



Briefing: The Convention on Biological Diversity COP16

July 2024

We face a global nature crisis that threatens not just wildlife, but our economy, health, and efforts to tackle the climate emergency. In October this year, delegates from almost 200 countries will meet for CBD COP16 – the biodiversity version of the climate COP – to discuss international efforts to reverse declines in nature. Parliamentarians can ensure the UK Government shows ambitious leadership at the conference to ensure targets and goals are met – both internationally and at home.

The United Nations [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) is a multilateral environmental agreement that promotes nature alongside human well-being. It aims to foster protection, conservation, and sustainable use of biological diversity across the world, with a 2050 vision of “living in harmony with nature.” The treaty was drafted in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, and is often referred to as the sister convention to the UN Climate Convention, the UNFCCC.

The CBD is increasingly important in a time when nature is in crisis, both globally and at home. An estimated [1 million species](#) face extinction globally, the populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians have [fallen by 69%](#) on average since 1970, and as of 2023, [45% of all known flowering plants](#) are thought to be at risk of extinction. The UK is one of the [most nature-depleted](#) countries.

In December 2022, the 195 countries that are party to the CBD agreed to a new plan to collectively tackle the nature crisis. Known as [The Biodiversity Plan](#) (previously referred to as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework), this landmark global action plan has an ambitious mission to halt and reverse the loss of nature by 2030. It sets a foundation for the transformative action required to truly tackle the biodiversity crisis and put nature on the path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet.

The next meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD is COP16, this October in Cali, Colombia. As the first meeting since the Biodiversity Plan was adopted, countries must show how they are putting their global promises into action. The UK must use its international influence to foster collective commitment to the urgent delivery of the global plan, while crucially being clear on its national plans to halt and reverse nature loss at home. A key chance for the UK to demonstrate genuine commitment to driving progress would be to put forward a bid to host the next COP – COP17 – in 2026.

The Biodiversity Plan

The [Biodiversity Plan](#) includes:

- **A guiding mission** to take urgent action to **halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030**
- **Four outcome-oriented goals to be achieved by 2050**, in order to 1) protect and restore nature, 2) sustainably use and manage nature, 3) share the benefits from nature fairly, and 4) invest and collaborate to find solutions
- **23 action-oriented targets to be undertaken by 2030**, which are grouped into three buckets: 1) reducing threats to biodiversity; 2) meeting people's needs through sustainable use and benefit sharing; 3) tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming. These include targets to:
 - Effectively **conserve and manage 30% of land and sea** (known as ‘30 by 30’)
 - **Halt human induced extinction**, and significantly reduce extinction risk
 - **Restore 30% of degraded ecosystems**
 - Ensure that **areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably**
 - **Reduce by half risk posed by pesticides** and highly hazardous chemicals
 - **Reduce government subsidies that are harmful** to nature by at least \$500 billion
 - **Increase biodiversity finance** by at least US\$ 200 billion

Key requirements for a successful COP16

COP16 will be held in **Cali, Colombia, from 21 October to 1 November 2024**. It will come at a moment when we have just five years left to meet major global commitments to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity, tackle climate change, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Over 20,000 delegates are expected to attend, ranging from government officials and parliamentarians to NGO organisations, private sector actors and more.

In order to make progress towards our global ambitions, at COP16 we need to see:

- **Commitment to urgent global implementation:** Very few countries have submitted their National Targets or revised national plans, which should set out how they will take action nationally to contribute to the global targets. At COP16, countries must stop arguing over semantics and demonstrate how they are going to take urgent action to halt biodiversity loss by the 2030 deadline.
- **Mobilisation of finance:** We cannot meet the goals of the Biodiversity Plan without sufficient finance, especially to support implementation by developing countries. Most donor countries are [lagging behind](#) on their commitments to deliver their fair share of the \$20 billion to developing countries by 2025 (Target 19). At COP16, we urgently need to see trust building between developed and developing countries, and progress towards the delivery of finance from all sources, including the redirection of harmful financial subsidies and incentives towards nature-positive activities and investments.
- **UK leadership:** The UK played a key role in getting the Biodiversity Plan over the line in December 2022 and has a strong legacy and active role in driving global ambition for nature's recovery. At COP16, we need to see the UK show dedication to implementation. Senior ministers should be in attendance and actively engaged, and the UK must meet the deadline to put forward its national targets and plan (see section below). An unmissable opportunity for the UK to show commitment to the delivery of the Biodiversity Plan would be to launch a bid to host COP17 in the UK. This would be an exciting chance to lead the world in fostering international collaboration to address the biggest challenges of our time.
- **Action to tackle the nature and climate crises in tandem:** The science is clear that biodiversity and climate are two sides of the same coin. In the lead up to COP16, there has been real momentum on creating tangible links between the climate/UNFCCC and biodiversity/CBD agendas on the road to UNFCCC COP30 next year in Brazil. At COP16, we need to see commitment from all countries to take action to tackle both the climate and nature crises in ways that are mutually reinforcing.

UK implementation

The Biodiversity Plan will only be meaningful if it is followed up by effective delivery in all countries. The last set of comparable targets, the 2011-2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, were [comprehensively missed](#) due to a failure to follow up with national-level implementation policies. Parties to COP15 are required to publish their National Targets, and National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) ahead of COP16, setting out how they will contribute to the achievement of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

The UK has yet to release its NBSAP. It is crucial that the new UK government prioritises finalising the NBSAP and submitting it by the deadline. The NBSAP should be ambitious, show clear collaboration between the four countries of the UK, and not just be a rehash of old promises but set out how legislative and financial measures will add up to a meaningful contribution to the global targets.

*Parliamentarians have a key role to play to ensure that the UK delivers against its global nature commitments. **If you are interested in being part of a UK parliament delegation to COP16, please contact Steven Kolenberg at skolenberg@internationalconservation.org***