



IUCN Common Messages to the 2026 Rio Convention Conference of the Parties (COPs)

July 2026

Introduction

As Parties to the Rio Conventions – the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) – meet this year, they do so amid geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and an escalating planetary crisis.

The accelerating decline of nature's living and non living components is now widely recognised, and its severity is increasingly clear. Yet uncoordinated, sector specific responses risk worsening biodiversity loss, for example through poorly planned renewable energy infrastructure, unsustainable bioenergy with carbon capture and storage, forest plantations using new or invasive species, climate and land degradation-driven human migration, or unproven geoengineering approaches.

These pressures are further compounded by developing El Niño conditions, which the World Meteorological Organization warns will disrupt global temperature and rainfall patterns and heighten extreme weather risks in the coming months ([WMO, 2026](#)). Such impacts will intensify biodiversity loss, climate change, and land degradation, disproportionately harming vulnerable communities.

With scientific understanding stronger than ever and the costs of inaction unmistakable, the 2026 meetings of the Rio Convention COPs offer a critical opportunity to use multilateral cooperation to confront these environmental crises decisively.

The Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement, and Land Degradation Neutrality targets reflect a shared international commitment to act. Progress has been made, but ambition and implementation remain far from sufficient to reverse current trends at the necessary pace and scale.

As 2030 approaches, when the Sustainable Development Goals and the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework should be achieved, IUCN urges Parties to intensify efforts and ensure the COPs deliver concrete outcomes rather than rhetoric, and strengthen mechanisms for implementation, monitoring, and accountability.

IUCN therefore presents its common messages for [UNCCD COP17](#), [CBD COP17](#), and [UNFCCC COP31](#), taking place in late 2026. These messages complement, but do not replace, IUCN's detailed positions and recommendations in the individual COP specific position papers.

1. Recognise Nature as the common thread linking all three Rio Conventions

IUCN calls on Parties to:

- **Scale up NbS implementation**
- **Apply the IUCN Global Standard to ensure quality, equity, and long term sustainability**
- **Support and join collaborative initiatives such as the ENACT Partnership**

High integrity **Nature based Solutions** (NbS) — as ecosystems are protected, restored, and sustainably managed — can conserve species and habitats, strengthen ecosystem resilience, restore degraded lands, and support both climate mitigation and adaptation. They remain one of the most effective and cost efficient ways to advance the objectives of all three Rio Conventions simultaneously.

NbS provide a coherent approach for national planning and implementation, with **ecological integrity** serving as the shared foundation across the Rio Conventions. At the national level, NbS (as defined in UN Environment Assembly Resolution [5/5](#)) offer a practical framework for operationalising ecological integrity across land, climate, and biodiversity strategies. Protecting and restoring high integrity ecosystems improves outcomes for land, climate, and biodiversity while strengthening the resilience of communities and economies to external shocks and their indirect impacts ([Young et al., 2025](#)).

IUCN has consistently called on governments to deploy NbS to reinforce these synergies (Resolution [7.114](#)). NbS provide a measurable, practical means for aligning **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)** processes and targets into a coherent whole of government approach.

Given the rising frequency and intensity of climate impacts, IUCN urges Parties to scale up NbS and other ecosystem based approaches, ensuring that all applications protect and restore ecosystem integrity, include robust social and environmental safeguards, and adhere to the [IUCN Global Standard for Nature based Solutions](#).

IUCN stands ready to help countries pilot integrated national initiatives that demonstrate these synergies in practice, drawing on proven platforms such as the [ENACT Partnership](#), [Bonn Challenge](#), [Freshwater Challenge](#), and [Regen10](#). IUCN invites Parties to join these initiatives and strengthen international cooperation and ambition.



