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Astrid Schomaker
Executive Secretary
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity
World Trade Centre
413 St Jacques Street, Suite 800
Montréal H2Y 1N9, Canada

9 May 2025

Notification No. 2025-005 – Submission of views and information on biodiversity and climate change

Dear Ms Schomaker,

In response to the above-mentioned notification regarding the call for submission of views and information on biodiversity and climate change, I am pleased to submit the enclosed comments on behalf of IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonia Peña Moreno".

Sonia Peña Moreno
Director, Centre for Policy and Law



IUCN submission of views on enhanced policy coherence across the Rio Conventions

CBD Notification 2025-005

In response to the invitation extended in CBD [Decision 16/22](#), paragraph 19, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) welcomes the opportunity to submit views on options for enhancing policy coherence to address the interlinked challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, including through a potential joint work programme of the Rio Conventions¹.

The need for enhanced policy coherence is widely accepted today

The importance of addressing the interlinked global challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation in an integrated manner, including through greater policy coherence, is widely accepted today. This has been extensively recognized under the CBD and in the other Rio Conventions, as well as in several other multilateral environmental agreements, international frameworks, and political declarations and statements.

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for example, have repeatedly underlined the need to address the interlinked climate change and biodiversity loss crises, as well as the importance of nature and ecosystems for climate action (Decision 1/[CP.27](#), paragraph 1 and Decision 1/[CMA.5](#), preamble). The Paris Agreement itself categorically notes the “importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems ... and the protection of biodiversity ... when taking action to address climate change” ([preamble](#)). Additionally, the outcome of the first global stocktake of the Paris Agreement, concluded at COP28 in December 2023, explicitly encouraged enhanced cooperation on the implementation of environmental agreements to support the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (Decision 1/[CMA.5](#), paragraph 163).

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has similarly recognized the need for policies, actions and comprehensive approaches to tackle desertification, land degradation and drought, alongside climate change and biodiversity loss, in an integrated manner. [Article 8](#) of the Convention, in fact, explicitly calls for the coordination of its activities with those under other relevant international agreements, particularly the UNFCCC and CBD, to maximize benefits and avoid duplication. Notably, it also calls upon Parties to encourage joint programmes that contribute to the Conventions’ objectives. Parties to the UNCCD have in other subsequent decisions, most recently at COP16 in December 2024, stressed the “need for policies, actions and comprehensive approaches to tackle these issues in an effective, integrated and coherent way” (UNCCD Decision [8/COP.16](#), preamble).

¹ In line with IUCN Resolution [WCC-2020-Res-114](#) Integrated solutions to the climate change and biodiversity crises.

Likewise, several decisions adopted under the CBD have called for enhanced collaboration with the UNFCCC and the UNCCD (e.g. Decisions III/21, IV/15, V/21, V/23, VI/20, VII/15, VIII/16, VIII/30, IX/16, X/20, X/33). These recognize the advantages of implementing activities and institutional arrangements in a mutually supportive manner, as well as the interconnected nature of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation. Subsequent decisions have further underscored the importance of integrated approaches to implementation, such as aligning national policies and planning, and ecosystem-based approaches, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Decisions XIII/4, XIII/5, 14/5). Most recently, Decision 16/22 recognizes “that biodiversity loss, climate change, ... desertification, land degradation, ...are interdependent and need to be addressed urgently and in a coherent and balanced manner”, and emphasizes, once again, the need for enhanced international cooperation and synergies.

The importance of realizing greater synergies, including at the policy level, has also been emphasised by key intergovernmental science-policy processes. The landmark joint report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on Biodiversity and Climate Change acknowledged that neither of these challenges can be successfully resolved unless they are tackled together. The report also stressed that policies addressing synergies in addressing biodiversity loss and climate change can maximize co-benefits and meet development aspirations ([IPBES-IPCC 2021](#)). The latest IPBES Nexus Assessment ([SPM, 2024](#)) also underscores the urgent need for integrated solutions and advocates for a paradigm shift, moving from isolated policy-making to integrated strategies that recognize the interdependence of biodiversity, climate, water, food and health systems.

The growing political consensus on the need for enhancing synergies and policy coherence is also clearly evident in the [Joint Statement on Climate, Nature and People](#) issued during COP28, which affirmed that “there is no path to fully achieve the near- and long-term goals of the Paris Agreement or the 2030 goals and targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework without urgently addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation together in a coherent, synergetic and holistic manner, in accordance with the best available science”.

