



IUCN
WORLD
CONSERVATION
CONGRESS
Marseille



THE MARSEILLE MANIFESTO

10 September 2021

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The IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille comes to a close in the midst of a global pandemic, and escalating climate and biodiversity emergencies. This exacerbates inequalities within and among countries and reinforces global divides.

The climate and biodiversity emergencies are not distinct, but two aspects of one crisis. Unsustainable human activity continues to compound the situation, and threatens not only our own survival but the foundation of life on Earth. We cannot separate ourselves from nature: we are part of nature, and depend upon it for our lives and livelihoods. Our response to these emergencies must be mutually reinforcing. For example, measures designed to address climate change must not lead to further biodiversity loss.

Humanity has reached a tipping point. Our window of opportunity to respond to these interlinked emergencies and share planetary resources equitably is narrowing quickly. Our existing systems do not work. Economic “success” can no longer come at nature’s expense. We urgently need systemic reform.

Yet there is reason to be optimistic. We are perfectly capable of making transformative change and doing it swiftly. During the global pandemic, we have changed our behaviour to protect our health, and the health of those around us. Fundamental change is again needed if we are to build societies that value, protect, and invest in nature. To invest in nature is to invest in our collective future.

The IUCN Congress recognises that we have *one nature, one future* and so commits to:

Respecting and harnessing the perspectives and agency of all citizens – especially youth¹, the leaders of the future, who constitute almost a fifth of the global population. The rights of indigenous peoples and local communities underpin their central role in conservation, as leaders and custodians of biodiversity. The agency of those who are marginalised, whether economically, socially or politically, including women must be enhanced. IUCN recognises that it is these groups who are most affected by the climate and nature emergencies, and that they also offer innovative solutions to them. IUCN, its Members and partners commit to supporting and strengthening their agency, promoting diversity and inclusivity in leadership and throughout our work. Around the world, those working to defend the environment are under attack. This includes communities and frontline workers like rangers. IUCN commits to work to protect environmental defenders. Further, IUCN urges its Members and partners to use the IUCN Natural Resource Governance Framework to strengthen inclusivity and equity more generally.

Pursuing collaboration and partnerships. To find common ground and encourage action, we must embrace diversity of opinion, framed by scientific evidence, and promote teaching and learning. This will allow us to work across disciplines and sectors, and adopt solutions that draw on the widest variety of experience, knowledge and traditions. It is time to broaden our perspectives. More cooperation, especially between countries, is needed to reinforce international and regional efforts. IUCN, as a convener and inclusive, democratic forum, stands ready to facilitate and build partnerships that enhance the capacity of our Members: State, civil society, and Indigenous Peoples’ Organisation (IPOs).

Local action as a powerful tool for change, which complements action at other scales. The Congress commits to fostering a new approach with a meaningful role for all, from grassroots organisations to governments and communities to corporations. Our new approach must recognise everyone’s responsibility, and guide them to act for

¹ 15-24 years’ old

nature and our future. IUCN encourages all citizens to do so wherever they are; be it in cities, farms, at sea, in workplaces, or schools.

IUCN Members and partners renew their commitment to work together to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the biodiversity-climate crisis, reaffirming that people and nature are at the heart of our pledges. These crises are destroying the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people.

Countering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic:

The pandemic makes clear our unsustainable relationship with nature. It amplifies the social, economic, and health inequities within and between societies, and between the Global North and the Global South. The links between people and nature mean that these issues can be resolved together. We need to conserve nature to maintain our own resilience. We must ensure more inclusive and just decision-making as we rebuild from the pandemic. This is an opportunity to recognise the rights and agency of indigenous people and local communities more fully, as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Congress encourages governments, civil society, and the private sector to restore a positive relationship with nature and people by:

Promoting investments in nature. Governments are now committed to stimulate economies. This generates a unique opportunity to create sustainable jobs, accelerate the just transition to a low carbon and sustainable blue economy, respect and engage communities, especially indigenous people and youth, end harmful investments and redirect them towards those that contribute to nature. IUCN urges governments to implement a “nature-based recovery”. To do so will provide public investments, and encourage the private sector and civil society to invest. At least 10% of the total global recovery investments should protect and restore nature, and the remainder must do no additional harm.

Transitioning to a nature-positive economy. More than half of the global economy is linked to nature. While using nature-based solutions to help countries recover is strongly supported, we must look to the long-term. IUCN urges governments to reform financial, economic, and regulatory systems and end subsidies that harm nature. Adopting a circular economy approach could help preserve critically-important global commons such as the ocean. Furthermore, IUCN implores corporations and other investors to screen new investments for their impacts and dependencies on nature in a scientifically rigorous manner and take appropriate action.

