

# Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 20 April 2021

## Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity

Executive/routine Wards All Council Commitments	Executive All <a href="#">43, 44</a>
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### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that the Policy and Sustainability Committee:
  - 1.1.1 Notes the content of the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity; and
  - 1.1.2 Agrees to sign the Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

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## Edinburgh Declaration on Biodiversity

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 The Edinburgh Declaration is intended to set out the aspirations and commitments of the Scottish Government, Edinburgh Process Partners and wider subnational constituency of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in delivery for nature over the coming decade. In recognition of the key role that subnational governments and local authorities play in delivering biodiversity protection the Declaration is open for signing by parties working at the local level.
- 2.2 In [May 2019](#) the Council declared a Climate Emergency and set a target for Edinburgh to become carbon neutral by 2030. The 2030 Sustainability Strategy will define the path for achieving this 2030 target as well as ensuring Edinburgh is adapted to the impacts of climate change, including through the protection and enhancement of Edinburgh's biodiversity. The signing of the Declaration will help the Council achieve the aims of the 2030 Strategy in relation to biodiversity through raising awareness of and pledging support for the Edinburgh Declaration.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 The participation of subnational governments, cities and local authorities from around the globe is being sought by Edinburgh Process to sign the [Edinburgh Declaration](#). The Declaration is intended to emphasise the role of action at the local level within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. The framework for action for the next decade is anticipated to be agreed at The Conference of Parties (COP 15) to the CBD due to take place in China in May 2021, subject to pandemic restrictions allowing this to occur.
- 3.2 The Opening address to the Edinburgh Process Webinar, held on the 23 September 2020, by Roseanna Cunningham MSP, cabinet Secretary for Environment Climate Change and Land Reform, provides a useful summary of the process and its aims - it can be found [here](#).

## 4. Main report

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- 4.1 The Edinburgh Declaration calls on the Convention on Biodiversity to take bold action to halt biodiversity loss. It also calls for greater prominence to be given to action at the local level and recognises the role of all levels of government and society in working more effectively together over the next decade.
- 4.2 Whilst there has been significant action towards several CBD targets, none of the targets to 2020 have been met. The intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPES) Report on Global Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services 2019 concluded that nature and its vital contribution to people, which combines both biodiversity and ecosystem services is deteriorating worldwide at an increasing rate.
- 4.3 The Edinburgh Declaration recognises the huge challenge of delivering the post - 2020 global biodiversity framework. The post 2020 targets will aim to support the Convention on Biological Diversity 2050 vision of “living in harmony with nature”.
- 4.4 In contributing to Biodiversity Target, City of Edinburgh Council recognise its duties to protect and enhance biodiversity including:
  - 4.4.1 The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their duties. Further, there is a requirement to report on a three-year cycle. The range of work the Council does across all services in protecting and enhancing biodiversity is detailed in [Statutory Biodiversity Duty Report 2018-20](#).
  - 4.4.2 The Climate Change Declaration agreed by Policy and Sustainability Committee on 14 May 2019 recognises the key role protecting and restoring biodiversity and the natural environment has in reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.
  - 4.4.3 The Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership, established in 2000 and celebrating its 21<sup>st</sup> year, is actively engaged delivering positive outcomes for biodiversity across the city. The current [Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2019-2021](#) is due to be reviewed this year.
  - 4.4.4 City Plan 2030 will include policies on Nature Based Solutions, Green and Blue infrastructure and Positive effects for biodiversity through development.

## 5. Next Steps

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- 5.1 It is expected that elements of the Edinburgh Declaration may be reflected in the next Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 and associated delivery plan. The current Biodiversity Strategy, 2020 Challenge for Scotland Biodiversity was expected to be completed at the end of 2020. Due to delay to the setting of the new international targets and impact of the pandemic, the new Biodiversity Strategy is not likely to be published until spring 2022. The new strategy presents local authorities' main opportunity to influence national biodiversity policy.

- 5.2 On signing the Declaration, the Council will continue to fulfil its biodiversity duty and, together with its partners, contribute to the aspirations of the Declaration by delivering initiatives such as Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan, Edinburgh Million Tree City, Edinburgh Living Landscape and Thriving Greenspaces Project. As well as supporting national policy development through groups such as the NPF4 working group on 'Positive effects for Biodiversity'.
- 5.3 On signing the Declaration, signatories will be subject to a short vetting process.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 There are no financial implications associated with the Edinburgh Declaration. It is voluntary, non-binding, has no legal status.

## **7. Stakeholder/Community Impact**

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- 7.1 COSLA are also supportive of Scottish local authorities signing the declaration. Current signatories include Scottish Councils such as Aberdeenshire, South Ayrshire and Stirling Councils and more are in the process of reporting the declaration to their respective committees.
- 7.2 The Signing of the Edinburgh Declaration is supported by the members of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Partnership.

