

PRESS RELEASE

Regional leaders of the world stress the need to jointly address climate and biodiversity crises

- In an event held today at COP27, Regions4 focused on drawing the links and connections from Climate COP27 to Biodiversity COP15, to be held in Montreal, Canada, next month.
- According to experts, narrowly-focused actions to combat climate change can directly and indirectly harm nature and vice-versa.
- Nature-based solutions are already being implemented by regions on different continents, as concrete adaptation actions with nature positive results.

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The event '**Hearing the voice of subnational governments: learning from the Edinburgh Declaration for biodiversity**' was held today at COP27 in Egypt. Organized by [Regions4](#), with the collaboration of the **Edinburgh Process Partners and the Government of Scotland**, one of the objectives of the event was to draw attention to the **interlinkages and connections between Climate COP27 and Biodiversity COP15**, which will be held in Montreal (Canada) next month.

This session highlighted the key common challenges, solutions, and recommendations between both world summits, and to share the **progress of integrated nature-based and resilience solutions**, at the regional level of government. Recognizing the synergies between both topics is crucial, because although it is recognized that both phenomena are interconnected in both the political and scientific spheres, experts affirm that, in practice, they are dealt with separately and this represents a great danger for people and ecosystems.

The [Edinburgh Declaration for subnational governments, cities and local authorities on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#) is a key milestone in the formal **recognition of contributions by subnational governments** (including cities and local authorities) to the **achievement of global biodiversity goals and targets**. At the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15, one of its objectives will be for the Parties to formalize this role through the adoption of an Action Plan specifically dedicated to subnational and local governments.

The Plan of Action aims to ensure the 'whole of government' approach advocated for in the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is materialized over the coming decade. The Edinburgh Declaration builds upon the previous recognition of subnational authorities by the CBD at COP10, held in Nagoya, Japan, in 2010. The **Minister for Environment and Land Reform of Scotland, Mrs Mairi McAllan**, said: "We have reached a crucial moment with the current COP27 negotiations, and COP15 approaching next month. We must make sure that the climate and nature crises remain high on the global agenda, and are recognized as part of the answer to many of the world's challenges".

"Both Climate COP27 and Biodiversity COP15 are unique opportunities for subnational governments to show the world that they play a critical part in stopping biodiversity loss. The Edinburgh Process

success and its Declaration invite us to continue to look for inspiration at the subnational level of government on how to bridge the two Conventions and moreover, how to implement the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework”, said **Mrs Natalia Uribe, Secretary General of Regions4**.

The need to address both the climate and biodiversity crises

According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), **“narrowly-focused actions to combat climate change can directly and indirectly harm nature and vice versa”**. Some of these actions identified by the report are planting trees in ecosystems that were not originally forest; increasing irrigation capacity; and any measures focused exclusively on mitigating climate change. Such actions should be evaluated according to both their positive and negative impacts and externalities. For example, the use of renewable energies often requires significant consumption of mined natural resources or land. The same goes for some adaptation measures, such as the construction of dams, which can have devastating effects on natural ecosystems. This information is drawn from a report on a four-day online workshop. It involved experts selected by a 12-person Scientific Steering Committee selected by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). This workshop was the first time that the two intergovernmental bodies had collaborated.

However, according to the authors, **many measures exist that can make significant positive contributions in both areas**. Some of the most important examples include: “stopping the loss and degradation of carbon- and species-rich ecosystems on land and in the ocean”; “restoring carbon- and species-rich ecosystems”; “increasing sustainable agricultural and forestry practices to improve the capacity to adapt to climate change, enhance biodiversity, increase carbon storage and reduce emissions”; “and enhancing and better-targeting conservation actions, coordinated with and supported by strong climate adaptation and innovation”.

The need to address climate change and the preservation of biodiversity together is urgent. For this reason, today, on Biodiversity Day at COP27, Regions4 has put the spotlight on this essential nexus. According to the report ‘Interlinkages between Biodiversity, Climate Change and Sustainable Development’, by Regions4, **“connecting the climate and biodiversity spheres is especially crucial at this moment when the world is gearing up for stronger actions on both Conventions**. Earth’s interrelated environmental emergencies must be addressed together through system-wide transformation, integrated approaches, coordinated action and international cooperation”.

Regions of the world are implementing nature-based solutions

The regions of the world, in fact, are already integrating both causes into their climate action in terms of adaptation. Some examples are compiled in the **RegionsAdapt Progress Report 2021-2022**, presented last Thursday at COP27 in Egypt. This document shows how subnational governments are moving towards **nature-based solutions**. For example, the LIFE IP Urban Klima 2050 project, carried out in the Basque Country (Spain), demonstrates significant progress regarding interventions at three levels: urban/periurban, river basin and coast. Other important actions include the development of a catalogue of nature-based solutions for the city of Vitoria-Gasteiz; the recovery of the Tonpoi coastal area for public use using climate change adaptation criteria in Bermeo; the intervention and

improvement of the banks of Errekatzulo river in San Sebastian; or the identification of alternatives to minimise the damage of the combined effect of waves and tides to the Zarautz promenade.

Goias (Brazil), Santa Elena (Ecuador), Lombardy (Italy) and Wales (United Kingdom) are all focusing on tree planting and the creation of green spaces. The 'Woodlands for Wales' tree-planting programme seeks to achieve several outcomes, including the reduction of soil erosion, slow water flows, provision of shelter, and the improvement of connectivity to maintain the mobility of sensitive, native species. The scheme also provides training and capacity building for local communities, creating opportunities to manage the land locally without the need to move or commute.

In Lombardy, in 2021, 9 million euros from the Recovery regional fund were invested into de-waterproofing (eliminating waterproofing substrates) and greening (planting vegetation) under an agreement between the region and several of its municipalities.

Goias is implementing several keystone projects, both at an institutional level. The 'Juntos pelo Araguaia' project is the largest initiative for the revitalization of river Basins in Brazil, and aims to restore forest areas, preserve natural springs, and conserve the quality of soil and water in the Araguaia River Basin. The SEDUC CERRADO planting campaign (2021) in the State of Goias involves the direct participation of citizens, and the development of PlanteGo, a mobile application, encourages citizens to plant seedlings in urban and rural environments.

Bridging the Climate-Biodiversity Divide

Regions4 is committed to supporting subnational leaders in their advocacy efforts towards the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted at CBD COP15. This is a **historic opportunity for subnational governments to be recognized for the role they will play in the implementation of the new framework**, but also to define the enabling conditions that will enable its successful implementation at all levels of government. Regions4 and its partners are therefore already preparing for a stronger presence than ever at COP15, calling on all subnationals to sign on to the Edinburgh Declaration, to join the flagship RegionsWithNature partnership initiative platform, and engage with the 7th Global Biodiversity Summit of Local and Subnational Governments to take place in Montreal during COP15.

In this way, Regions4 and its partners will make sure that the most significant outcomes of COP27, relative to the subnational biodiversity agenda, are carried over into COP15, playing its part to bridge the divide between the two conference conventions. Regions from around the world are already playing a key role in bridging this divide, by treating climate change and biodiversity loss as a common crisis, to be responded to through resounding commitment and action.

For more information, request interviews or receive news from Regions4 during COP27:

Alba Díaz de Sarralde | Media Advisor | Gabineteseis

adiazdesarralde@gabineteseis.es / M. +34 659 59 35 62

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