



Including mountains in the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework *

Mountains are vital for the conservation of biodiversity, and mountain people are critical to managing and protecting biodiversity; therefore, the Mountain Partnership calls on the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to ensure that mountains are explicitly included in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and in all CBD processes.

Call to action

1. Request that the CBD Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity is reviewed, updated and implemented by 2030 to complement and reinforce the new Global Biodiversity Framework.
2. Include the mountain perspective in the monitoring framework of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
3. Support the identification, development and inclusion of indicators specifically related to and important for safeguarding mountain biodiversity and mountain communities, including the Mountain Green Cover Index and the indicators presented in the document "Indicators for elevating mountains in the CBD post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework."¹

Mountain peoples and mountain ecosystems – a mutually beneficial relationship

- Mountains cover 27 percent of the Earth's land surface and are biodiversity reservoirs hosting almost half of the world's biodiversity hotspots.
- Mountains are home to endemic and endangered species, and many of the world's most important crops and livestock species originated in mountains.
- The international community has identified mountains as being fragile ecosystems in need of dedicated strategies, policies and investments since the adoption of the Agenda 21 in 1992, which included a chapter on mountains.
- Mountains are centres of biodiversity and are the world's "water towers," and mountain peoples are essential to the maintenance of mountain biodiversity in many different ways.

* This document aims to complement the two Policy Briefs elaborated by UNEP, GRID-Arendal, GMBA and MRI: [Elevating Mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (2019); [Elevating Mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework 2.0](#) (2020).

¹ UNEP, GRID-Arendal, GMBA and MRI (2021). [Indicators for Elevating Mountains in the Convention on Biological Diversity's Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

- The CBD adopted a Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity in 2004 with clear objectives that had to be achieved by 2010 but were not fully accomplished. Today, mountain ecosystems and their inhabitants face increasing challenges, including a high demand for mountain resources by lowland dwellers, while lowland-focused policies often ignore the vulnerability and disadvantaged characteristics of mountains.

Mountain communities are critical to managing and protecting biodiversity

New challenges have arisen for mountain ecosystems. The acceleration of economic and land-use changes combined with the climate crisis and recent COVID-19 pandemic are making existing problems even more acute. These challenges need to be addressed in an inclusive way that takes into account the needs of mountain communities as well as the crucial role that mountain people play in maintaining biodiversity.

- Biodiversity and the availability of natural resources are essential for the livelihoods of mountain communities that are among the world's hungriest – almost 350 million mountain people are at risk of food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Mountain people are stewards of biodiversity. Human presence in mountains is crucial for maintaining seminatural ecosystems that have been shaped over centuries.
- Outmigration puts traditional mountain livelihoods at risk, and the abandonment of land and the disappearance of traditional farming and agropastoral practices endanger soil and crop biodiversity, which are a basis of resilient food systems.
- The COVID-19 crisis has increased mountain inhabitants' vulnerability to food insecurity and reinforced the need for restoring and creating resilient and biodiverse food systems in harmony with natural systems.
- Mountains are particularly sensitive to climate change and anthropogenic pressures. In developing countries, the steady population increase in mountain areas, combined with unsustainable changes in land use, puts additional pressure on natural resources and drives biodiversity loss.

Mountains in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

The conservation of highly diverse yet fragile mountain ecosystems relies on the long-term maintenance of healthy and active mountain communities to prevent land abandonment and promote sustainable livelihoods.

The Theory of Change around which the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is built provides the foundation for integrating the human dimension as a key component of the solutions to halting biodiversity loss. To review and update the CBD Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity for the period 2020-2030, with particular attention to new challenges and the role of mountain communities, would address a critical component needed for achieving the CBD's main goals. This requires addressing the following key points:

- 1) **Interdependence:** Mountain biodiversity is interlinked with mountain populations and their role as guardians maintaining agrobiodiversity and healthy upland mountain ecosystems as well as their importance for lowland ecosystems.
- 2) **Mountain agrobiodiversity as the key for future food security:** The high diversity of mountain crops represents a repository of agrobiodiversity that is vital for food security and future food systems in light of the climate crisis and the need for resilient crops.

- 3) **Restoration of mountain ecosystems for biodiversity and people:** The Programme of Work of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) refers to the mutually beneficial relation of human communities and biodiversity in mountain ecosystems. It recognizes forestry and agroforestry as sources of climate resilience in mountains and indigenous knowledge as a capital to tap into for sustainable natural resource management systems, including natural hazards that endanger biodiversity. Combating land degradation that reduces productivity and drives biodiversity loss in mountains, restoring degraded lands, and integrating climate and disaster risk considerations into land-use practices are effective ways to protect biodiversity and livelihoods. The holistic approach of the Global Action Plan of the UN Decade for Family Farming (2019-2028) – which recognizes families as not only being food producers but also fulfilling environmental, social and cultural functions while being custodians of biodiversity – might also provide a wide range of solutions in the context of mountains.
- 4) **Locally adapted solutions for natural resource management:** Actions and plans that provide mountain populations with the choice to remain on their land will support the management of natural systems and locally-adapted solutions to reduce the impacts of natural hazards that endanger biodiversity, such as wildfires, landslides, flooding and land degradation. Risk-based land and watershed management can reduce erosion, safeguard water flows and reduce the risk of natural hazards.
- 5) **Governance and processes:** Existing guidelines, action plans, programmes of work, regional strategies and documents developed in the context of the CBD Programme of Work on Mountain Biodiversity should be updated as needed. These should then be used as guidance for authorities to develop their biodiversity strategies as well as improve local governance of mountain regions and their high biodiversity.
- 6) **Indicators for safeguarding mountain biodiversity:** Indicators that are effective for monitoring the states and trends of mountain ecosystems and their biodiversity should be identified and further developed, and their uptake in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and its monitoring framework should be promoted.