



PRESS RELEASE

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Philanthropies Pledge \$5 Billion to Conserve Nature Worldwide

Historic announcement complements African nations' leadership in UN Biodiversity treaty negotiations

New York City (22 September 2021)—At a high-level event in the margins of the 76th session of the UN General Assembly, nine philanthropic organizations launched the "Protecting Our Planet Challenge" and pledged \$5 billion to protect and conserve 30% of the planet by 2030 by supporting protected areas and Indigenous stewardship of their territories. This marks the largest-ever philanthropic commitment to nature conservation.

The science based 30x30 target has emerged as a central element of the Convention on Biological Diversity's [draft 10-year strategy](#), which is expected to be approved at COP15 in Kunming, China in April 2022. Indigenous leaders welcomed the announcements as a sign of how the 30x30 target could be aligned with human rights.

Throughout the Convention on Biological Diversity negotiations, African countries have led calls for significantly more financing to support biodiversity conservation. A [landmark study](#) found that current global spending on biodiversity needs to increase by more than a factor of five in order to protect the most important biodiversity and the services it provides and transition to a system of sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. To close this funding gap, funding must be dramatically increased from all sources, including official development assistance, governments' domestic budgets, philanthropies, and corporations.

Today's event, [Transformative Action for Nature and People](#), highlighted the extent to which philanthropies are increasing their efforts to help close the biodiversity funding gap, especially when it comes to funding the implementation of the 30x30 target. Not all details about where the funding would be spent were announced, but the philanthropies participating in the event noted that more nature conservation funding needs to go directly to local efforts, including Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

The event also featured over a dozen heads of states, Indigenous leaders, and high-level United Nations officials, and resulted in additional financing commitments to help close the biodiversity funding gap.

Yannick Glemarec, the Executive Director of the Green Climate Fund, said that the fund is devoting a considerable portion of its portfolio, now close to \$9 billion, to restoring ecosystems while creating jobs, sending a strong signal of the importance of nature in addressing the climate crisis and sustaining livelihoods. Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the

European Commission, reiterated that the European Union will double its external funding for biodiversity. The additional €4 billion (\$4.7 billion) from 2021-2027 will assist the most vulnerable countries. Chancellor Merkel of Germany also reiterated support for the 30x30 target and the country's pledge to increase international climate financing to an annual €6 billion (\$7 billion) by 2025 at the latest.

More details about the historic philanthropic commitments are available [here](#).

African heads of state participated in the event and demonstrated the level of ambition that will be necessary for the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity deal to be a success.

In his video remarks, **H.E. Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria** committed to:

Regional and interregional coordination which we are currently championing. The expansion of protecting areas including the establishment of ten new national parks across the country as well as creation of marine protected areas pursuant to the 30x30 agenda of the CBD.

In his video remarks, **H.E. Mr. Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of Gabon** said:

As we are preparing for the next Council Of the Parties on Biodiversity I urge humanity to make strong and concrete commitments. It is time for humanity to make peace with nature for the sake of present and future generations. Indigenous leaders participated in the event, highlighting the central role that Indigenous Peoples and local communities must play in the development and implementation of a successful global biodiversity strategy.

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, Coordinator of the Association of Peul Women and Autochthonous Peoples of Chad (AFPAT), said:

Indigenous peoples have been some of the worst affected by climate impacts, but we also have the solutions. Indigenous peoples make up only 5% of the world's population, yet we protect around 80% of the world's biodiversity and a third of the carbon stored in tropical forests. We are guardians of nature: there is no route to a safe climate that does not include recognition and support for our communities. There must be recognition of the 80% of biodiversity that Indigenous peoples are conserving already and the 30x30 initiative is a good complementary idea as long as it is done with the free prior and informed consent and in partnership with indigenous peoples, respecting them and their rights and traditional knowledge that we know are essential to effectively protect nature and provide for people.

Referring to the "Protecting Our Planet Challenge" announcement, **Ms. Vicky Tauli-Corpuz**, Nia Tero Board Chair & Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, said:

Investing in the rights of Indigenous peoples and their guardianship of territory is one of the most important, and most overlooked, strategies for addressing the existential threats of climate

change and biodiversity loss. As an organization committed to securing Indigenous guardianship of thriving ecosystems, we applaud these leading-edge funders for dramatically expanding support of this essential pathway to achieve the 30x30 targets.

In his video remarks, **Mr. Johnny Kasudluak**, Arqviiliit Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area, Nunavik, Canada stated:

The entire circumpolar world is being affected by the changing climate. Our ecosystems will be headed for collapse without strong initiatives. The rest of the world needs to realize the need to follow Indigenous Peoples' examples of taking care of their lands and waters. What each person does within the environment affects your neighbours all over the world. All ecosystems around the world are interconnected. Our Arqviiliit IPCA project is a step towards protecting our environment for our wildlife, our community, as well as our neighbours near and far. These areas of the planet where nature thrives must be respected and be part of the global push to conserve at least 30% of the land and ocean by 2030.

Additional African leaders welcomed the event's announcements and discussed the implication for the continent.

Hailemariam Desalegn, Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and member of the Global Steering Committee for the Campaign for Nature, said:

Today's event shows that the 30x30 target is capable of generating significant public enthusiasm and historic levels of new funding. African countries have been among the earliest champions for this target and are in a position to help lead its implementation. With sufficient financing, Africa can show the world how increasing land and ocean conservation can help wildlife, bolster food and nutrition security, and drive sustainable economic growth.

Ernest Bai Koroma, Former President of Sierra Leone and member of the Global Steering Committee for the Campaign for Nature, said:

For an agreement at next year's biodiversity COP to be sufficiently ambitious, it must include the 30x30 target, especially as the disruptions in the natural environment are increasingly threatening peace and security. Today's announcements from government leaders around the world show that not only are countries increasingly ready to support this science-based target, but they are also ready to start implementing it too. This should provide a significant boost and sense of optimism to the ongoing Convention on Biological Diversity negotiations.

Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, Former Prime Minister of Uganda and member of the Global Steering Committee for the Campaign for Nature, said:

We are starting to see ambitious rhetoric turn into ambitious action. More commitments are needed, but today's announcements put the world firmly on track for the global biodiversity agreement and the 30x30 target to be a success.

Background on the 30x30 Target:

The 30x30 proposal is championed by the [High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People](#) (HAC)--an intergovernmental coalition of more than 70 countries co-chaired by Costa Rica, France, and the UK. Nearly two dozen African countries are members of the coalition. The 30x30 proposal is currently Target 3 in the [draft plan](#) that countries are negotiating through the UN Convention on Biological Diversity.

Overwhelming [scientific evidence and economic data](#) shows that conserving at least 30% of the planet's land and ocean is a key way to help address global biodiversity loss--in addition to storing carbon, preventing future pandemics, increasing fisheries' production, and bolstering economic growth with benefits outweighing costs by a factor of 5 to 1.

Recent research has highlighted the central role that Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs) play in conserving biodiversity. The [Territories of Life: 2021 Report](#) estimated that IPLCs conserve more than 22% of the extent of the world's Key Biodiversity Areas on land and at least 21% of the world's lands. The report also found that IPLCs are the de facto custodians of many existing state and private protected and conserved areas, without being recognized as such, underscoring the critical need for equitable governance and the importance of ensuring that all existing and new protected and conserved areas fully respect Indigenous Peoples' and local communities' rights.

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