# [***We must unite our efforts to fight climate change and biodiversity loss***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69S0-WD71-JDG9-Y2XG-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

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

Climate change and ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** are two of the most important challenges and risks for human societies. But as the chairs of IUCN's seven expert Commissions write, the window of opportunity to address them is closing rapidly.

The upcoming 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Dubai comes at a critical time. Against a rapidly closing window of opportunity, we must overcome two of the most significant challenges for human societies: climate change and ***biodiversity*** ***loss***. They are inseparable, interdependent, and mutually reinforcing. Our current approaches fall short of what scientific evidence indicates is needed to address them.

This task is core to the mission of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN): to influence, encourage and assist societies worldwide to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.

Solving the linked challenges of climate change and ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** demands bold and transformative efforts. Responsibility falls on us all.

As the seven elected Commission Chairs of the IUCN, we represent over 15,000 scientists, scholars, policy makers, economists, lawyers, and other experts who work on issues related to this mission. For the first time, we are writing collectively because COP28 represents not just an opportunity to assess our progress, but to issue a profound call to action. We must adopt a holistic approach that recognizes the interdependence of the climate and ***biodiversity*** crises. (Read IUCN's position paper for COP28 here.)

Solving these linked challenges demands bold and transformative efforts firmly anchored in science and the principles of justice and equity. At the core of the necessary whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is the recognition that the fate of our planet rests not only in the hands of governments and institutions but also in the actions of the private sector, individuals, and communities. Responsibility falls on us all.

Four key elements should guide debates at COP28 and beyond over how best to design and deploy innovative solutions to ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** and climate change.Integration

These challenges require coherent, consistent, and integrated efforts on the part of governments at all levels, sectors, and systems; multilateral and bilateral institutions; communities; businesses; scientists and others to limit global warming to maximum 1.5oC, conserve and sustainably use ***biodiversity***, and restore degraded ecosystems. Only by considering climate and ***biodiversity*** as parts of the same complex, systemic challenge— which also includes the actions, motivations, and aspirations of people—can we develop effective solutions that maximize benefits while minimizing risks.Ecosystem Integrity

We must maintain, enhance, and restore ecosystem integrity. Sustaining healthy ecosystems is essential to halting ***biodiversity*** decline and species extinctions and to maintaining ecosystem services that underpin human well-being. Ambitious land- and ocean-based actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems have co-benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation, and ***biodiversity*** conservation objectives. Such efforts can help to contain temperature rise to 1.5oC, provided that such actions complement—and are not in lieu of—ambitious reductions of emissions from fossil fuels, industrial processes, and land-use change.Transformation

Addressing the ***biodiversity*** and climate crises will require systemic changes in the way we live, changes that can only be achieved through rapid and far-reaching actions across all sectors of a type, scale, and speed never before attempted. All actors, private and public, must begin the process of planning for transformative actions to protect ***biodiversity***, rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change, and achieve sustainable development. Those actions must put society on the pathway to a positive vision of good quality of life in harmony with nature. Governments have a particular responsibility to adopt and enforce laws governing such transformations in ways that are equitable, just, and effective.Urgency

The window of opportunity to address climate change and ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** is still open, but it is closing rapidly. Achieving the goal of protecting 30 percent of the Earth ’ s terrestrial and marine areas by 2030—as adopted by the parties to the Global ***Biodiversity*** Convention in late 2022—will require significant expansion of protected areas in only seven years and will be almost impossible without greater collaboration across the international agreements on ***biodiversity***, climate change, and desertification.

There are synergies across these agreements, as well as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, that could facilitate simultaneously halting global ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** and mitigating and adapting to climate change. Cross-cutting issues, intersectoral policies, and regulatory frameworks are areas where strong synergies could contribute to transformative societal change.

We cannot solve one problem by creating others.

While delegates at COP28 should recognize these synergies, they must also be alert to possible conflicts between ***biodiversity*** conservation and climate change mitigation. In particular, they must ensure that the critical green energy transition does not come at the expense of ***biodiversity***. For example, building solar facilities in fragile ecosystems or sensitive wildlife habitats or in forested areas could be disastrous for many ecosystems and species. Wind farms, hydropower dams, deep-sea mining for minerals to be used in batteries, and other energy infrastructure pose similar challenges.

We cannot solve one problem by creating others. But careful siting of energy projects can greatly reduce the impact on ***biodiversity*** and still contribute to the green energy transition.

Previous policies have largely tackled the problems of climate change and ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** independently. Policies that address synergies between mitigating ***biodiversity*** ***loss*** and climate change, while also considering their societal impacts, offer the opportunity to maximize co-benefits and help meet development aspirations for all.

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