



United Nations Habitat Assembly of the
United Nations Human Settlements Programme
Second session
Nairobi, 5–9 June 2023

Resolution adopted by the United Nations Habitat Assembly on 9 June 2023

2/4. **Biodiverse and resilient cities: mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning**

The United Nations Habitat Assembly,

Underlining the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹ and the mandate of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) as the focal point in the United Nations system for sustainable urbanization and human settlements, and as the custodian agency for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 11 on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable,

Stressing the relevance of the transformative commitments of the New Urban Agenda,² especially those related to the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions, environmental sustainability and resilient urban development, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, restoration and sustainable use, resilience and climate change adaptation and mitigation to achieve the 2030 Agenda,

Taking note of the Secretary-General's most recent report on progress in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda,³ which describes actions that cities can take to make progress in halting and reversing biodiversity loss locally,

Taking note also of the *World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities*,⁴ which highlights the fact that economic growth and resilience cannot be sustained without bridging the infrastructure gaps across the urban-rural continuum through adequate territorial planning and enhanced capacity for human settlements to strengthen the pivotal role they play in realizing sustainable futures,

Welcoming the publication of *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, the Working Group II contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2022),⁵ which integrates knowledge about the interdependence of climate, ecosystems, biodiversity and human societies and documents the impact of climate change on urban areas,

¹ General Assembly resolution 70/1.

² General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

³ [A/76/639–E/2022/10](#).

⁴ UN-Habitat, *World Cities Report 2022: Envisaging the Future of Cities* (Nairobi, 2022).

⁵ Available at https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg2/IPCC_AR6_WGII_FullReport.pdf.

Welcoming also the 2019 *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services⁶ affirming that biodiversity is deteriorating worldwide at rates unprecedented in human history,

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/5 on nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development, which recognizes the definition of nature-based solutions and that they are among the actions that play an essential role in the overall global effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including by effectively and efficiently addressing major social, economic and environmental challenges, such as urban development,

Recalling also the importance of ecosystem-based approaches, as agreed upon under the Convention on Biological Diversity, for maintaining and increasing resilience and reducing the vulnerability of people and the ecosystems they rely upon,

Recalling further General Assembly resolution 77/167 of 28 December 2022, which encourages parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, other Governments and relevant organizations to integrate nature-based solutions, ecosystem-based approaches and other management and conservation approaches, in line with United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/5, into their strategic planning, as appropriate, across sectors,

Recalling Governing Council resolution 23/17 on sustainable urban development through expanding equitable access to land, housing, basic services and infrastructure,

Taking note of the outcomes of the eleventh session of the World Urban Forum, held under the theme “Transforming Our Cities for a Better Urban Future”,

Recognizing that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach, and that efforts to mainstream biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban territorial planning need to be implemented in a balanced and integrated manner and consider the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, with a view to addressing the social and economic conditions of people in vulnerable situations and fostering income-generating professional and employment opportunities for those communities, taking into account the specific challenges faced by developing countries,

Taking note of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and the United Nations decade of action to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 76/300 of 28 July 2022 on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment,

Welcoming the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in 2022, whose target 12 calls for significantly increasing the area and quality of and the connectivity of, access to and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ensuring biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and to the provision of ecosystem functions and services,

Welcoming in particular target 19 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, whereby the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity have committed themselves to substantially and progressively increasing the level of financial resources from all sources, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, mobilizing at least 200 billion United States dollars per year by 2030, which could contribute to more biodiverse and resilient cities,

Welcoming the discussions held at the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, and encouraged by the voluntary commitments set out in the Water Action Agenda, which will accelerate efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6, including by ensuring access to clean water and sanitation for all,

Recognizing that there are multiple international processes and agreements that can contribute to achieving urban resilience, in a manner consistent with national priorities and circumstances, and that these processes in turn highlight the importance of subnational entities, particularly local governments and authorities, in addressing biodiversity loss and building resilience,

⁶ IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (Bonn, 2019),

1. *Requests* the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to encourage a shift in urbanization that takes into account biodiversity and ecosystem services, and to support Member States and members of United Nations specialized agencies, within the scope of existing resources, by:
 - (a) Promoting the mainstreaming of biodiversity and ecosystem services into urban and territorial planning and management;
 - (b) Promoting alignment at all levels of government regarding urban policies that are sensitive to all social, economic and ecological contexts;⁷
 - (c) Promoting income-generating professional and employment opportunities stemming from the conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of biodiversity for people in vulnerable situations;
2. *Also requests* the Executive Director, subject to the availability of resources, to establish an open-ended international expert advisory group on biodiverse and resilient cities, on the basis of regional balance and in collaboration with institutions, organizations, networks, and experts already engaged with the concept of biodiverse and resilient cities, including the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and other biodiversity-related conventions and key United Nations entities, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, to produce a toolkit on urban development for more biodiverse and resilient cities to:
 - (a) Compile examples of best available practices that contribute to more biodiverse and resilient cities, based on the best available evidence and science;
 - (b) Assess and raise awareness of existing criteria, standards and guidelines that effectively promote more biodiverse and resilient cities, taking into account the specific challenges faced by developing countries;
 - (c) Identify the needs of people in vulnerable situations and potential pathways for generating professional and employment opportunities for those communities from the conservation, restoration, sustainable use and management of biodiversity in cities;
 - (d) Compile examples of innovative methodologies for spatial planning and management of cities to contribute to the conservation, preservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity along a preserve- conserve-restore-create spectrum that responds to varying states of natural habitat within and around cities, taking into account different regional, national and subnational circumstances;
3. *Further requests* the Executive Director to assist with building capacity, subject to the availability of resources, through technical assistance and guidance to improve the development and strengthening of skills and abilities in biodiversity management in urban planning, so that countries can improve the processes that enable the transformation of cities into biodiverse and resilient cities;
4. *Requests* the Executive Director to assist Member States and members of United Nations specialized agencies, especially developing countries, in identifying options for supporting sustainable investment in biodiverse and resilient cities and sharing information on financial resources to implement relevant actions, upon request and subject to the availability of resources;
5. *Requests* the Executive Director, in consultation with appropriate partners and within the scope of available resources, to assist Member States and members of United Nations specialized agencies, upon request, in developing pilot projects and programmes to promote more action with regard to biodiverse and resilient cities, including conservation, restoration and sustainable use measures;
6. *Requests* the Executive Director to articulate the links between biodiverse and resilient cities and the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and to report to the Executive Board of UN-Habitat on the matter;
7. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit for consideration by the Executive Board, at its last session of 2024, the toolkit on urban development for more biodiverse and resilient cities;

⁷ See IPBES, *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services: Summary for Policymakers* (Bonn, 2019), para. 39.

8. *Requests* the Executive Director, in accordance with the UN-Habitat resource mobilization strategy, to convene a group of financing institutions, including regional institutions, to support the implementation by financial institutions of policies favouring more biodiverse and resilient cities through contextualized capacity-building and aligned solutions;

9. *Encourages* Member States to contribute to the implementation of the present resolution through increased contributions to the non-earmarked fund of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation or through soft-earmarked or earmarked funding;

10. *Encourages* the Executive Director to explore further options for raising funds from all appropriate sources to support implementation of the present resolution;

11. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Habitat Assembly at its third session on the status of the implementation of the present resolution.
