

# Protected and Conserved Areas Joint Statement on Climate Change and Biodiversity Crises

UNFCCC COP26, Glasgow, United Kingdom, November 2021  
CBD COP15, Kunming, April 2022

## Preamble

1. We, a group of Protected and Conserved Areas management authorities, agencies and associated bodies, offer this Joint Statement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP26 and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15.
2. We invite other Protected and Conserved Areas and associated bodies to join us in our commitments and actions to address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss at this vital time.
3. We also invite Governments, investors, and supporters from across the world to work with and support the global Protected and Conserved Areas family to unlock their full capability in addressing the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.
4. **Protected and Conserved Areas** refer to all forms of land, water and marine based conservation measures typically known as national parks, marine parks, nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, Indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCA), other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM), working landscapes and seascapes, and more.

## Context

5. As a family of Protected and Conserved Areas we recognise that no single site or organisation can address the global crisis of climate change nor the exacerbating impact of climate change on biodiversity loss.
6. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the world, on people's lives and health. It has also reconnected individuals and communities with nature; highlighting the intrinsic link between human health and nature and the benefits of healthy ecosystems for society's wellbeing.
7. Recent assessments by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the International Resource Panel (IRP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have all documented that rapid and far-reaching transformations across all sectors of society and the economy are necessary to tackle climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss.
8. The [G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' Meeting Communiqué](#) of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 also recognised that the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are global challenges requiring urgent and ambitious action at all levels; and it committed to urgent action to conserve, protect and restore natural ecosystems including soils, grasslands, savannah, drylands, wetlands, coral reefs, rivers, lakes, coastal dunes, peatlands, seagrass beds, mangroves and saltmarshes.
9. The [IUCN World Conservation Congress 2021](#) implored governments to set ambitious protected area and other effective area-based conservation measure (OECM) targets by calling for at least 30 percent of the planet to be protected by 2030; and it noted that these targets need to be based upon the latest science and reinforce rights – including free prior informed consent and with

appropriate recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands, territories and resources - as set out under the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

10. Over 70 countries are members of the [High Ambition Coalition \(HAC\) for Nature and People](#) that champions a global deal for nature and people with the central goal of protecting at least 30 percent of world's land and ocean by 2030 (30x30). The 30x30 target is a global target which aims to halt the accelerating loss of species, and protect vital ecosystems that are the source of our economic security.
11. We believe the global family of Protected and Conserved Areas is well placed to respond to the calls to action from the IPCC, IPBES, IRP and UNEP and to support the ambition of countries around the world, including the G7 and the members of the HAC, by taking rapid and far-reaching actions to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

### **The role of Protected and Conserved Areas**

12. Protected and Conserved Areas form a global family and have a unique and powerful place in our landscapes, seascapes, and societies across the planet. They are intimate spaces that are both culturally and personally significant for connecting with nature.
13. These global and yet local and personal aspects of our Protected and Conserved Areas allow us **to play a transformative role in addressing the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss**. Our family of Protected and Conserved Areas are the foundations that 30x30 will build on:
  - a. we can support the development of sustainable landscapes and seascapes,
  - b. we can be a focus for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and serve as examples for how degraded ecosystems can be restored to improve the resilience of natural systems,
  - c. we can support climate change mitigation by being global sinks and stores for carbon and by making our operations carbon neutral
  - d. we can play a vital role in adaptation to climate change, reducing inequality in access to the benefits of nature, enhancing recognition and respect of rights (especially those of Indigenous and local communities) and enhancing social, economic, and ecological resilience to climate change impacts,
  - e. we can contribute to disaster risk reduction through natural solutions,
  - f. we can support educational activities to inspire and inform the billions of visitors we receive each year, and
  - g. we can be among the first places to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

**In other words, we can be the first 30 percent that inspires and informs land and sea use choices across the remainder of the planet, and we can be the places where billions of people connect with nature and become inspired to play an active part in combatting the dual crises.**

14. Designation and protection are not enough to fully unlock these transformative and decisive capabilities in addressing the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. We need to see better conservation and restoration of nature, especially of carbon-rich ecosystems, within Protected and Conserved Areas and better connectivity of these spaces **to become the heart and anchors of nature recovery networks globally**.
15. Investment will be key, but funding alone is not the only answer either. Protected and Conserved Areas need to be **governed and managed effectively and equitably**, with sufficient resources, capacity, will and commitment to achieve their outcomes in the long-term; and they need to be

recognised as part of land-use and marine spatial planning and decision-making to play their role effectively.

16. Protected and Conserved Areas need to be brought into the centre of the work to resolve the climate change and biodiversity loss crises. Protected and Conserved Areas' **capabilities should be leveraged** to direct transformative levels of investment in nature-based solutions; and their connections and importance to cultures, communities and visitors should be harnessed to unlock and demonstrate the opportunities for vast behavioural change.
17. The guardians of these places – communities (including those with customary and legal rights), landowners, managers and front-line workers, like Rangers - need recognition, support and investment too. Around the world many of those who defend the environment are under attack. They too need protection. They play a vital role, and their continued efforts will be needed to unlock the potentially transformative benefits of Protected and Conserved Areas.
18. Our family of Protected and Conserved Areas is incredibly diverse – covering a vast array of climates, terrains, waters and ecosystems, and governed and managed by a diversity of actors in every country of the world – yet with a common purpose. The scale and nature of the role each Protected and Conserved Area will play in tackling the dual crises will vary, tuning their approach to be place-specific and to generate the greatest impact and return.

**Our global commitments to address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are to:**

- Champion a shared view of the role Protected and Conserved Areas can play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and beyond.
- Engage a powerful and diverse array of authorities, custodians and stewards across governments, the private sector, Indigenous Peoples, and local communities everywhere.
- Lead efforts to achieve net-zero operations and carbon-rich, biodiverse, and resilient landscapes in our respective geographies.
- Focus on aspects of our work that drive scale of impact and benefit, including:
  - Collaborate and exchange knowledge internationally,
  - Leverage and build our connections with billions of people (visitors and supporters) and communities to inspire behavioural change,
  - Support a global movement for the deployment and implementation of nature-based solutions at scale, and
  - Inspire and enable those working outside Protected and Conserved Areas by linking with initiatives outside our boundaries and sharing our experiences.

*List of founding signatories and logos*

(Alphabetical order.)