





## IUCN, A KEY PARTNER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, the world's largest and most diverse environmental network, is an intergovernmental organisation uniquely composed of government and civil society Members, and a global network of experts organised under six Commissions.

Harnessing the experience, resources and reach of its Members and experts, IUCN is the leading provider of conservation data, assessments and analysis, and an implementing agency of conservation projects around the world. IUCN champions nature's role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also serves as an official agency monitoring progress towards biodiversity-related targets.

The 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and the 17 SDGs that underpin it, recognise that the natural world and its life-giving services must be urgently protected if we are to fulfil the needs of nine billion people by 2050.

The SDGs are premised on the notion that we cannot solve problems in isolation. For example, producing more food for the growing human population (SDG 2) will require freshwater supplies for adequate irrigation (SDG 6). The availability of freshwater will depend on healthy ecosystems (SDGs 14 and 15), which are increasingly impacted by climate change (SDG 13). Protecting these ecosystems will require strong institutions, governance and cooperation from the local to the international level (SDGs 16 and 17).





SDG 1

# NO POVERTY

**Conserving nature helps maintain the natural resources that sustain the world's economies. This is particularly important for sectors directly dependent on these resources, such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries.**

IUCN works to conserve nature and maintain its ability to reduce poverty and contribute to sustainable development. IUCN also aims to ensure that conservation and development efforts take into account the rights and access to natural resources of local communities and indigenous peoples.

## IUCN:

- prevents potential economic losses and improves resilience to climate change and to other environmental disasters by sustainably managing nature – contributing 'nature-based solutions' to global challenges;
- facilitates initiatives which enable communities, smallholder farmers and indigenous peoples' groups to gain control over land and natural resources, participate in supply chains and improve their incomes.
- provides technical guidance on water, land and ecosystem management to businesses, governments and communities to ensure socially inclusive and climate-resilient economic growth;



**Healthy ecosystems contribute to food security by making food systems more productive and stable in the long term. Healthy ecosystems also strengthen the resilience and adaptability of farming systems to climate change, extreme weather, flooding and other disasters.**

IUCN works to improve agricultural productivity and to raise incomes of small-scale food producers by restoring degraded ecosystems and strengthening ecosystem governance. It also works to ensure that environmental changes do not threaten the availability of food year-round, or undermine the nutritional needs of poor and vulnerable communities – particularly children, women and older people.

**IUCN:**

- conserves and restores the health of soil and land, ensuring an optimal and sustained supply of key ecosystem goods and services that underpin the productivity of food systems;
- develops policies and best practice for the agricultural and fisheries sectors to sustainably manage and conserve natural resources, maximising their productive potential;
- encourages public and private investment in the sustainable management of ecosystems to secure stable food production and protection against disasters;
- maintains the genetic diversity of important food crops by developing conservation strategies to safeguard wild cereals, fruit-bearing plants and other wild crop relative species.



SDG 3

## GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**Malnutrition affects the development of children and is an underlying contributing factor in about 45% of all child deaths globally. For many rural and coastal populations, wild, local species can provide the essential nutrients needed for good maternal and child health, reducing the morbidity and mortality of young mothers and children. Nature also provides ingredients used for both modern and traditional medicines. Green spaces in urban areas improve mental and physical health and well-being.**

IUCN works to conserve local species, ecosystems, protected areas and urban green spaces for the nutrients, medicinal products, clean air and other services they provide.

### IUCN:

- demonstrates the health benefits of locally-harvested species used by indigenous and local communities to promote their conservation;
- develops guidelines and trains local authorities on designing and managing protected and urban natural areas, with the aim of improving people's physical and mental well-being.



SDG 5

# GENDER EQUALITY

**Gender equality and women's empowerment are matters of fundamental human rights and social justice. Women play vital roles as natural resource managers, knowledge holders and caregivers, yet remain under-represented in decision-making processes. Full and equitable participation of women in social and economic life is essential to nature conservation and sustainable development.**

IUCN provides technical and capacity-building support to government and non-government stakeholders to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment are integral to environmental and development initiatives.

## IUCN:

- identifies opportunities for increased participation of women in environmental and development policies and initiatives;
- develops methodologies and guidelines on ways to include gender equality and women's empowerment in national and international biodiversity conservation strategies.
- coordinates projects which help countries implement their commitments to gender equality as part of national programmes and international agreements;



# CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

**Nature provides the infrastructure needed to supply clean water for human use in daily subsistence, agriculture and energy generation. At the same time, secure water supplies are needed to maintain healthy water-related ecosystems. Pollution, deforestation and climate change are having devastating impacts on these ecosystems. This leads to water scarcity, which may contribute to conflicts within and between countries.**

IUCN protects and restores ecosystems and ensures effective management of water resources to secure clean water for its myriad of uses by society.