2. Increase ambition to deepen coordination and strengthen national integration of the Rio Conventions, without sacrificing dedicated financing

IUCN urges Parties to:

- **Adopt aligned decisions** to strengthen cooperation and policy coherence **Promote joint scientific assessments**, coordinated reporting, and collaboration among national focal points and Convention secretariats
- **Increase public and private finance** for biodiversity, climate adaptation, restoration, and NbS
- **Redirect harmful subsidies** and incentives
- **Strengthen accountability and integrity** in nature and climate finance mechanisms
- **Align biodiversity, climate, and land restoration objectives** across NBSAPs, NDCs, and LDN targets

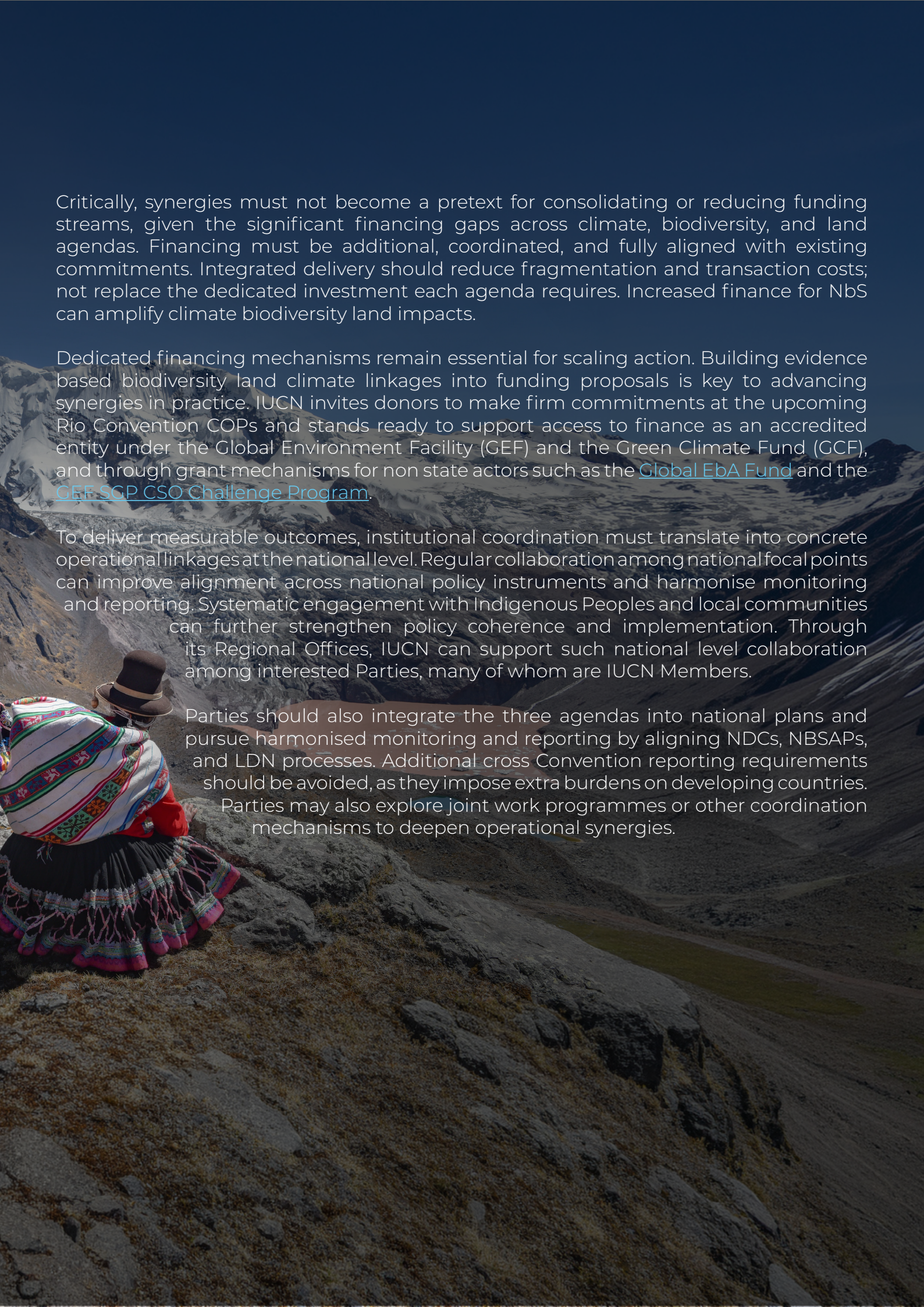
Greater coherence across the three Rio Conventions is widely recognised as essential for maximising synergies, improving efficiency, and avoiding duplication. Over the years, Parties have repeatedly underscored the need for stronger collaboration among national focal points, Convention secretariats, COP Presidencies, and scientific bodies to enhance policy alignment and develop shared implementation pathways.

