooperation is widely accepted but needs concrete operationalisation

Climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation are not separate environmental problems but rather interlocking components of a single planetary crisis, where each component affects and is affected by the others. Addressing them in isolation, and in a siloed manner, is no longer tenable. Especially in view of the growing urgency of the crisis and the narrowing window for meaningful intervention, they demand an enhanced and unified international response.

The importance of addressing the interlinked global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation in an integrated manner has been explicitly recognized under all three Rio Conventions, as well as in several other international fora. These provide a clear mandate for advancing a more cooperative approach, as summarised below:

- Most recently, under the *Global Mutirão* decision ([Decision1/ CMA.7, preamble](#)) adopted at UNFCCC COP30 in Belém, Parties underlined 'the urgent need to address, in a comprehensive and synergetic manner, the interlinked global crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land and ocean degradation in the broader context of achieving sustainable development, as well as the vital importance of protecting, conserving, restoring and sustainably using and managing nature and terrestrial, marine and mountainous ecosystems for effective and sustainable climate action'. This was the latest of several similar UNFCCC decisions adopted at previous COPs (e.g.

¹ For example, see Resolutions [7.114](#) Integrated solutions to the climate change and biodiversity crises; [8.002](#) Accelerating action for nature-positive, sustainable agriculture and food systems; [8.011](#) Delivering harmonised accountability and means of implementation for international forest protection goals; [8.038](#) Harnessing IUCN's power: Driving synergy for a net zero, nature positive and just energy transition; and [8.043](#) Integrating biodiversity conservation in carbon pricing and trading programmes for climate change mitigation.

² [IUCN submission of views on enhanced policy coherence across the Rio Conventions: CBD Notification 2025-005](#), May 2025.

[Decision 1/CMA.5, paragraphs 33 and 55](#); [Decision 1/CP.27, paragraph 1](#); [Decision 1/CP.26, preamble and paragraph 21](#), etc.). The Paris Agreement itself clearly notes the ‘importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems ... and the protection of biodiversity ... when taking action to address climate change’ ([preamble](#)).

- The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has recognized the need for comprehensive approaches to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought, alongside climate change and biodiversity loss, and called for coordination and joint programmes with other international agreements, particularly the UNFCCC and CBD. Its 2024 decision on *Promoting and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies* is particularly noteworthy in this regard ([Decision 8/COP.16, preamble](#)), and several of its elements are directly pertinent for the forthcoming discussions at SBSTA64.
- The CBD has also called for enhanced collaboration to address climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation (e.g. Decisions III/21, IV/15, V/21, V/23, VI/20, VII/15, VIII/16, VIII/30, IX/16, X/20, X/33). Subsequent decisions have underscored the importance of integrated approaches to implementation (e.g. Decisions XIII/4, XIII/5, 14/5). Following Decision [16/22](#) on *Biodiversity and climate change*, the CBD secretariat gathered inputs to explore options for ‘enhanced policy coherence, including a potential joint work programme of the Rio conventions’, and organised a dedicated technical information exchange to find ways to enhance cooperation and policy coherence to support the implementation of the three Rio Conventions. Most recently, its Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) adopted Recommendation [27/3](#) inviting the Convention secretariats and Presidencies to work towards developing a multilevel road map with short, medium and long-term actions, including a mapping study to help to identify concrete actions to enhance cooperation, policy coherence and synergies across the Rio conventions.
- Greater cooperation has also been emphasised by key intergovernmental science-policy processes. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) acknowledged that neither challenge can be resolved unless they are tackled together, stressing that synergistic approaches can maximize co-benefits and meet development aspirations ([IPBES-IPCC 2021](#)). The recent IPBES Nexus Assessment ([SPM, 2024](#)) also highlights the urgent need for integrated solutions and advocates for integrated strategies.
- The importance of enhancing synergies and policy coherence across environmental agreements has also been clearly recognized within the UN Environment Assembly (e.g. Resolution [7/5](#) on *Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments*) and at the UN General Assembly ([A/RES/77/167](#)).

However, these understandings now need to be concretely operationalized and practically advanced while remaining mindful of the respective mandates of the different policy processes. Parties to the UNFCCC have the opportunity now to play an active role in this process, including by adopting dedicated COP decisions that can enable substantive

cooperation across the Rio Convention secretariats and with other related international processes and organizations. What would be particularly important in this regard is to ensure the availability of a formal dedicated space for Parties to continue in-depth discussions on this matter on an ongoing basis, including through the establishment of a standing agenda item. It may also be beneficial for Parties to mandate the establishment of an Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) to work intersessionally to study some of the options for operationalizing greater cooperation (including those highlighted below), and report back to Parties at successive SBSTA/COP sessions. Additionally, the CBD SBSTTA recommendation to develop a multilevel road map to identify concrete actions to enhance cooperation, as noted above, can offer a useful process for UNFCCC Parties to align with and contribute to as well. IUCN hopes to see constructive exchanges on this overall topic during SBSTA64, leading to the adoption of a formal decision at COP31, and looks forward to supporting Parties in this effort.

Build on existing options for enhancing cooperation

Over the past two decades, a range of measures to support cooperation across the Rio Conventions has been proposed.³ Some of these, which are noted below, can offer concrete options to incorporate within a future UNFCCC COP decision.

