# [***Applying the lessons of climate change to halting biodiversity loss***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65XY-R171-JDG9-Y2G9-00000-00&context=1516831)

Impact News Service

July 15, 2022 Friday

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**Length:** 1158 words

**Body**

Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature has issued the following press release:

The world faces increasingly urgent twin crises. Climate change and nature ***loss*** threaten irreversible changes to the global environment, changes that will profoundly impact the wellbeing of billions of people around the world.

These two crises are fundamentally linked. Climate change is a key driver of ***biodiversity*** ***loss***. It increases the severity and frequency of hazards such as droughts and floods, changes the ranges in which species can thrive, alters food webs, and affects times and patterns of reproduction. Degradation of natural ecosystems – particularly deforestation – is both releasing enormous volumes of greenhouse gases, and reducing the ability of natural systems to continue to absorb carbon from the atmosphere. On the other hand, we know how much nature can contribute to addressing the greatest threats the world faces including climate change, water security, food security, health, and disaster risk management.

This is why it is significant – and vitally important – that IUCN Members at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille voted to create a Climate Crisis Commission (CCC). This Commission, the Congress ruled, is charged with working with regional and national IUCN committees and civil society to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, taking into account actions and initiatives developed through the UN climate change process. I am honoured to have been appointed as Interim Chair of the CCC.featured image

Invertebrate life including corals, tunicates and sponges, covers mangrove roots; Tunicate Cove, Belizenaturepl.com / Tim Laman / WWF

I am a former Minister of the Environment of Peru, from 2011 to 2016. In this capacity I served as President of the Twentieth Conference of the Parties (COP20) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2014. Since 2016, I have led WWF ’ s Global Climate and Energy Practice, working on climate change in the context of WWF ’ s mission to conserve nature.

The Paris Agreement demonstrated it is possible to forge a global consensus around a shared environmental goal. Despite the urgency and importance of addressing ***biodiversity*** ***loss***, this has not yet happened for nature.

In seeking to address climate change, the Paris Agreement has demonstrated that it is possible to forge a collective global consensus around a shared environmental goal, namely holding the global temperature rise to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. For all the contentions and disputes, there is now also a set of processes and mechanisms to work towards that goal.

Despite the urgency and importance of addressing ***biodiversity*** ***loss***, a collective global consensus has not yet been forged for nature. I am writing in July 2022; it is vital that ongoing negotiations around a global ***biodiversity*** framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are swiftly and positively concluded. But such a framework is only the beginning. A key lesson from Paris is that the international goal must be firmly embedded in national agendas, with national policies and regulations aligned with the global objective.featured image

Slash and burn agriculture has caused a 97% reduction of dry baobab forest across MadagascarJeff Wilson / Silverback / Netflix

We have also learnt the critical importance of connecting climate change with the economy, to ensure we understand both the economic risks and costs of inaction, and the opportunities presented by the crisis to create jobs, growth and profitable investments. The global economy is, as Professor Dasgupta observed in his landmark report for the UK government, embedded in nature, and the economic dependencies and impacts on ***biodiversity*** are far-reaching and profound.

Non-state actors are key to addressing the environmental crisis. I was one of the early champions of formally engaging sub-national governments, civil society, business, academia and cities in the UNFCCC process. Building consultative, collaborative relationships with these actors has proved critical in translating the goals and aspirations of an international agreement into action and implementation.

Ensuring that policy and decision-making is connected with science will be central to the Climate Crisis Commission ’ s work.

And, of course, the entire agenda must be firmly rooted in science. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has been fundamental to building consensus about the extent of the danger posed by a changing climate and the range of solutions to both cut emissions and build resilience. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on ***Biodiversity*** and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) is playing a comparable role on nature and ***biodiversity*** ***loss***. The report from the IPBES-IPCC co-sponsored workshop ***Biodiversity*** and Climate Change is a good first step in recognising the climate and nature links. Ensuring that policy and decision-making are connected with science will be central to our work.featured image

Seven year old Sumatran orangutanHuw Cordey / Silverback / Netflix

Critically, our responses to climate change and nature ***loss*** need to converge and be brought into alignment. Despite the links between them, the two issues have to date been addressed in silos, ever since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit created the UNFCCC and the CBD. There are enormous opportunities for common and integrated solutions to the two crises. Nature-based Solutions, for example, can harness and leverage natural systems to mitigate climate change, support the livelihoods of those people who rely upon them, as well as increase the resilience of those systems to protect and enhance ***biodiversity***.

The integration of climate, ***biodiversity***, climate resilient development and the Sustainable Development Goals must be embedded in national and international decision-making, whether in policy, business or investment. As we have learned with climate change, seemingly unrelated policies and economic activities can create impacts and dependencies. The imperative of protecting nature and the climate must be taken into account in the decisions our leaders make.

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We need a whole-of-society effort, with the backing of all IUCN Members. The changes we need to see in policy, business and the behaviour of individuals will only take place if they have the widest possible support. This particularly includes the most vulnerable people and those, such as indigenous peoples, who often have the most intimate and co-dependent relationships with the natural world.

If we can make progress in these efforts, I believe that the CCC can make a valuable contribution to addressing these twin crises for people, nature and climate.

**Classification**

**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newswire

**Journal Code:** INS

**Subject:** ***BIODIVERSITY*** (90%); ***BIODIVERSITY*** CONSERVATION (90%); CLIMATE ACTION (90%); CLIMATE CHANGE (90%); CONSERVATION (90%); ENVIRONMENTAL & WILDLIFE ORGANIZATIONS (90%); FOOD SECURITY (90%); NEGATIVE NEWS (90%); AGREEMENTS (89%); CLIMATE CHANGE REGULATION & POLICY (89%); CLIMATOLOGY (89%); ENVIRONMENTAL TREATIES & AGREEMENTS (89%); UNITED NATIONS (89%); DROUGHT (78%); EMISSIONS (78%); GLOBAL WARMING (78%); GREENHOUSE GASES (78%); NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS (78%); SALTWATER ECOSYSTEMS (78%); SOCIETY, SOCIAL ASSISTANCE & LIFESTYLE (78%); POLLUTION MONITORING, PREVENTION & REMEDIATION (77%); ENVIRONMENTAL ACCIDENTS & DISASTERS (76%); TREATIES & AGREEMENTS (74%); DEFORESTATION (73%); ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENTS (73%); INTERIM MANAGEMENT (73%); PRESS RELEASES (73%); WATER CRISES & SHORTAGES (73%); UNITED NATIONS INSTITUTIONS (72%); ACCIDENTS & DISASTERS (71%); APPOINTMENTS (69%); RISK MANAGEMENT (69%); GOVERNMENT ADVISORS & MINISTERS (67%)

**Industry:** EMISSIONS (78%); GLOBAL WARMING (78%); DEFORESTATION (73%); RISK MANAGEMENT (69%)

**Geographic:** FRANCE (79%); SWITZERLAND (74%)

**Load-Date:** July 16, 2022

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