



Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment

Source to sea, Biodiversity, Climate, Resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction

In the context of the [2023 UN Water Conference](#), this Information Brief highlights some of IUCN’s contributions to water-related issues, focusing on the specific themes that will be treated under the interactive dialogue on [Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment](#).

What is the UN Water Conference interactive dialogue on “Water for Climate, Resilience and Environment” about?

The interactive dialogue will explore the current status, challenges and opportunities for progress, including transformative solutions, related to the interlinkages between water, climate resilience and the environment. The dialogue will review the importance of better valuing and protecting ecosystems and nature, as well as the role of integrated water resource management and Nature-based Solutions to advance related outcomes, such as climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity protection. Finally, the dialogue will consider the means to ensure that water is a lever for transformative and sustainable development in the face of climate change.

How does IUCN contribute to this topic through its [Nature 2030 Programme](#)?

IUCN is committed to act so that [by 2030, freshwater systems support and sustain biodiversity and human needs](#). To achieve this ambition, IUCN ensures that knowledge is available to mobilize decision makers on the implementation of protection, sustainable water management, and wetland and river restoration. The Union also helps protect, restore, and promote

healthy freshwater systems and habitats, targeting better connectivity, water quality, pollution control and mitigation, and system integrity.

Furthermore, the Union champions policy, regulatory frameworks, and action for freshwater systems that integrate across transnational, national, and local scales. Such frameworks are forward looking, targeting climate change resilience and long-term water security for both people and nature.

How does IUCN contribute through its Resolutions?

Over the years, IUCN Members have adopted numerous [Resolutions and Recommendations](#) related to water, water governance and cooperation. Several Resolutions¹ adopted at the last World Conservation Congress in Marseille in 2021 address the interlinkages between water, climate, resilience, and environment. [Resolution 7.008](#) aims to protect rivers and their associated ecosystems as corridors in a changing climate, while [Resolution 7.012](#) pursues aquatic biodiversity conservation in freshwater systems, as they currently experience high levels of synergistic human pressures. [Resolution 7.016](#) recognizes the richness of spring ecosystems and calls on States to adopt measures to protect them, and [Resolution 7.017](#) seeks to protect the natural flows of water for the conservation of wetlands, recognizing the important role of these ecosystems in climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction. Finally, [Resolution 7.060](#) encourages governments, international organizations, the private sector, and other institutions to embrace a consistent and

¹ IUCN Resolutions constitute the body of its general policy. They are adopted at the World Conservation Congress every four years through an open consultative process of IUCN’s 1,400+ Members (including governments, NGOs, and Indigenous peoples’ organisations), and thereby reflect and promote the priorities of the global conservation community.



coherent approach to Nature-based Solutions,² as presented by the [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#).

What is IUCN doing concretely on this matter?

IUCN is implementing numerous activities and projects that aim to address water-related issues as they address climate change and resilience issues. For instance, IUCN ended in 2022 [the Mekong WET project](#), which aimed to establish an effective and replicable framework for delivery of ecosystem-based adaptation and mitigation benefits from Ramsar sites (wetland sites considered of international importance under the [Ramsar Convention on Wetlands](#)) in the region.

In Southern Africa, IUCN is working in the transboundary basins of the Buzi, Pungwe and Save rivers shared between Mozambique and Zimbabwe to deploy early warning systems for cyclones, which are becoming more intense and regular due to climate change.

IUCN's work and interventions also directly aim to reduce risk to vulnerable groups and strengthen their

inclusion in decision-making. For example, in Lake Titicaca, IUCN implemented a [leadership process](#) aimed to empower local women in the sustainability and protection of the lake. Further, the IUCN-led [Valuing Water Youth Journey](#) seeks to promote meaningful youth engagement in water and climate-related decision-making.

Finally, IUCN is currently developing guidelines for assessing the effectiveness of protection of wetland systems, including their environmental flows, as well as raising awareness among policymakers and the general public about the diverse values that rivers provide and the need to keep some river as free-flowing.

For more information, please contact:

IUCN International Policy Centre
InternationalPolicyCentre@iucn.org

IUCN World Headquarters
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 999 0000
www.iucn.org

² IUCN defines Nature-based Solutions as “actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits.” [Resolution 6.069 Defining Nature-based Solutions](#) (2016).