The importance of enhancing synergies and policy coherence across environmental agreements has also been clearly recognized within the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the world's highest-level decision-making body for matters related to the environment. This is seen, for instance, both in the ministerial declaration of UNEA 5.2 *Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals* ([UNEP/EA.5/HLS.1](#)) as well as in [Resolution 6/4](#) on *Promoting synergies, cooperation or collaboration for national implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and other relevant environmental instruments*.

Finally, the United Nations General Assembly, on its part, has noted the importance of improving coherence in the implementation of the Rio Conventions, and the ongoing work of the Joint Liaison Group of the three agreements ([A/RES/77/167](#)).

Cumulatively, these decisions provide a solid foundation and a clear mandate for advancing a more unified and coherent approach to addressing these interlinked environmental crises, including through potential joint programmes.

Various options for enhancing policy coherence have already been identified

Over the past two decades, the decisions above, in addition to a range of joint workshops and expert groups, have identified various measures to support synergies and enhance policy coherence across the Rio Conventions, both at the global and at the national level². A selection of these options, and how they can be further strengthened, is highlighted below.

- **Alignment between key national policy and planning instruments.** Ensuring adequate coordination in the design and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) under the CBD, Land Degradation Neutrality targets (LDN) of the UNCCD, and the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) of the UNFCCC, provide a clear opportunity to align goals and policy planning at the national level. The activities falling downstream of these instruments could be further integrated into a practical framework for national coordination that links the national-level objectives and the main actions for each Convention³.
- **Common elements in monitoring and reporting.** Without compromising the mandated reporting requirements under each of the Conventions, the development and use of commonly agreed terms, definitions, databases and templates can contribute to streamlining of reporting, which in many cases is duplicative and burdensome at the national level, especially for developing countries. This could be supported by the facilitation of exchange of information and experience, including improving inter-accessibility and inter-operability of available web-based data, as well as cooperation in the development of guidance, methodologies and tools.
- **Collaboration among national focal points.** Regular meetings and communication among the Conventions' national focal points, and of their respective teams, can play a key role in ensuring alignment between national policy and planning instruments and harmonized monitoring and reporting, which would support a more coherent implementation of the Conventions, especially on topics where they substantively overlap. Consistent collaboration with other key stakeholders, such as Indigenous peoples and local communities, in commonly organized platforms, can also support greater policy coherence and enhanced implementation of national commitments.
- **Collaboration between the secretariats and/or the Subsidiary Bodies of the Rio Conventions.** The Joint Liaison Group (JLG), an informal structure comprising the heads of secretariats of the three Rio Conventions, has been endorsed by Parties to all three Rio Conventions (CBD Decision [VI/20](#), UNCCD decision [12/COP.6](#), UNFCCC decision [13/CP.8](#)). By systematically exchanging information and identifying common thematic areas for collaboration and institutional cooperation, the JLG can advise and offer support to Parties in their policy development and implementation at the national level in a manner that respects the distinct mandate of each Convention. This institutional mechanism can be further strengthened by including the chairs of the

² See for example [FCCC/SBSTA/2004/INF.19 - UNEP/CBD/WG-RI/1/7/Add.1](#). OPTIONS FOR ENHANCED COOPERATION AMONG THE THREE RIO CONVENTIONS. Paper prepared by the secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the Joint Liaison Group.

[UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/16](#) - Indicative List of Activities by Parties to Promote Synergies Among the Rio Conventions

³ Such an approach was proposed in the [Midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework Independent Assessment Report](#). October 2023.

subsidiary bodies of the three Conventions, which would also provide greater authority to the body and ensure that Parties remain directly involved in its work. The secretariats have also taken action to support joint capacity building activities, including training as well as and local, national and regional workshops to promote synergies in implementation. Further cooperation could target communication, education and public awareness programmes. The [Rio Conventions Joint Capacity-building Programme](#) is the most recent example of such an effort.