## **8. Background reading/external references**

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- 8.1 None

## **9. Appendices**

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- 9.1 Appendix 1 - [Edinburgh Declaration -For subnational governments, cities and Local Authorities on post-2020 global biodiversity framework 31 August 2021](#)



## EDINBURGH DECLARATION

### For subnational governments, cities and local authorities on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework

31 August 2020

#### Preamble

We, subnational governments, cities and local authorities - as participants and contributors to the *Edinburgh Process for Subnational and Local Governments on the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework*, and supported by the Secretariat and some Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity - are **deeply concerned** about the significant implications that the loss of biodiversity and climate change has on our livelihood and communities. The impacts on our environment, infrastructure, economy, health and wellbeing, and our enjoyment of nature are already visible. Indeed, the COVID-19 global pandemic has reminded us how important it is to live in harmony with nature. Healthy biodiversity and the ecosystem services that it provides are key for human well-being and to build the resilience of our cities and regions, both during and after the pandemic, and it should be central to our recovery.

We **are concerned** that, as outlined in the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook, none of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been fully met; that action by CBD Parties alone is insufficient to put us on a path to the 2050 vision of 'living in harmony with nature' or to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and that convergence across multilateral environment agreements (MEA's) is progressing at too slow a pace.

We **acknowledge** that the IPBES *Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* concludes that, despite insufficient action, it is not too late for the climate or for biodiversity, but that transformative action is needed at all levels.

We **recognise** the need for transformative change across terrestrial and marine ecosystems, and across urban development and all productive sectors to ensure enhanced food security, human health and sustainable livelihoods whilst avoiding, mitigating or minimising the negative impact on biodiversity. We also **recognise** the role that many indigenous peoples and local communities have in the management of their territories, through effective biodiversity mainstreaming across all sectors.

We **note** the need to develop effective policy, governance and financing solutions at all levels of government and to ensure vertical integration across national, subnational, city and local levels to effect transformative change. These should address both the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and integrate all dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic, cultural and social).

We **also note** the vital role that indigenous peoples and local communities, women and youth, non-governmental organisations, and wider society, play in decision making and in taking action at

subnational, city and local levels, and that there should be a fully collaborative approach to ensure active participation of these groups.

We **highlight** the key role of the private sector, including the financial sector, and **encourage** them to catalyse the transformative change needed through full, active and responsible engagement, in support of biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and sustainable use.

We **emphasise** the key role that subnational governments, cities and local authorities already play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity and in delivering actions across planning, implementation, and monitoring.

We **welcome** the endorsement of the *Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities, and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020)* under Decision X/22 and **recognise** the productive role that this has played in the last decade mobilising subnational, city and local authority actions towards implementing the goals of the Convention; and in fostering an increased recognition on the critical role of our constituency in the CBD.

We **celebrate** the commitments and statements already issued by subnational governments, cities and local authorities including recent declarations of intent<sup>12</sup>, and in particular the results achieved through the outputs of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Global Biodiversity Summit of Cities and Subnational Governments – the *Quintana Roo Communique on Mainstreaming Local and Subnational Biodiversity* (2016) and the *Sharm El-Sheikh Communique for Local and Subnational Action for Nature and People* (2018).

We **acknowledge** the need to build upon the existing *Plan of Action* under Decision X/22, and the advocacy agenda of subnational governments, cities and local authorities over the past decade, and **collectively commit** to raising our ambition and action in the coming decade.

### **Development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

We **welcome** the development of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, in particular clear, action based, SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) targets and the inclusion of an integrated monitoring framework.

We **thank** the Co-Chairs of the Open-ended Working Group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for taking an inclusive and participatory approach in developing the framework; and **welcome** the ‘whole of government’ approach embodied in the framework, which captures the principle of governance across all levels of government, including at the level of subnational governments, cities and local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> [Aburra Valley – Medellin Declaration of Metropolitan Areas to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework \(2019\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Carta de São Paulo - BIO2020 – Brazilian Perspectives for the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework \(2020\)](#)

We continue to **support** the 2050 vision “*living in harmony with nature*” and stand ready with a raised ambition to make a contribution that will deliver a local to global impact, and meaningfully contribute to the long term goals.

We **share the ambition** of the 2030 Mission as was set out in the Zero Draft version of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, ‘*To take urgent action across society to put biodiversity on a path to recovery for the benefit of the planet and people.*’ This ensures a clear pathway towards the 2050 Vision and corresponds with the ambition of subnational governments, cities and local authorities towards addressing the most pressing global challenges, including climate change, disaster risk reduction, health and poverty alleviation, as well as biodiversity.

### **Implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework**

We **welcome** the inclusion of subnational governments, cities and local authorities, as key enablers for the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. However, we **recognise** that our role extends beyond the provision of enabling conditions.

Subnational governments, cities and local authorities play key roles in conserving, restoring and reducing threats to biodiversity, in meeting people’s needs through sustainable use and equitable benefit-sharing, in developing the tools and solutions needed for implementing biodiversity protection actions, and in monitoring and reporting.

We **recognise** that our actions in implementing and mainstreaming biodiversity ensure that support mechanisms and enabling conditions are in place at subnational, city and local levels - and that a vertically integrated and cross-cutting governance approach would enhance these efforts.

We **highlight** the significant role that subnational governments, cities and local authorities play in resource mobilisation for implementation and mainstreaming of biodiversity actions. We **stress** the need for immediate and increased efforts to mobilise financial resources at all levels of government and from the private sector.