- **Strengthen the Joint Liaison Group.** The Joint Liaison Group (JLG) between the secretariats of the CBD, the UNFCCC and the UNCCD has been endorsed by Parties to all three Rio Conventions (CBD Decision [VI/20](#), UNCCD decision [12/COP.6](#), UNFCCC decision [13/CP.8](#)). By systematically exchanging information and identifying common thematic areas for collaboration and cooperation, the JLG can advise and support Parties in their policy development and implementation at the national level in a manner that respects the distinct mandate of each Convention. This institutional mechanism can be concretely strengthened by including the Chairs of the Subsidiary Bodies of the three Rio Conventions. This would provide greater political authority to the JLG, improve oversight of its work, and ensure that Parties remain directly involved in its activities. The JLG can also play an important role in supporting joint capacity building activities and in enhancing communication, education and public awareness in areas of thematic overlap. Furthermore, it can build functional operational linkages with other initiatives that are actively supporting the delivery of synergies across the Conventions. The [Rio Conventions Joint Capacity-building Programme](#), and its engagement with initiatives such as the [Synergies Collaboration Platform](#), is an example of such an effort.
- **Joint work programmes can offer a concrete platform for cooperation.** A joint work programme (JWP) of the three Rio Conventions, mandated by the Parties to each Convention, could also be set up to strengthen the operational linkages across the Conventions. This could address gaps in knowledge and capacity on scientific and

³ For example, see [FCCC/SBSTA/2004/INF.19](#) - [UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/1/7/Add.1](#). OPTIONS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS. Paper prepared by the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the Joint Liaison Group. [UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/16](#) - Indicative List of Activities by Parties to Promote Synergies Among the Rio Conventions. See also [CBD/SBSTTA/27/4](#) for a recent synthesis of option to enhance policy coherence.

technical themes that are common to each process (e.g. addressing ecological integrity and conserving biodiversity while preserving natural greenhouse gas sinks and reservoirs).⁴ It could also help to identify and address some of the potential perverse outcomes and trade-offs that occur when actions that fulfil the goals of one Convention undermine the goals of another. Further, it could explore priority areas for developing common guidance (e.g. on gender and Indigenous Peoples engagement) as well as mechanisms and templates for joint data collection and monitoring and reporting.

- **Alignment between key national policy and planning instruments.** Coordination in the planning, design and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets, and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) of Parties, represents a clear opportunity for securing policy alignment and avoiding duplication and fragmentation at the national level in order to deliver more effective and unified responses to biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation. Activities falling downstream of these instruments could be further integrated into a framework for national coordination and implementation, supported by an integrated financial strategy, that links the national-level objectives and actions to the mandates and requirements of each Convention.⁵
- **Advancing Nature-based Solutions as a common implementation vehicle.** Nature-based Solutions (NbS) and/or ecosystem-based approaches have been endorsed in COP decisions of all three Conventions and are embedded in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) provides an effective operational framework to advance their high-integrity implementation. Furthermore, initiatives such as the *Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for Accelerated Climate Transformation (ENACT) Partnership* can provide concrete support to all the three Rio Conventions.⁶
- **Building regular collaboration among the existing science-policy processes of the Rio Conventions.** Using the experience of the joint IPBES-IPCC report, other opportunities can be explored to enhance closer collaboration among the intergovernmental science-policy bodies of the Rio Conventions, including through joint assessments on topics that cut across all three policy processes, potentially also linking with other relevant science-policy processes. The need for such collaboration has been noted in the CBD (Decision 16/22, paragraph 2) and the UNCCD (Decision [21/COP.16](#), Annex, Table 2).
- **Collaboration among national focal points.** Regular meetings and communication among the Conventions' national focal points can contribute to better alignment between national policy and planning instruments and harmonized monitoring and reporting. Systematic collaboration with other stakeholders, such as Indigenous

⁴ For example, see: "[Connecting the Dots No 3: Increasing collaboration across the Rio Conventions to achieve synergistic climate and biodiversity outcomes at COP30](#)", *IUCN Technical Brief*, November 2025.

⁵ For example, see [UNCCD/COP\(16\)/2](#) - Midterm evaluation of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Report by the Intergovernmental Working Group, 2024.

⁶ See also [ENACT 2024 Nature-based Solutions Discussion Paper: Strategic action across the Rio Conventions](#), October 2024.

Peoples and local communities, can also support greater policy coherence and enhanced implementation of national commitments. IUCN could support such activities at the national level among interested Parties with whom it currently collaborates across all of these areas.

- **Enhance financing for synergistic implementation.** Finance has been widely recognized as a crucial enabler for unified action yet remains largely insufficient and fragmented. It therefore needs to be significantly scaled up, building on existing commitments under each process, also ensuring that these commitments are as aligned and mutually supportive as possible. Furthermore, it is particularly important that adequate financing be made directly accessible to Indigenous Peoples and local communities from all of these processes, in view of the critical role that they play in addressing these interlinked challenges on the ground. Efforts such as the [Podong Indigenous Peoples Initiative](#) can offer useful models.

IUCN welcomes this opportunity to provide its inputs and looks forward to supporting Parties in their deliberations on this important topic during SBSTA64. Given that the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD will all be convening their COPs in 2026, this offers a timely opportunity for Parties to adopt aligned decisions under each process with a view to further improving cooperation and enhancing policy coherence.