- **Building regular collaboration among the existing science-policy processes of the Rio Conventions.** Securing common understandings of science are foundational to advancing ambition and action at the policy level. Using the experience of the joint IPBES-IPCC report, other opportunities can be explored to enhance closer collaboration among the intergovernmental science-policy bodies of the Rio Conventions, respectively IPBES, IPCC and the UNCCD's Science-Policy Interface (SPI), including though joint assessments that can inform common topics that cut across all three policy processes. The need for such collaboration has already been noted in the CBD (Decision 16/22, paragraph 2) and in the 2025-2026 biennial work programme of the UNCCD's SPI (Decision [21/COP.16](#), Annex, Table 2).
- **Advancing Nature-based Solutions (NbS) as a common implementation framework.** NbS and ecosystem-based approaches have been recognized, and their use encouraged, in all three Conventions (UNCCD Decisions [8/COP.15](#) and [8/COP.16](#); Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 8 and 11, and CBD Decision 16/22; UNFCCC Decision 1/CP.27). The [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) provides a concrete operational framework to advance the high-integrity implementation of these important solutions on the ground and can support all the three Rio Conventions. These efforts can be further supported by initiatives such as *Enhancing Nature-based Solutions for Accelerated Climate Transformation* ([ENACT](#))—launched by Egypt and Germany at UNFCCC COP27⁴.

A joint work programme can provide a concrete vehicle for enabling practical progress

While there have been numerous consultations over the years inviting views and activities for enhancing cooperation among the Rio Conventions, a joint CBD-UNCCD-UNFCCC programme has not yet been established. A joint work programme (JWP) across the three Rio Conventions, mandated by the Parties to each Convention, could be a powerful, innovative and concrete institutional mechanism to take forward and oversee the implementation of the sorts of measures identified above to help achieve greater policy coherence in a systematic and considered manner. Indeed, there are already precedents for such JWPs, for example, the JWP between the CBD and UNCCD on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands (mandated by CBD Decision [V/23](#), paragraph 8).

In considering the establishment of a JWP across the Rio Conventions, it will be important to clearly determine its objective, structure and modalities, as not all identified areas of

⁴ The [ENACT 2024 Nature-based Solutions Discussion Paper: Strategic action across the Rio Conventions](#) was launched at CBD COP16 and iteratively distributed at UNFCCC COP29 and UNCCD COP16, to support policy makers providing evidence-based policy actions on NbS to enhance cohesion across the Rio Convention.

collaboration may require such a formally established arrangement. One option would be for the JWP to systematically map all the areas of substantive overlap across the three Conventions and identify priority areas of intervention where common guidance and mechanisms for joint monitoring, reporting and investments could be built, so as to reduce redundancies and maximise the benefits for climate change, biodiversity and land health. The JWP could also focus on specific scientific and technical themes shared by the three Rio Conventions and seek to address any gaps in knowledge and capacity. For instance, an area that could benefit from such cross-Convention collaboration is on how ecological integrity and the preservation of natural GHG reservoirs (including in the context of REDD+) can be ensured, and how the potential perverse outcomes of actions that fulfil the goals of one Convention but undermine the goals of another, can be better addressed.⁵ A key role of the JWP could also be to help track progress and share best practices on joint implementation, which can help build synergies, especially at the national level.

Regardless of the exact approach and focus of the JWP, in order to be effective, and genuinely facilitate coordination across the Conventions, and at the national level, its mandate and modalities must be developed and adopted with broad buy-in from Parties to all three Conventions. Such commitment would be best secured through a commonly agreed decision taken by the COP of each Convention. An explicit commitment to linking the implementation of the Rio Conventions, to be carried out through such a decision, could also significantly speed up national coordination processes.

IUCN welcomes the organization of a technical information exchange in 2025 to further explore options to enhance cooperation and policy coherence to support the implementation of the Conventions, as set out in CBD Decision 16/22, paragraph 19. We look forward to engaging and contributing to the planned discussions on this topic at UNFCCC SB62 session in Bonn in June. We would also be pleased to offer the *IUCN World Conservation Congress* to be held in Abu Dhabi in October as a venue to further advance this discussion across a wider audience. Likewise, UNFCCC COP30 in Brazil – the birthplace of the Rio Conventions – provides an invaluable opportunity for Parties to consider this issue, and to lay the necessary groundwork ahead of 2026, when the COPs of all the Rio Conventions will convene and a common and coordinated decision can potentially be formally taken.

⁵ For example, see: "[Connecting the Dots 2: Calling for a work programme to establish priorities for synergistic climate and biodiversity action](#)", *IUCN Technical Brief*, 29 November 2024.