Prioritising investments in nature that advance social justice and inclusion. New investments, though well-intentioned, can exacerbate existing inequalities if not designed carefully. Particular efforts must be made to include marginalised groups, and importantly, realise the agency of women, youth, local communities and indigenous peoples in investments in nature-based solutions. IUCN encourages governments and the private sector to adopt the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions, and ensure that investments benefit nature, are sustainable and contribute to social and economic equity. The United Nations is requested to show leadership by recognising and implementing the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Halting biodiversity loss by committing to a transformative, effective, and ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework

The next months will largely determine how countries address the biodiversity emergency. Decisive and collaborative action is imperative at the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP-15 and beyond. If we are to secure the future of life on the planet, we must halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and achieve ecosystem recovery and restoration by 2050.

The IUCN Congress urges governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Indigenous Peoples’ Organisations and Community-Based Organisations to take actions that drastically reduce the causes of biodiversity loss, and drive transformative changes across all sectors. This includes a shift in cultural relationships with nature to ensure its conservation, restoration, and sustainable use.

Understanding transformed ecosystems better, including agricultural landscapes and coasts, is critical for biodiversity. It also benefits people, climate and nature. Biodiversity and conservation matter everywhere. We must address the factors that diminish life, and the one health we share with animals and the environment. Pollutants, including those from agriculture and industry, destroy the biodiversity of soils, water, land and the ocean. These must be phased out. To sustain a healthy ocean we must end plastic pollution and overfishing. The Congress urges citizens to pursue nature conservation in their neighbourhoods and communities, develop ecological and regenerative approaches that promote biodiversity, and restore habitats to boost and sustain productivity.

Committing to an ambitious, interconnected and effective site-based conservation network that represents all areas of importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services is crucial. Such a network must recognise the roles and custodianship of indigenous peoples and local communities. Their diverse use of biodiversity can be compatible with effective conservation. Marine and terrestrial protected areas must be no-go zones for damaging industrial activities. The Congress implores governments to set ambitious protected area and other effective area-based conservation measure (OECM) targets by calling for at least 30% of the planet to be protected by 2030. These targets must be based upon the latest science, and reinforce rights – including Free Prior Informed Consent – as set out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. IUCN must boost the agency of indigenous peoples and local communities, and reduce biodiversity loss at scale. Governments are encouraged to use IUCN’s protected area management categories, and the many tools developed by IUCN to support such efforts. Application of the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas Standard, for example, will ensure that areas are effectively managed and equitably governed to deliver long-term biodiversity outcomes. Intact land and seascapes need to be fully protected from industrial-scale activities, including deep seabed mining. In this respect, ambitious quantitative targets are insufficient unless there is commitment to effective implementation and meaningful funding for conservation.

Mobilising partnerships is vital in order to accelerate restoration on land and in the ocean, and to achieving greater impact by reaching larger audiences. The Congress calls on governments, NGOs and other actors to ensure that restoration benefits nature, aligns with science, recognises and respects traditional and other knowledge systems, acknowledges the diverse uses of ecosystems and builds alliances between the biodiversity and climate change communities.

Fostering effective conservation of species, ecosystems and genetic diversity is essential for the recovery of biodiversity, including soil and agro-ecological diversity. IUCN and its Members and partners, commit to work to conserve genetic diversity, avoid species extinction, and promote the sustained recovery of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems on land and in our seas. It will do this by helping governments and other stakeholders to use the available conservation tools and resources. The Congress urges governments to accommodate biodiversity in all policies, programmes, and strategies and in particular, those to tackle the climate crisis. Congress also calls for action to improve our understanding of the links between human, animal and environmental health. Action is needed to improve the sustainable use of natural resources, reduce deforestation, promote sustainable food production and account for and eliminate the negative environmental impacts of international trade.

Confronting the risks and impacts of the climate emergency

The average global temperature has increased by approximately 1°C above pre-industrial levels. The events of 2021 - catastrophic floods, heatwaves, and wildfires - remove any doubt that greenhouse gas emissions from human activity are destabilising established ways of life in developing and rich economies alike. Indigenous peoples as well as coastal, island, and dryland communities are hit hardest by the impacts of the climate emergency, although they contributed the least. Importantly, they possess traditional knowledge that contributes to effective solutions. Some scientists worry that we are now close to an irreversible tipping point. The Congress urges ambitious and effective action, including at UNFCCC COP 26 and beyond. Governments must act to limit greenhouse gas emissions, strengthen adaptation, and drive a just transition to a low carbon economy.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions urgently across all sectors worldwide to limit the temperature rise to less than 1.5°C and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 is imperative. Global warming threatens our global goals, and

those economies that have benefited most from fossil fuels must now lead the way in reducing emissions. The Congress calls for the decarbonisation of the global economy, and decoupling economic growth from the use of fossil fuels. Governments should rapidly phase out all support for carbon-intensive energy generation and halt international investments in fossil fuels while ensuring that this transition is equitable.