Recent decisions reinforce this direction. UNCCD Decisions [7/COP.16](#) and [8/COP.16](#) urge Parties to prioritise holistic, integrated action on desertification, land degradation, and drought, and their interlinkages with climate change and biodiversity loss, with a focus on accelerating and scaling up **Nature based Solutions** and ecosystem based approaches. Under CBD Decision [16/22](#) on biodiversity and climate change, the Secretariat collected inputs on options for enhanced policy coherence — including a potential joint work programme — and convened a technical information exchange to identify ways to strengthen cooperation across the three Conventions. SBSTTA Recommendation [27/3](#) invites Convention secretariats and Presidencies to develop a multilevel road map with short , medium , and long term actions, supported by a mapping study to identify concrete opportunities for cooperation and synergy.

The UNFCCC's Global Mutirão decision (Decision [1/CMA.7](#), preamble) adopted at COP30 in 2025 in Belém, Brazil, similarly stresses the urgent need to address climate change, biodiversity loss, and land and ocean degradation in a comprehensive and synergistic manner, and highlights the vital importance of protecting, conserving, restoring, and sustainably managing ecosystems for effective climate action.

A central concern in advancing this synergy agenda is finance. In 2023, US\$220 billion supported NbS, while US\$7.3 trillion flowed into nature negative activities — meaning that for every dollar invested in protecting nature, thirty dollars were spent degrading it. Meeting global commitments under the Rio Conventions requires NbS investment to rise to US\$571 billion by 2030 and US\$771 billion by 2050 ([UNEP, 2026](#)), alongside redirecting harmful subsidies and fiscal incentives toward nature positive outcomes.



A person wearing a brown hat, a colorful striped poncho, and a large, ornate skirt is sitting on a rocky mountain ridge. They are looking out over a vast, mountainous landscape with a river valley below. The sky is clear and blue.

Critically, synergies must not become a pretext for consolidating or reducing funding streams, given the significant financing gaps across climate, biodiversity, and land agendas. Financing must be additional, coordinated, and fully aligned with existing commitments. Integrated delivery should reduce fragmentation and transaction costs; not replace the dedicated investment each agenda requires. Increased finance for NbS can amplify climate biodiversity land impacts.

Dedicated financing mechanisms remain essential for scaling action. Building evidence based biodiversity land climate linkages into funding proposals is key to advancing synergies in practice. IUCN invites donors to make firm commitments at the upcoming Rio Convention COPs and stands ready to support access to finance as an accredited entity under the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and through grant mechanisms for non state actors such as the [Global EbA Fund](#) and the [GEF SGP CSO Challenge Program](#).

To deliver measurable outcomes, institutional coordination must translate into concrete operational linkages at the national level. Regular collaboration among national focal points can improve alignment across national policy instruments and harmonise monitoring and reporting. Systematic engagement with Indigenous Peoples and local communities can further strengthen policy coherence and implementation. Through its Regional Offices, IUCN can support such national level collaboration among interested Parties, many of whom are IUCN Members.

Parties should also integrate the three agendas into national plans and pursue harmonised monitoring and reporting by aligning NDCs, NBSAPs, and LDN processes. Additional cross Convention reporting requirements should be avoided, as they impose extra burdens on developing countries.

Parties may also explore joint work programmes or other coordination mechanisms to deepen operational synergies.

