

UNFCCC COP26 Protected and Conserved Areas¹ Joint Statement

Glasgow, United Kingdom,
November 2021

Preamble

1. We, a group of Protected and Conserved Areas offer this Joint Statement to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP26.
2. We invite other Protected and Conserved Areas and associated bodies to join us in our commitments and actions to address the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss at this vital time.
3. We also invite Governments, investors, and supporters from across the world to work with and support the global Protected Areas family to unlock their full capability in addressing the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

Context

4. As a family of Protected and Conserved Areas we recognise that no one Protected Area can address the global crisis of climate change nor the exacerbating impact of climate change on biodiversity loss.
5. Recent assessments by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the International Resource Panel (IRP), and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) have all documented that rapid and far-reaching transformations across all sectors of society and the economy are necessary to tackle climate change, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.
6. The [G7 Climate and Environment Ministers' Meeting Communiqué](#) of 20th May 2021 also recognised that the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are global challenges requiring urgent and ambitious action at all levels, and committed to urgent action to conserve, protect and restore natural ecosystems including soils, grasslands, savannah, drylands, wetlands, coral reefs, rivers, lakes, coastal dunes, peatlands, seagrass beds, mangroves and saltmarshes.
7. Over 60 countries are members of the [High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People](#) that champions ambitious and effective global biodiversity targets, including **conserving or protecting at least 30 percent of global land and at least 30 percent of the global ocean by 2030 to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and address climate change (30by30)**.
8. We believe the global family of Protected and Conserved Areas is well placed to respond to the calls to action from the IPCC, IPBES, IRP and UNEP and to support the actions of countries around the world including the G7 to take rapid and far-reaching actions to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss.

¹ Throughout this Joint Statement, '**protected and conserved areas**' refer to all forms of land, water and marine based conservation measures typically known as national parks, marine parks, nature reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, Indigenous and community conserved areas (ICCA), other effective area-based conservation measures (OECM), and more. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) provide definitions and guidance on the use of these terms.

The role of National Parks and Protected Areas

9. Protected and Conserved Areas are a global family and have a unique and powerful place in our land and seascapes and in our societies across the planet. These spaces are intimate and both culturally and personally significant spaces to connect with nature.
10. These global and yet local and personal aspects of our protected and conserved areas allow us **to play a transformative role in addressing the twin crises**. Our family of Protect and Conserved Areas are the foundations that 30by30 will build on:
 - a. we can support the development of sustainable landscapes and seascapes,
 - b. we can support climate change mitigation by being global sinks for carbon and by making our operations carbon neutral,
 - c. we can play a vital role in adaptation to climate change, enhancing social, economic, and ecological resilience to its impacts,
 - d. we can contribute to disaster risk reduction through natural solutions, and
 - e. we can be among the first places to halt and reverse biodiversity loss.

In other words, we can be the first 30% that inspires land and sea use choices across the remainder of the planet, and we can be the place where billions of people connect with nature and get inspired to play an active part in combatting these emergencies.

11. Designation and protection are not enough to unlock these transformative and decisive capabilities in addressing the dual crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. We need to see better protection and restoration of nature, especially carbon-rich ecosystems, within our Protected and Conserved Areas and better connectivity of these spaces **to become the heart and anchors of nature recovery networks globally**.
12. Investment will be key, but funding alone is not the answer either. Protected areas must be **governed and managed effectively and equitably**, with sufficient resources and capacity, will and commitment to achieve their outcomes in the long-term. They need to be recognised as part of land-use and marine spatial planning and decision-making to play their role effectively.
13. Protected and Conserved Areas need to be brought into the centre of the work to resolve these crises. Protected and Conserved Area's **capabilities should be leveraged** to direct transformative levels of investment in nature-based solutions and their connections and importance to cultures, communities and visitors should be harnessed to unlock and demonstrate the opportunities for vast behavioural change.
14. Their relationships with the managers, stewards and owners of these spaces can develop and unlock sustainable approaches to land and marine use for adoption across the balance of the planet and to support the health and wellbeing of billions of people.
15. Our family of Protected and Conserved Areas is incredibly diverse covering a vast array of climates, terrains, waters and their ecosystems, and governed and managed by a diversity of actors in every country of the world, yet with a common purpose. The scale and nature of the role each park and protected area will play in tackling these crises will vary, tuning their approach to be place-specific and to generate the greatest impact and return.

Our global commitments are to:

- Champion a shared view of the role National Parks and Protected Areas can play in the 21st century, and beyond.

- Engage a powerful and diverse array of authorities, custodians and stewards across governments, the private sector, Indigenous peoples, and local communities everywhere.
- Lead efforts to achieve net-zero operations and carbon-rich, biodiverse, and resilient landscapes in our respective geographies.
- Focus on aspects of our work that drive scale of impact and benefit, including:
 - Collaborate and exchange knowledge internationally
 - Leverage and build our connections with billions of people (visitors) and communities to inspire behavioural change.
 - Support a global movement for the deployment and implementation of nature-based solutions at scale.
 - Inspire and enable those working outside the protected landscapes by linking with initiatives outside our boundaries and sharing our experiences.

List of signatories:

A leading role at home

(it would be useful to understand and perhaps publish actions each signatory is already taking, for example:)

In support of this statement and our commitments the UK National Parks have committed already to:

- Net-zero organisations by no later than 2030 and net-zero National Park landscapes by no later than 2045 and to join the UNFCC Race to Zero.
- To research and develop a new finance facility (Net Zero with Nature) to unlock £200m+ of private and public investment in nature-based solutions and to share our R&D with the global family of Protected and Conserved Areas.
- To work with partners to inspire our 100m+ visitors to play their part in tackling the dual crises.