## IUCN:

- provides scientific evidence of the value of wetlands, floodplains and other water-related ecosystems for power generation, agriculture and other uses, to encourage investment in their conservation;
- provides data and analysis of aquatic ecosystems and guidelines on the conservation and sustainable use of river basins to governments and local communities;
- provides legal and policy advice on the inclusive and efficient allocation, management and conservation of water resources to governments and local communities;
- provides technical guidance on effective water management to governments and local communities in transboundary areas;
- advises the private sector on ways to improve the management of water resources across business supply chains and products.



# REDUCED INEQUALITIES

**Unequal allocation, management and access to natural resources create economic inequalities between individuals and groups, within and among countries.**

IUCN works with indigenous peoples, local communities, government institutions and civil society organisations to redress such inequalities. It works to ensure that rights to natural resources are respected and that the benefits resulting from the use of those resources are shared in an inclusive and equitable manner.

## IUCN:

- coordinates projects which promote locally-managed resources and locally-controlled production for daily sustenance and income generation;
- provides technical, policy and legal advice to indigenous and peasant communities, artisanal farmers and fishers to help increase their participation in decision-making processes and secure their rights and access to natural resources;
- advises governments on policies and legal approaches to ensure inclusive and equitable sharing of benefits derived from natural resources;
- advises the private sector on ways to improve the management of natural resources and ensure inclusive and equitable sharing of their benefits.





# SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**Natural areas in and around cities provide important benefits and services to society, including climate regulation, disaster risk reduction, and food and water supply. They also support the mental and physical health of urban and rural inhabitants. As cities continue to expand into natural areas, there is an urgent need to secure the continued delivery of these benefits through appropriate urban planning and management approaches.**

IUCN works with governments, the private sector and the scientific community to develop and implement cost-effective 'nature-based solutions' to urban challenges – actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore ecosystems.

## IUCN:

- provides technical advice to cities and subnational governments on integrating nature-based solutions in urban and regional planning, and improving air and water quality in cities;
- develops knowledge and guidelines for urban and regional planners on ways of including biodiversity and ecosystems in cities;
- designs and coordinates landscape restoration programmes to conserve and manage ecosystems in and around cities, and increase local resilience to disasters;
- assesses the state of the planet's natural heritage, and advises business, governments and local authorities on appropriate measures to value and conserve it.



# CLIMATE ACTION

**Ecosystems play a critical role in regulating the world's climate through their function as 'natural carbon sinks'. Healthy ecosystems also help vulnerable communities adapt to the adverse effects of climate change and offer protection against climate-related disasters.**

IUCN assesses the risks that species and ecosystems face from climate change, and develops conservation responses to these. It also advances practical 'nature-based solutions' to tackling climate change based on the effective conservation, management and restoration of the world's ecosystems. IUCN's work in this area aims to benefit humans and ecosystems alike, taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable, including women and indigenous peoples.

## IUCN:

- conducts research and analysis of the impacts of climate change on vulnerable species and ecosystems, and assesses the potential of nature-based solutions to address climate change;
- implements and supports projects, including global initiatives such as the Bonn Challenge, to conserve, restore and sustainably manage natural ecosystems as a way to effectively mitigate and adapt to climate change, while providing a range of other co-benefits;
- advises governments, businesses and other stakeholders, including in the UNFCCC negotiations, to ensure that biodiversity and nature-based solutions are integrated into national, regional and global climate policies and actions.



# LIFE BELOW WATER

**Over three billion people depend on coastal and marine biodiversity for food and income. However, coastal, marine and polar ecosystems are under threat from over-exploitation of resources, habitat destruction, pollution and climate change. This has negative impacts on species, ecosystems and ecological processes, reducing fish stocks and increasing extreme weather events and plastic contamination.**

IUCN works to ensure that the biodiversity and productivity of coastal, marine and polar ecosystems are restored and maintained, and that their resources are used sustainably and equitably.

