Suggested topics for global dialogues under the work programme for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation

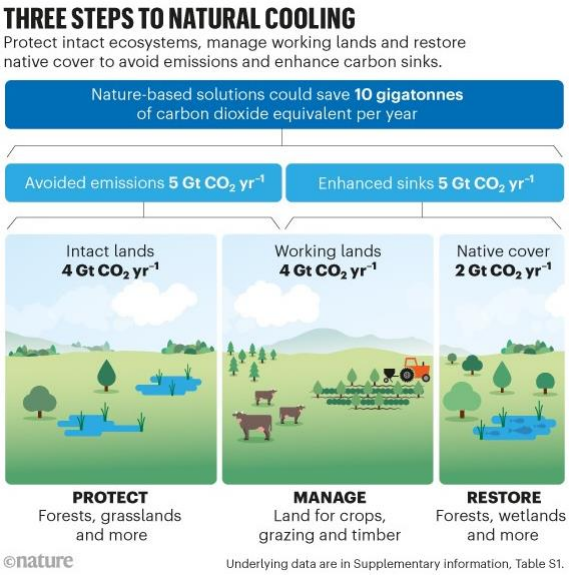
Submission by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

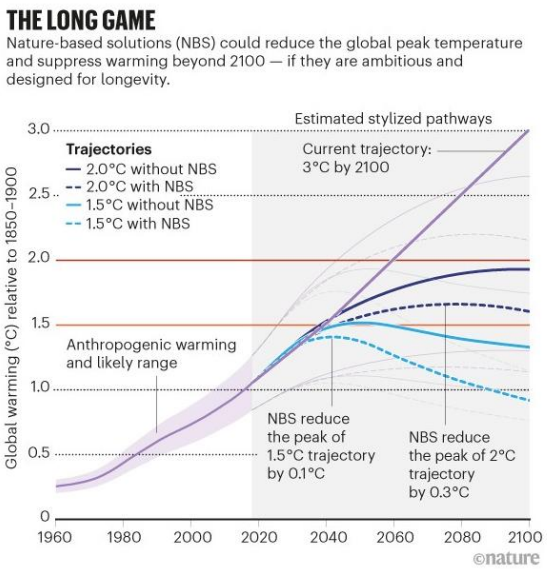
1 February 2023

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is pleased to make this submission in response to the invitation to Parties, observers and other non-Party stakeholders (as specified in FCCC/PA/CMA/2022/L.17, paragraph 12) to submit suggested topics for the two global dialogues to be held in 2023 under the work programme for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation referred to in paragraph 27 of Decision 1/CMA.3.

IUCN welcomes the above decision to establish a work programme for urgently scaling up mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade in a manner that complements the global stocktake. It also welcomes the opportunity to operationalise the work programme through focused exchanges of views, information and ideas, and to submit topics for discussion under the planned global dialogues.

In this context, IUCN would like to suggest that one of the topics for these dialogues in 2023 focus on the mitigation contribution and potential of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) based on the protection, restoration, and sustainable management of the world's ecosystems.[1] Recent analysis published in *Nature* shows that NbS, when designed with ambition and for longevity, can have a powerful role in reducing temperatures in the long term (Girardin et al 2021).





Source: Cécile A. J. Girardin, Stuart Jenkins, Nathalie Seddon, Myles Allen, Simon L. Lewis, Charlotte E. Wheeler, Bronson W. Griscom & Yadvinder Malhi. 2021. 'Nature-based solutions can help cool the planet — if we act now', *Nature*, 12 May.

[1] In Resolution (UNEP/EA.5/Res.5) adopted on 2 March 2022, the *United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)* decided that Nature-based Solutions are 'actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems which address social, economic and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, resilience and biodiversity benefits' (operative para 1). This definition directly builds on and incorporates the IUCN definition of NbS that was adopted by IUCN's 1,400+ State and NGO Members through Resolution 69 at the *2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress* in Hawaii, USA.

The analysis estimates that protecting intact ecosystems, improving the management of working lands, and restoring degraded ecosystems can save around 10 gigatonnes of CO_2e per year (see charts on previous page). This, it notes, is more than the estimated emissions from the entire global transportation sector. Other peer-reviewed studies have similarly estimated that NbS could contribute around 30% of the global mitigation required by 2030/2050 to achieve the 1.5/2°C temperature rise goal agreed to under the Paris Agreement (Griscom et al 2017, Roe et al 2019).

In November 2021, UNEP and IUCN also jointly assessed the current state of knowledge on the size of the contribution that NbS could make towards climate change mitigation. Offering a cautious interpretation of the existing evidence, and taking into account the associated uncertainties and the time needed to deploy safeguards, this assessment estimated that by 2030, NbS implemented across all ecosystems can deliver emission reductions and removals of at least 5 $GtCO_2$e per year, of a maximum estimate of 11.7 $GtCO_2$e per year. By 2050, this could rise to at least 10 $GtCO_2$e per year, of a maximum estimate of 18 $GtCO_2$e per year (UNEP and IUCN 2021). This is a significant proportion of the total mitigation required to achieve the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. Furthermore, as noted by several experts (Roe et al 2021, Chausson et al 2020, Seddon et al 2021), NbS actions, when implemented properly, also offer multiple co-benefits, including for climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation and local livelihood support.

The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (Working Group-III) has also highlighted the benefits of these measures. It notes that the largest mitigation potential of the agriculture, forestry and other land uses (AFOLU) sector comes from the conservation, improved management, and restoration of forests and other ecosystems (coastal wetlands, peatlands, savannas and grasslands), with protection measures offering the highest total and per area mitigation benefit of any action in the AFOLU sector, and reduced deforestation in the tropics providing the largest share of the overall mitigation potential. It also underscores the high synergies between biodiversity protection and GHG abatement through the protection of primary forests and other primary ecosystems. Several other studies have also noted the value of protecting carbon-rich, high-biodiversity ecosystems as a key priority in this regard (Waring et al 2020, Cook-Patton et al 2021, Noon et al 2021).

At UNFCCC COP27, Parties adopted the *Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan*, which 'Underlines the urgent need to address, in a comprehensive and synergetic manner, the interlinked global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss in the broader context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the vital importance of protecting, conserving, restoring and sustainably using nature and ecosystems for effective and sustainable climate action' (Decision 1/CMA.4, paragraph 1). It also encouraged Parties 'to consider, as appropriate, nature-based solutions or ecosystem-based approaches … for their mitigation and adaptation action while ensuring relevant social and environmental safeguards (Decision 1/CMA.4, paragraph 81). An increasing number of countries have also incorporated NbS within their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement (Seddon et al 2019, UNEP and IUCN 2021, WWF 2021).The global dialogues under this work programme therefore offer a concrete opportunity for focused discussion on how mitigation ambition and implementation in this critical decade can be further scaled up through NbS.

However, it is important to stress that NbS should not be seen as a substitute for rapid and ambitious GHG emission reductions in other sectors, but rather something that should be done alongside them to limit the increase in global average temperature to 1.5°C, as called for by science. Thus, they should not be used to delay the urgent action that is required today across all sectors to phase out fossil fuels and decarbonize the global economy.

IUCN appreciates the opportunity to contribute to this work programme and looks forward to engaging constructively in the forthcoming dialogues.