



High-Level Political Forum 2024

United Nations HQ, 8 – 18 July 2024, New York, United States of America

Key messages

- HLPF 2024 needs to be a moment to follow up on the commitment from the 2023 SDG Summit to ensure the lasting protection of the planet and its natural resources. The declaration should make a strong case for **urgent action on the triple planetary crisis through a rights-based approach**.
- **The declaration should focus on synergies between the SDGs** and prioritize policies and investments that have multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals. **While some of the interlinkages between SDGs are synergistic, others involve significant trade-offs.** For example, a business-as-usual approach to addressing SDG 2 on zero hunger could contribute to competition over land, soil degradation and water pollution.
- **SDG 2 will not be achieved without a transformation of our global food system towards more sustainable forms of consumption and production.** Investing in sustainable agricultural practices and approaches that emphasize soil and land health could transform the sector into an instrument of progress towards several SDGs including those that relate to poverty, food security and climate change.
- **Nature-based Solutions (NbS) should be recognized as playing** a critical and supportive role to address today's environmental crisis, while simultaneously addressing other societal challenges.
- It is essential to include a commitment to secure a surge in SDG financing and an enabling global environment for developing countries. **IUCN proposes language urging countries to scale up and repurpose finance for biodiversity and climate, redirecting harmful subsidies, as well as making trade and the circular economy work against pollution and for nature.**

The triple planetary crisis has halted, slowed or reversed the progress of sustainable development. IUCN has drawn particular attention to the interlinked crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution in recent years. Unless addressed in a comprehensive, synergetic, ambitious and timely manner, these twin interlinked long-term crises threaten to undermine the achievement of the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda. Climate change is estimated to push up to 130 million people into extreme poverty by 2030 (World Bank, 2020), and adversely impact food production and security (IPCC, 2023). Furthermore, it is estimated that 1.2 billion people, or 30% of the population across tropical countries, are highly dependent on nature for their basic needs (Fedele, 2021). With 80 per cent of the world's poorest people living in rural areas and being especially dependent on ecosystems, the growing loss and degradation of nature witnessed today can negatively impact their livelihoods, wellbeing and food security.

Business-as-usual approaches to our food and water systems are failing to protect both the environment, as well as many communities around the world. Agriculture and food systems are the leading drivers globally of land and sea-use change, water resource depletion and pollution, and stress on biodiversity.

Likewise, at the macro level, World Bank modelling has shown that in a scenario where just a few ecosystem services collapse, low-income countries could forego 10 per cent in real GDP annually by 2030, compared with global losses of 2.3 per cent (World Bank, 2023). Hence, the impacts of both the climate change and biodiversity loss crises, taken individually and in combination with each other, can severely hamper the delivery of SDGs 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 15 directly, with indirect impacts on all others. Addressing these crises requires urgent action to fully deliver the targets agreed to under SDGs 13, 14 and 15 and fully implementing the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Achieving existing commitments under the Rio Conventions is critical for ensuring sustainable development and a healthy and prosperous future for current and future generations. For example, on climate change, in tandem with deep emission reductions in other sectors, investing in Nature-based Solutions that conserve, restore and sustainably manage ecosystems

can remove around 10 GtCO_{2e} per year while also providing a range of adaptation and other economic, social and environmental benefits (Girardin et al., 2021; UNEP and IUCN, 2021). Successfully addressing the triple planetary crisis will require strong, effective and inclusive institutions (SDG 16), as well as sufficient means of implementation and suitable partnerships (SDG 17) across all levels.

In the lead-up to the SDG summit in September 2023, IUCN published the report "[Seven years to save nature and people: a proposed set of policies and actions for the SDG Summit](#)". **Building on the key messages in this report, IUCN would like to present the following concrete proposals for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration text:**

The chapeau should emphasize the need to prioritize policies and investments that have multiplier effects across the Sustainable Development Goals. This includes a direct mention to actions geared to safeguard areas of importance to biodiversity, covering at least 30% of global terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems; protect, restore, and promote healthy freshwater systems and habitats; implement Nature-based Solutions for climate change mitigation, resilience and disaster risk reduction; ensure gender equality as a human right, and ensuring the full recognition of indigenous peoples' rights.

On SDG 2, ambitious and forward-looking language should be added on transforming food systems, implementing Nature-based Solutions in agriculture, and investing in soil and land health to support multifunctional, nature-positive and sustainable agrifood landscapes and systems. Specifically, we would suggest language that urges countries to prioritize soil and landscape biodiversity for food and nature, mainstream sustainable agricultural approaches and practices, develop payment schemes for ecosystem services to incentivize sustainable farming, promote healthy and sustainable diets, reduce and repurpose environmentally harmful subsidies, and build consensus to intensify dialogue between the agriculture and conservation communities.

On SDG 13, it is essential that the Ministerial Declaration recognizes, that conserving and restoring ecosystems and **NbS play a critical and supportive role in addressing biodiversity loss, achieving mitigation and just transition objectives, nurturing resilience, safeguarding livelihoods, and empowering communities amidst the challenges posed by climate change while simultaneously addressing other societal challenges.** In this regard, the IUCN Global

Standard for Nature-based Solutions is a robust, voluntary and facilitatory tool that can play a role in the design and execution of NbS at different scales and in all sectors. This will require finance to be mobilized at scale and the facilitation of synergies between climate and nature finance, especially for IPLCs who are essential stewards of nature.

Moreover, achieving SDG 13 will also require immediate action to conserve our Global Ocean. Equitable, fair, environmentally-oriented and just ocean governance and effective management is essential to tackle the triple planetary crisis. An example of concrete action is the swift ratification of the BBNJ agreement by all parties.

With regards to SDG 16, IUCN reaffirms its call to strengthen the environmental rule of law to combat and eliminate illegal wildlife trade and environmental crime overall. IUCN urges states to adopt and uphold laws aimed at the protection of environmental defenders and whistleblowers. Furthermore, IUCN underscores the importance of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, in line with Resolution A/RES/76/300.

Lastly, concerning SDG 17, it is key to secure a surge in SDG financing and an enabling global environment for the means of implementation in developing countries. **IUCN proposed language urging countries to scale up and re-purpose finance for biodiversity and climate, to redirect harmful subsidies, and to make trade and the circular economy work for nature and against pollution.**

IUCN also deems it fundamental to equip institutions with the necessary tools for sustainable and inclusive transformation. As a science-based organization we are committed to informing policy-making to achieve the SDGs through our data, standards, knowledge and derived metrics (e.g. IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and of Ecosystems, the IUCN Global Standard for NbS, the Species Threat Abatement and Restoration metric, the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, and the IUCN Global Ecosystem Typology). Their use can not only support the monitoring and review process of goals and targets but also support the enhancement of synergies across several multilateral environmental agreements.

For more information, please contact:

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