



The UN & You

BY TERESA KOTTURAN SCN – NOVEMBER 2022

CONFERENCE

UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15)

7 - 19 December 2022
Montreal, Canada



Photo by UNEP/Stephanie Foote

UN Convention on Biological Diversity

The [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) resulted from the [1992 Rio Earth Summit](#). At Rio, 150 government leaders signed the convention, and today there are 196 member parties. The main objectives of the convention are: conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. “The CBD is dedicated to promoting sustainable development and the convention recognizes that biological diversity is about more than plants, animals and microorganisms and their ecosystems – it is about people and our need for food security, medicines, fresh air and water, shelter, and a clean and healthy environment in which to live.” Nature is critical to meeting the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services had warned the global community in 2019 that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history—the rate of species extinctions is accelerating. According to their report, around one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction, many within decades, more than ever before history. The current biodiversity crisis is driven by human activities—the present global

extinction is called the sixth mass extinction or Anthropocene extinction. Biodiversity loss is one of the planetary crises we are facing, and the global response is insufficient—we need transformative changes.

Nature loss has far-reaching consequences. Damaged ecosystems exacerbate climate change by releasing carbon instead of storing it. Rampant development is putting animals and humans in closer contact increasing the risk of diseases like COVID-19 to spread. According to a recent UN Environment Program report, 60 percent of human infections are estimated to have an animal origin.

The [2022 UN Biodiversity Conference](#) (COP15), taking place in Montreal from Dec. 7–19, is all about protecting nature and halting biodiversity loss around the world. Parties to the convention will need to adopt a bold new agreement for nature, to take concrete steps to shift our unsustainable consumption and production patterns to ones that allow both people and planet to thrive.

The conference in Montreal is part two of COP15. Part one took place virtually in Kunming, China in October 2021, which saw the adoption of the Kunming Declaration “[Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future For all Life On Earth](#)”. The parties to the convention committed to negotiate an effective post-2020

global biodiversity framework that can bend the curve of biodiversity loss.

The conference will also look at the implementation of the protocols of the Convention on Biological Diversity that deal with the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of nature, and the safe transport, handling and labelling of Living Modified Organisms.

What needs to happen at COP15:

- Adoption of an equitable and comprehensive framework matched by the resources needed for implementation
- Clear targets to address overexploitation, pollution, fragmentation and unsustainable agricultural practices
- A plan that safeguards the right of indigenous peoples and recognizes their contributions as stewards of nature
- Finance for biodiversity and alignment of financial flows with nature to drive finances toward sustainable investments and away from environmentally harmful ones.

Inger Andersen, executive director of UNEP, had asked the parties in Kunming to back every commitment with policies, legislation and delivery through a whole-of-government approach. National policies are needed to tackle drivers of biodiversity loss. She asked them to close the financing gaps by reducing, repurposing and redirecting harmful use of financial resources; reform economies to make them circular to reduce the extraction of natural resources. She called

on the world leaders to have political will, and resources and capacities to deliver, to be brave to address vested interests and other barriers to action. According to her, “delivering on biodiversity, we deliver on climate, on pollution, on the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, and on food and energy system transformation. So let us ensure that this COP will be remembered as the moment we finally set our societies and economies on the path to rebuilding the biodiversity upon which we all rely.”

Will the parties to convention—ministers and heads of government and state—have ambition and commitment to deliver? Will they hear the “cry of the Earth and the cry of people?” There is time to engage your governments for an ambitious agreement for nature, for the protection of lands and oceans, for equitable sharing of benefits and to restore our dying ecosystems. **Humanity is using the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to maintain our way of life, and ecosystems cannot keep up.**

The opening session will take place at 10 a.m. (Montreal) on Dec. 7, 2022. Darlene O’Leary, NGO Liaison for the Sisters of St. Martha (Antigonish) will be participating in the COP as part of the Columban delegation. She will share updates, which will be circulated among the SC Federation NGO Liaisons.

An interesting resource from The Nature Conservancy: [COP15: Your Guide to the UN 2022 Biodiversity Conference](#)

THE POST 2020
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Inger Andersen
Executive Director,
United Nations
Environment Programme

An ambitious and measurable post-2020 biodiversity framework which drives our actions to end biodiversity loss, is an important insurance policy to secure the future for people and planet. We at UNEP are unwavering in our commitment to support member states and the CBD to arrive at a Framework that alters our relationship with the natural world for the better.