We are uniquely and most effectively positioned to deliver the outreach, awareness, and uptake of the framework across the whole of society, facilitating engagement with key stakeholders to implement the framework at subnational, city and local levels. Nevertheless, we **recognise** that more can be done to build upon already existing policies and frameworks to ensure the full participation of the whole of society in delivering the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

### **COMMITMENT FOR THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

Subnational governments, cities and local authorities will continue to build upon our previous efforts, to deliver transformative actions by:

- Recognising the overall value of nature and integrating it into subnational, city and local planning, management and governance instruments;

- Implementing appropriate actions that deliver on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework goals and action targets;
- Aligning biodiversity strategies and actions, and our monitoring and reporting efforts with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), within our subnational, city and local competencies;
- Increasing resource mobilisation for investment in biodiversity action at subnational, city and local levels, and providing incentives to ensure positive outcomes;
- Mainstreaming biodiversity across public, private and business sectors to achieve greater environmental, societal and economic resilience;
- Communicating, educating and raising public awareness with specific efforts to make knowledge available in several languages;
- Strengthening capacity building in order to implement nature-based solutions (NBS) and green and blue infrastructure, particularly through ecosystem based approaches and as a contribution to a green recovery from COVID-19;
- Providing opportunities for knowledge exchange across subnational, city and local levels, and between all sectors of society;
- Sharing best practices across subnational, city and local levels, to efficiently implement transformative actions;
- Delivering convergence with other intergovernmental agreements and processes, taking forward bold and innovative actions at the subnational, city and local level which result in mutually beneficial outcomes.

## CALL FOR ACTION

We subnational governments, cities and local authorities therefore **call upon** Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity to;

- I. Take strong and bold actions to bring about transformative change, as outlined in the IPBES global assessment report, in order to halt biodiversity loss.
- II. Recognise the vital role of subnational governments, cities and local authorities, in delivering the 2050 vision of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and the 2030 mission as set out in the Zero Draft document; and to explicitly place that recognition throughout the framework text, including the monitoring framework for the goals and targets.
- III. Support the adoption at COP15, of a new dedicated Decision for the greater inclusion of subnational governments, cities and local authorities within the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; that builds upon and renews the *Plan of Action on Subnational Governments, Cities and Other Local Authorities for Biodiversity (2011-2020)* as endorsed under Decision X/22; and that significantly raises ambition for subnational, city and local implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework throughout the next decade.
- IV. Establish a multi-stakeholder platform that ensures representation of subnational governments, cities and local authorities to support the implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.



We, subnational governments, cities and local authorities, ***stand ready*** to meet the challenge of delivering, alongside Parties, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, to ensure investment, and play a stronger role in the implementation of the framework through a renewed and significantly stepped-up *Plan of Action for subnational governments, cities and local authorities* for the coming decade.

EDINBURGH PROCESS PARTNERS



Ms Roseanna Cunningham, MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate  
Change and Land Reform  
On behalf of the Scottish Government



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot



Ms Lesley Griffiths AS/MS  
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd, Ynni a Materion  
Gwledig  
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural  
Affairs  
On behalf of Welsh Government



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



Mr Ashok Sridharan  
ICLEI President  
On behalf of ICLEI - Local Governments  
for Sustainability



Ms Cheryl Jones Fur  
Deputy Lord Mayor of Växjö, Sweden  
On behalf of ICLEI Europe



Ms Elena Moreno  
Regions4 President  
Basque Deputy Minister for Environment  
On behalf of Regions4 Sustainable  
Development



Mr Benoit Charette  
Ministre de l'Environnement et de la Lutte  
contre les changements climatiques  
On behalf of Gouvernement du Québec

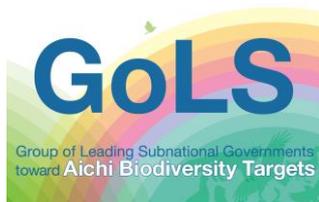




Mr Hideaki Ohmura

Governor of Aichi Prefecture

On behalf of the Group of Leading Subnational Governments toward the Aichi Biodiversity Targets (GoLS)



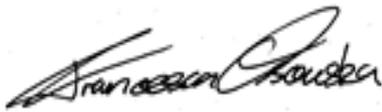
Under consideration

On Behalf of the European Committee of the Regions



**European Committee  
of the Regions**

**Supported by:**



Ms Francesca Osowska

Chief Executive

On behalf of NatureScot



Mr Simon Milne MBE

Regius Keeper

On Behalf of Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh



**Royal  
Botanic Garden  
Edinburgh**

**Dated: 31 August 2020**

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## SIGNATORIES

### SUBNATIONAL, CITY AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b> <b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date Signed</b>
<i>Example: Jo Blogs</i>	<i>Head of Environment and Nature Division</i> <i>Local Council</i>	<i>Xx/Month/2020</i>

### ADDITIONAL SUPPORTERS

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b> <b>Organisation</b>	<b>Date Signed</b>
<i>Example: Nat Ure</i>	<i>Director, Nature Company</i>	<i>Xx/Month/2020</i>