## IUCN:

- identifies effective responses to issues affecting coastal, marine and polar environments, such as ocean warming, acidification, plastic pollution, and invasive species;
- assesses risk to marine species (The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™) and ecosystems (Red List of Ecosystems) to guide conservation policy and action, use of marine resources, and investment priorities;
- provides guidelines and training on the effective management of marine protected areas;
- advises governments on sustainable trade in marine species to help end poaching and trafficking;
- identifies marine sites of global significance for the persistence of biodiversity (Key Biodiversity Areas) to guide the establishment of marine protected areas and other safeguards – protected area coverage of marine Key Biodiversity Areas is an official indicator for SDG Target 14.5;
- develops best practice for the private sector – mainly fishing, tourism and extractives – to reduce their impacts on the seas;
- advises the United Nations and other bodies on conservation and sustainable use in areas beyond national jurisdiction.



# LIFE ON LAND

**Sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems helps mitigate climate change and supports the livelihoods, health and well-being of millions of people around the world. Terrestrial biodiversity faces a number of threats, however, including over-exploitation, invasive species and climate change. As a result, species extinctions are currently occurring one thousand times faster than the natural rate. About 30% of land is degraded, leading to declines in agricultural productivity and outputs.**

IUCN works to conserve terrestrial ecosystems by assessing species' extinction risk, improving land use management and restoring degraded landscapes.

## IUCN:

- assesses risk to terrestrial species (The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™) and ecosystems (Red List of Ecosystems) to guide conservation policy and action, land use, and investment priorities – the Red List Index is the official indicator for SDG Target 15.5;
- provides guidelines and training on the effective management of protected areas;
- identifies sites of global significance for the persistence of biodiversity (Key Biodiversity Areas) to guide the establishment of protected areas and other safeguards – protected area coverage of Key Biodiversity Areas is an official indicator for SDG Targets 15.1 and 15.4;
- develops tools and builds capacity to combat desertification, land degradation and drought, prevent deforestation and restore forests;
- develops best practice to help extractive, agricultural and other companies reduce their impacts on the environment;
- develops methods to detect, manage and respond to invasive alien species, and provides the official indicator for SDG Target 15.8;
- advises governments on sustainable trade in wildlife to help end poaching and trafficking.



# PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

**Effective and just institutions are necessary for tackling environmental challenges, including the degradation of ecosystems and climate change. Governance frameworks impact the distribution of the costs and benefits related to the use of natural resources. This includes costs associated with environmental degradation and climate change, and benefits stemming from biodiversity conservation.**

IUCN works to improve governance systems and foster international cooperation on efforts to conserve nature. It aims to strengthen the rule of law at all levels, especially in relation to the use of natural resources, crimes committed against nature and community access to ecosystem benefits.

## IUCN:

- identifies gaps in national environmental laws and policies, and in international treaties to improve the conservation of natural resources and ensure equitable access to their benefits;
- provides technical advice and trains policy makers and local communities on ways to incorporate rights-based approaches in the conservation and use of natural resources;
- examines global approaches to combatting wildlife trafficking and illegal logging and fishing as forms of organised crime;
- manages the environmental law portal ECOLEX to ensure public access to environmental laws.



# PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

**Strong partnerships between governments, donors, the private sector and local communities are necessary to conserve ecosystems and the services and benefits they provide to support humans and wildlife.**

IUCN is a global union composed of both governments and civil society organisations. Working with governments, NGOs, scientists, businesses, local communities and indigenous peoples' organisations, IUCN generates knowledge and informs policy, as well as institutional and financial measures, to ensure nature conservation and the sustainable and equitable use of natural resources.

## IUCN:

- produces, analyses and disseminates conservation knowledge and tools, drawing on the Union's global network of experts and organisations from the public, civil society and private sectors;
- recommends key policy outcomes for international agreements to ensure adequate biodiversity conservation and equitable use of natural resources;
- advises governments on the development and implementation of environmental legal reforms;
- provides platforms to mobilise and channel financial resources towards implementing and scaling up environmental action;
- develops and provides advice on industry standards to improve the environmental, social and governance performance of businesses;
- convenes independent scientific and technical advisory panels to advise governments and corporations on controversial conservation and development issues;
- develops tools for businesses to minimise their negative impacts on the environment and maintain ecosystem benefits;
- provides data and methodologies to track progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.



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IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, is an intergovernmental organisation composed of over 200 states and government agencies, more than 1,000 civil society organisations, and six Commissions comprised of over 10,000 experts dedicated to species survival, environmental law, protected areas, social and economic policy, ecosystem management, and education and communication. This unique, diverse and powerful Union provides public, private and non-governmental organisations with the knowledge and tools that enable human progress, economic development and nature conservation to take place together. IUCN's Secretariat, Commissions and Members make direct and substantial contributions towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

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