3. Close the implementation gap through increased and needs based capacity building and inclusive and equitable planning

IUCN encourages Parties to:

- **Prioritise knowledge sharing and scientific cooperation**, technology transfer, and institutional strengthening
- **State capacity needs clearly** in national instruments to identify and address gaps
- **Use existing knowledge, tools, and data** that already support action on climate, biodiversity, and land
- **Ensure full participation of Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and other non-State actors** in planning, monitoring, and reporting
- **Expand direct access to finance and capacity building opportunities**

Capacity building and development

Effective implementation of the Rio Conventions ultimately depends on capacity. Beyond finance, countries need strong technical, institutional, and human capacities to design, implement, monitor, and scale action. Closing the implementation gap therefore requires closing the capacity gap.

Common capacity constraints have been identified across the Conventions: insufficient access to dedicated finance; limited technical skills in areas such as monitoring, reporting, data management, and ecosystem accounting; and inadequate institutional capacity for policy alignment, mainstreaming, coordination, planning, enforcement, and resource mobilisation to sustain national governance systems.

Recommendations from various studies have highlighted the need for **systematic and inclusive national capacity needs assessments** to guide capacity building efforts, shape medium and long term programmes, embed capacity building within institutions, retain developed capacities, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation.

In response, Parties have called for a **programmatic approach** that reinforces institutions and enabling conditions, builds partnerships and joint initiatives, adopts whole of government and whole of society engagement, promotes North–South, South–South, and triangular cooperation, and secures predictable funding for capacity building programmes.

Robust support mechanisms at regional and national levels are essential. The regional and subregional **Technical and Scientific Cooperation Support Centres (TSCCs)** for implementing the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework must become fully operational without delay, as they can provide targeted capacity support extending beyond the CBD.

The **Joint Liaison Group (JLG)** of the CBD, UNFCCC, and UNCCD — endorsed by Parties to all three Conventions (CBD Decision [VI/20](#), UNCCD Decision [12/COP.6](#), UNFCCC Decision [13/CP.8](#)) — can further strengthen cooperation. By exchanging information and identifying shared thematic areas, the JLG can support Parties in developing and



implementing national policies while respecting each Convention's mandate. It can also facilitate joint capacity building activities and enhance communication, education, and public awareness. The Rio Conventions Joint Capacity building Programme, and its collaboration with initiatives such as the Synergies Collaboration Platform, exemplify these efforts.

Inclusive planning for implementation

Inclusive and equitable planning is essential for durable outcomes. Both the first **global stocktake** under the Paris Agreement (Decision [1/CMA.5](#)) and the **draft global report** on collective progress toward the Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (to be discussed at CBD COP17) show limited progress toward agreed targets. They also demonstrate that Parties equipped with strong tools and infrastructure for sharing information and lessons learned are better able to adjust national plans and improve delivery of global goals.

A key message from the draft KMGBF progress report is that limiting reporting to national governments — excluding non government actors — weakens ownership, accountability, and effective implementation. IUCN stresses the importance of updating NBSAPs through inclusive, participatory processes that engage the whole of society. Parties also need mechanisms to ensure national reports reflect contributions from non State actors, supported by improved interoperability between national and subnational biodiversity information systems.

Indigenous Peoples and local communities must be central in these efforts. They are among the world's most effective stewards of biodiversity, and their knowledge, leadership, and rights are essential to achieving the objectives of all three Rio Conventions. Their full participation must be ensured in planning, monitoring, and review processes.

Through its standards and knowledge products — including the [IUCN Global Standard for Nature based Solutions](#), the [IUCN Red List of Threatened Species](#), the [Red List of Ecosystems](#), [Key Biodiversity Areas](#), and other science based tools — IUCN provides Parties with practical means to assess, plan, implement, monitor, and report progress across all three Rio Conventions.

For more information about IUCN's engagement at the Rio Convention COPs, please contact centreforpolicyandlaw@iucn.org