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CBD COP16 Brief:

Advances in Governance of
the Climate, Environment,
Health Nexus



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Hosted by Colombia (21 October - 2 November, 2024), the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP 16) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) delivered key items to advance biodiversity governance. This brief discusses progress at COP16 and new implementation opportunities across four areas closely aligned with the IAI Strategic Plan of work on: climate change, marine and coastal biodiversity, health and diverse knowledge.

Biodiversity and Climate Change

CBD COP16 agreed to **Decision 16/22 Biodiversity and Climate Change** after several years of deliberation. The decision strengthens coordination on several aspects of integrated governance and implementation. Parties agreed to work towards: collaboration of CBD and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) focal points; synergies between biodiversity and climate actions for the full carbon cycle and for adaptation; and environmental approaches to climate action and disaster risk reduction (e.g., nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches,



non-market-based approaches, Mother Earth-centric actions). Parties are encouraged to use the [Voluntary Guidelines for the Design and Effective Implementation of Ecosystem-based Approaches to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction](#).

To implement Decision 16/22 CBD parties and the CBD Secretariat will need support for:

- increasing awareness and understanding of the interlinkages between biodiversity and climate change, the impacts of climate change and climate action on biodiversity, and the role of biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services in climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- opportunities to address the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus;
- providing voluntary guidance and tools on nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation with fit-for-purpose social and environmental safeguards;
- developing guidelines and tools for carrying out conservation and restoration in a changing climate;
- parties, observers and other stakeholders to submit to the CBD Secretariat by May 2025 views on options for enhanced policy coherence and a potential joint work programme of the Rio conventions (CBD, UNFCCC, and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)) for consideration of the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio Conventions prior to COP17; and
- providing information to the CBD Secretariat on measures at sub-national, national, or regional levels to integrate biodiversity and climate change policy and practice.

Marine and Coastal Biodiversity

The Parties to COP16 achieved progress on national and international ocean management for marine protected areas through the adoption of **Decision 16/16 Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas** after 8 years of negotiation. The decision establishes a process and technical and scientific modalities for identifying and protecting critical and vulnerable areas within and beyond national jurisdiction. The protocol agreed under the CBD will inform and can be further used by ongoing discussions of the [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction](#) (BBNJ).



Decision 16/16 specifically requests information on the regional dimensions of marine and coastal ecosystems and their ecological and biological features and processes, on regional differences in data availability, as well as on related collaborations across regions.

To implement Decision 16/16 CBD parties and the CBD Secretariat will need support for:

- ongoing scientific and technical guidance on updated or new descriptions of ecologically or biologically significant marine areas;
- the ongoing CBD Informal Advisory Group on Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas;
- marine workshops of experts from Indigenous Peoples and local communities, and women and youth organizations;
- advancing synergies with other marine agreements; and
- collaborations with competent intergovernmental organizations, other relevant organizations, experts, and Indigenous Peoples and local communities, with their free, prior and informed consent.

Biodiversity and Health

CBD COP16 adopted **Decision 16/19 Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health** after first being called for by CBD parties in 2018 at COP14. The Plan reflects the political will to improve stewardship and understanding of our human relationship to nature and ecosystems. The Plan promotes policies and practices that enhance positive health outcomes as well as actions that recognize and minimize the negative impacts biodiversity loss and environmental degradation have on health. The Plan contains organizational tools to support parties to coordinate work and build capacity to link management of the environment to public health. The Plan includes nearly 100 actions that can be incorporated into the development and update of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs) in alignment with the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) targets.

The Plan aims to improve integrated policy coordination on biodiversity and health through

enhanced communication, dialogue and collaboration across government ministries and all governments and sectors. The CBD Secretariat will need ongoing support to do additional work, such as determining monitoring elements and indicators for the Global Action Plan.¹



To implement Decision 16/19 CBD, the Parties and the CBD Secretariat will need support for:

- capacity building on biodiversity and health interlinkages, such as those compiled and listed by the CBD Secretariat ([CBD/SBSTTA/26/8 Enclosure II page 22](#));
- convening regional workshops and facilitating dialogues on biodiversity and health;
- ensuring the full and effective participation of youth in decision-making and action on biodiversity and health;
- identifying and applying synergies with the work of the World Health Organization including resolutions related to One Health and to environmental determinants of health; and
- sharing measures, guidance and tools, examples, best practices and lessons learned in the implementation of the Global Action Plan.

¹ Willetts, L, van de Pas, R, Woolaston, K, Bennett, NJ, Vora, NM, Shah, D, Atkinson, A-R, Stewart-Ibarra, A. Implementing the Global Action Plan on Biodiversity and Health. The Lancet, 2024, 404(10470): 2402-05. doi: [10.1016/S0140-6736\(24\)02557-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(24)02557-1)

Biodiversity and Diverse Knowledge

A novel CBD COP15 decision in 2022, **Decision 15/22 Nature and Culture**, as well as a milestone report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on diverse values and valuation of nature² contributed to advancing this item at COP16. Following the committed work of many parties in recent years, the CBD parties adopted **Decision 16/14 Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature**. The decision calls for recognizing and integrating diverse knowledge and value systems, valuation methods and concepts and world views of nature in ecosystem assessments, policymaking and decision-making, planning, monitoring, reporting and review, including through the update and revision of NBSAPs and progress measurement, and the implementation of the Global Biodiversity Framework. The decision emphasizes including diverse intrinsic, relational and instrumental values of nature in decision-making and in developing and supporting participatory processes.

In addition, COP16 adopted two additional milestone outcomes advancing social aspects of biodiversity and global south perspectives.

The first is the landmark CBD **Decision 16/5 Full and Effective Participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities** that concretizes the working group on traditional knowledge and participation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities into a permanent CBD forum, known as the **Subsidiary Body on Article 8j** (SB 8j). This decision culminates two decades of

ongoing work and, in addition, structures a channel for future synergies with the **UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** (UNPFII). As result of this decision the CBD Secretariat will establish a global network of national focal points on Article 8(j), and also invites one representative from each of the seven sociocultural regions identified by UNPFII to participate in its work. SB 8j will proceed to formalize its operational structures in its initial meetings, with an overall aim to inform parties to the CBD and parties to the **Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing** and to the **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety** on matters related to Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The second milestone, led by Colombia and Brazil, is the adoption of CBD **Decision 16/6 Role of People of African Descent, Comprising Collectives Embodying Traditional Lifestyles**. The decision calls for support to protect the shared knowledge, innovations and practices of people of African descent, comprising collectives embodying traditional lifestyles and to summarize these contributions in CBD party national reports.

CBD parties and observers can support implementation of Decisions 16/14, 16/5, and 16/6 by incorporating them into NBSAPs.



What is Next in Global Biodiversity Governance?

Funding: The COP16 parties agreed to the Cali Fund, a global fund guiding large companies and other major entities reliant on and benefiting commercially from digital sequence information of genetic resources to contribute 1% of their profits (benefit-sharing) to the implementation of the CBD. Deliberations for an overall financial mechanism as well as on a monitoring framework for the GBF will resume at an extended COP16 special meeting in 2025.

Science: The CBD COP16 parties invited IPBES to complete future assessments on 1) pollution and biodiversity; 2) cities and biodiversity; 3) biodiversity and poverty; and 4) biodiversity and climate change.

All CBD COP16 outcome decisions can be found here.
<https://www.cbd.int/decisions/cop?m=cop-16>

² Synthesized in this journal article: Pascual, U, Balvanera, P, Anderson, CB et al. Diverse values of nature for sustainability. Nature, 2023, 620:813-23. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41586-023-06406-9>