

International Day for Biological Diversity 2023

From Agreement to Action: the Central Role of Water to Build Back Biodiversity

22 May 2023, 9:00-10:00 EDT/15:00-16:00 CEST

virtual event

Background

All aspects of human wellbeing depend on water. In turn the planet's water cycle is dependent on and mediated by biodiversity and water-related ecosystems. Freshwater ecosystems cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface but harbour more than 10% of all species. The importance of biodiversity and water-related ecosystems is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goal 6 and in particular Target 6.6. However, biodiversity in freshwater ecosystems is in danger. Freshwater species are going extinct more rapidly than terrestrial or marine species. Habitat loss and pollution are a growing threat.

In December 2022, the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) was adopted with the aim of halting and reversing the loss of biodiversity, sustaining water-related ecosystem services, and supporting SDG 6 and the other Sustainable Development Goals. This global framework sets an ambitious plan, including 4 goals for 2050 and 23 targets for 2030, to implement broad based action to bring about a transformation in our societies' relationship with biodiversity. All the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework are linked to water and water-related ecosystems in multiple ways.

To mark the historic achievement of the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework at COP 15, the theme of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2023 is: **"From Agreement to Action: Build Back Biodiversity"**. This theme builds on the results of COP 15. Now that the world has the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (agreement), the focus must quickly shift to its implementation (action).

In March this year, the [UN 2023 Water Conference](#) in New York marked a once-in-a-generation event, as it was the first UN conference solely dedicated to water issues in the nearly 50 years since the first UN Water Conference. With almost 10,000 registered participants, the Conference aimed to be inclusive, cross-sectoral and action oriented. More than 700 commitments were submitted to the [Water Action Agenda](#) platform, which is a collection of new and ambitious commitments, initiatives and actions by governments, the UN system and stakeholders, in support of the lifeblood of our planet. The commitments cover a wide range of actions, from capacity building, to data and monitoring systems to improving the resilience of infrastructure. It is clear from the commitments that governments, the UN system, and stakeholders are paying attention to the cross-cutting and intersectoral nature of water, with roughly a quarter of commitments also relating to global targets on biodiversity.

In celebration of the International Day for Biological Diversity 2023, this event will illustrate the critical interlinkages between freshwater and biodiversity and showcase the outcomes of the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP 15) and UN 2023 Water Conference. The Water Action Agenda commitments on

biodiversity made by different stakeholders at the UN 2023 Water Conference will be discussed at the event.

Draft agenda

Moderated by Ms. Lis Mullin Bernhardt, Freshwater Unit, Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

- 9:00-9:05 **Welcoming remarks**
- Ms. Lis Mullin Bernhardt, Freshwater Unit, Marine and Freshwater Ecosystems, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- 9:05-9:15 **Opening remarks**
- Mr. Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs, Kingdom of The Netherlands, Sherpa for the UN 2023 Water Conference (5 min)
- Ms. Musonda Mumba, Executive Secretary, Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (5 min)
- 9:15-9:20 **Keynote: the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework**
- Mr. Wataru Suzuki, Principal Coordination Officer, Office of the Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity
- 9:20-9:55 **Panel Discussion: Water Action Agenda commitments on biodiversity (Q&A/discussion)**
- Dagmar Kaljariko, Policy Officer, European Commission – Directorate General for Environment: [Commitment on valuing water and restoring ecosystems](#)
 - Martín von Hildebrand, Founder, Gaia Amazonas Foundation: [Safeguarding ecosystem and sociocultural connectivity](#)
 - Ian Harrison, Freshwater Specialist, Conservation International: [Freshwater Challenge on restoration](#)
 - Priyanka Pandey, Communications Coordinator - Global Youth Biodiversity Network, Nepal chapter
- 9:55-10:00 **Closing remarks**
- Ms. Madhushree Chatterjee, Chief, Natural Resources and Interlinkages Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Registration link:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_k7Kmq1YHTbC34TON1ZYHwg