

Speaking notes
IUCN Acting Director General, Dr Grethel Aguilar
UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)
General Statement
19/20 July 2023
Speaking time: 3 minutes

- Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and gentlemen,
- We are halfway to 2030 since the SDGs were adopted, yet we are deeply off course. Across the board, progress is insufficient, and in many cases, deteriorating altogether. We are only on track to meet 12% of the targets, and none of the Goals.
- This also applies to the nature-related Goals, which humanity's lives, livelihoods, and well-being depend on.
- One quarter of the species assessed by the IUCN Red List are threatened with extinction, and more than 70% of the planet's land surface has been significantly altered by people. Meanwhile, over 14 million tons of plastic end up in the oceans each year, and greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise.

- But we must not despair. Instead, we must correct our course.
- There is much more that we can do. There is strong evidence that conservation efforts have positive impacts, when carried out well. Indeed, without these efforts, trends in species extinction risk would be at least 20% worse.
- Now is the moment to radically expand our work. There is great momentum with the recent adoption of treaties, such as an Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies; the High Seas Biodiversity Treaty; a General Assembly Resolution recognising the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment; and of course, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which, together with the SDGs, must guide our efforts.
- What we need now is the political will to implement our collective commitments at speed and scale.

- And we need to invest. Investment in nature is good investment – it pays off in the short and long-term. Filling the 700 billion-dollar “biodiversity financing gap” will require a range of responses, from international flows; to domestic resource mobilisation; to the reform of subsidies harmful to nature; and to innovative blended approaches. We need to use all of our tools.
- Finally, I want to underline the common responsibility not only of governments, but of civil society and non-state actors as well, to ensure the full implementation of the SDGs. There is a role for everyone.
- IUCN and its 1,400 Members stand ready to do our part.
- Let us ensure that that the SDG Summit becomes the moment when we **do** change course.
- Thank you.