



XI Conference of Parties
CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY
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Press Brief

Cities, Local and Sub-national Authorities and Biodiversity

Why is this important?

More than half of the world's population lives in cities, and it is estimated that this will rise to 60% by 2030. For nature and biodiversity, this trend can bring both threats and solutions, and this means local authorities (such as mayors and governors) have a vital role to play to complement the actions of the CBD's main players, national governments. Urbanization can have major impacts on biodiversity, as when natural habitats are cleared to make way for housing and infrastructure or are polluted by urban industry or households. When people move to cities, they also consume more than before, due to the improvements in their quality of life – these more intensive consumption patterns also cause impacts, sometimes far away, due to the corresponding increase in the use of natural resources (so-called ecological footprints). At the same time, cities are the source of many policies, processes and technologies that can serve as solutions to biodiversity-related problems in urban settings.

Sustainable urbanization, through the creation of compact and ecologically-friendly cities, can promote the more efficient use of natural resources, and reduce consumption of water, energy and— ultimately —impacts on biodiversity.

To help achieve this, Parties to the CBD can facilitate collaboration between all levels of government and support local and sub-national authorities in implementing the Convention locally. Indeed, mayors and governors, and their staff, can play a crucial – and growing – role in bringing biodiversity back into the urban agenda.



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What news to expect in Hyderabad?

The mobilization of sub-national governments (municipal, State/Provincial/Regional authorities, autonomous and semi-autonomous regions, overseas entities, etc) in support of Parties since 2007 has opened new avenues for the implementation of the CBD's Strategic Plan 2011-2020.

Indeed, the ambitious Aichi targets can only be achieved by harmonizing efforts of national governments with their corresponding sub-national and local authorities, and exploring synergies between all levels of government. Local and sub-national authorities invest more, in aggregate, in biodiversity than national governments, but often such investments are not harmonized with CBD policies and activities at the national and global levels. At COP 10, Parties adopted a Plan of Action for Sub-national Governments, Cities and other Local Authorities through decision X/22, and significant progress can be reported by the Global Partnership on Sub-national and Local Action for Biodiversity, for instance through national guidelines for sub-national and local strategies on biodiversity, awards for best practices at local level, decentralized cooperation, public procurement programmes and support to networks of sub-national authorities.

COP 11 will mark new steps to scale up lessons learned in the past five years:

The Cities for Life Summit on 15 and 16 October, bringing together more than 250 sub-national and local authorities, will contribute to negotiations with a view to the harmonization of policies, strategies and action plans across all levels of government (vertical mainstreaming), and increased support from Parties and traditional donors to sub-national and local action on biodiversity, for instance through thematic or geographic networks

The launch of the Cities and Biodiversity Outlook, a reference publication on the links between biodiversity, urbanization and ecosystem services developed in collaboration with the Stockholm Resilience Center, involved more than 120 scientists and experts from around the globe

The "Cities and Biodiversity" Exhibit and stands of the Advisory Committee of Cities of the Global Partnership, with images from Mexico City, Bonn, Montreal, Singapore, Nagoya, Montpellier, Hyderabad, and Curitiba. One of the exhibition's messages is that the battle for biodiversity will be won or lost in the cities of the world.

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