The Congress urges governments and the private sector to ensure that those who are most vulnerable are not abandoned in this transition, and do not bear the costs of it. New green technologies must not become drivers of the loss of land rights. Equally, any negative effects on ecosystems that might arise from the response to climate change, including from emerging technologies and industries, must be avoided.

The Congress implores governments to implement *nature-based solutions* while significantly reducing fossil-fuel emissions. Nature-based solutions could provide around 30% of the mitigation required by 2030 while helping to protect vulnerable communities and countries from the impacts of climate change. These solutions also contribute to conserving biodiversity and supporting jobs, livelihoods and health. The ocean sequesters carbon but is increasingly damaged by warming, deoxygenation, and acidification from greenhouse gas pollution. IUCN encourages governments to integrate nature-based solutions as part of their commitments under the Paris Agreement, and to apply the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions during implementation. IUCN also urges all non-state actors to include nature-based solutions in their commitments under the UNFCCC's Race to Zero and Race to Resilience initiatives.

Optimising the global response requires action from all, and for all to be able to act: IUCN, through its Members and partners, commits to supporting new coalitions to effectively and responsibly implement nature-based solutions that address the climate-biodiversity crisis. Furthermore, acknowledging initiatives such as the Glasgow Finance Alliance for Net-Zero, the Congress stresses the fundamental importance of mobilising climate-related finance from all sources. These must be sufficient to achieve the ambition of low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development as reflected in the Paris Agreement.

THE IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS'S COMMITMENT TO ACTION

At the World Conservation Congress, hosted by France in Marseille, September 2021, IUCN Members and partners commit to deliver on the following actions as a substantive and significant contribution to the post-pandemic recovery and the biodiversity-climate crisis. These commitments will be documented and monitored through the IUCN Contributions to Nature Platform. The Union will report back on progress achieved at the next World Conservation Congress.

- Under the leadership of Western Indian Ocean states, IUCN and partners commit to support the establishment and implementation of the Great Blue Wall Initiative, the first regionally connected network to develop a regenerative blue economy to the benefit of 70 million people, while conserving and restoring marine and coastal biodiversity
- IUCN commits to support and prioritise the implementation of the first IUCN Global Indigenous Agenda for the Governance of Indigenous Lands, Territories, Waters, Coastal Seas and Natural Resources, a self-determined strategy developed and owned by Indigenous Peoples, as a contribution to the work of the Union and global conservation. Its implementation shall be guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- The UNFCCC High Level Champions for Climate Action and IUCN are establishing a partnership to enhance and accelerate global and regional net-zero initiatives by non-State actors that systematically integrates nature and nature-based solutions and deliver on the Race to Zero, Race to Resilience, mobilising climate finance while supporting the post 2020 biodiversity agenda.
- Over 30 subnational governments, cities, partner organisations and IUCN agreed to expand universal access to high-quality green spaces and to enhance urban biodiversity in 100 cities, representing around 100 million citizens by 2025, and assessing their impact according to the Urban Biodiversity Index.

- Five multi-national companies – Kering, Holcim, L’Occitane, LVMH, Pernod Ricard – with a combined annual turnover of USD 92 billion and close to 300,000 employees committed to restore and enhance biodiversity through nature-positive corporate strategies and actions. These commitments will be integrated into their operational landscapes and supply chains, measured and reported on.
- Greece committed to reduce overfishing by establishing no-takes zones in 10% of their territorial waters by 2030 and to reduce marine plastic pollution by 60%.
- El Salvador, Belize, Pakistan, Chile and Region Sud, France committed to restore a collective total of 5.5 million hectares, increasing the total Bonn Challenge commitments to over 215 million hectares, while the Government of Germany has allocated €20 million to IUCN to establish a Forest Landscape Restoration technical expert hub.
- The International Hydropower Association has committed to a clear no-go commitment to operations within World Heritage sites that is binding on all its members. They will also continue to work with IUCN to explore how this commitment can be expanded to cover other categories of protected areas.
- 15 new country commitments to the IUCN Green List Standard, totalling more than 30 million hectares of protected and conserved areas, bringing the number of participating ‘Green List’ countries to more than 70 worldwide.
- IUCN Members, supported by the IUCN National and Regional Committees, commit to deliver contributions to the Nature 2030 IUCN Programme and global goals for nature, and document those through the "Contributions for Nature Platform".

At World Conservation Congress, the host country France committed to:

- Achieve 30% of protected areas nationally by 2022 and 5% of its Mediterranean maritime area under strong protection by 2027, 25 times more than the current area
- Help advance the international agenda for the protection of the oceans by organising, in conjunction with the UN, a One Ocean Summit
- Accelerate the fight against imported deforestation and protect forests with the Alliance for the Conservation of Rainforests.
- Promote a treaty on plastic pollution.
- Include financial risks linked to the loss of biodiversity in economic and financial analyses and strengthen investments favourable to biodiversity, in particular, nature-based solutions to support the ecological transition in agriculture, forests, soils and carbon sinks.