



21st *Community of Practice*

Policy Legislation and Governance Section (PLGS) in collaboration with
Programme Development Branch

Biodiversity Beyond Borders Fostering Life Across Urban-Rural Landscapes

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS

[Watch the recording](#)





Objectives

The session was set up with the following **objectives**:

1. Share knowledge and experiences on global promotion of biodiversity amidst urbanization.
2. Identify successful tools and strategies for biodiversity conversation across the urban-rural continuum.
3. Understand the role of data and digital solutions for Biodiversity conservation in urban and rural contexts.
4. Share key messages and calls for action, governance models and investment for managing biodiversity in upcoming CBD CoP 16 and subsequent COPs for UNFCCC and UNCCD.

During the session, the participation peaked at **110** listeners interested in learning how urban-rural linkages and biodiversity intersect, plans for COP16 and experiences globally.

Speakers:



Chantal Robichaud -
CBD



Leonard Mpanju -
Planner - Arusha



Santiago Granados -
ECLAC



Carlos Correa -
UNCCD



Sandra Neumann -
Berlin Mayors office



Remy Sietchiping -
UN-Habitat



Andrew Rudd -
UN-Habitat



Thomas Forster -
UN-Habitat



Grace Githiri -
UN-Habitat



110+
Listeners

Key highlights

1. Interdependence of Urban and Rural Areas:

- » A recurring theme was the **critical interdependence** between urban and rural areas for biodiversity conservation. Urban areas rely heavily on natural resources from rural areas, while rural areas benefit from urban economies. Integrating policies across these areas is essential for long-term ecological resilience. UN-Habitat has developed two resources also shared at COP15 in 2022 [managing urban-rural linkages for nature](#) and [Cities and nature: planning for the future](#)

Examples like **Arusha's urban forests** demonstrate how rural and urban biodiversity initiatives can be mutually beneficial, supporting both ecosystems and economic growth through tourism and sustainable land use.





2. Innovative Urban Biodiversity Strategies:

- » **Colombian cities**, such as **Monteria** and **Medellín**, were highlighted for their leadership in biodiversity-friendly urban planning. Their projects include reconnecting cities with natural water systems, such as rivers, and building **green corridors** that reduce urban heat while enhancing biodiversity.
- » Medellín's **Green Corridors Program** was noted as a practical example of how cities can reduce temperatures and improve biodiversity, showing measurable benefits in terms of **climate resilience**.

3. Community Engagement and Ownership:

- » Several speakers emphasized the importance of **community involvement** including **indigenous communities** in biodiversity initiatives. In **Arusha**, the engagement of local communities in the creation and maintenance of urban forests has been critical. This fosters a sense of ownership and ensures that conservation efforts are sustained over the long term.
- » The inclusion of **indigenous species** in urban forestry projects in Tanzania not only preserves local ecosystems but also strengthens the cultural connection between communities and their natural surroundings.

4. Policy and Governance Innovation:

- » **Berlin's Urban Nature Pact** stood out as a global initiative led by cities to translate international biodiversity goals into local action. This pact requires cities to commit to a minimum of 15 biodiversity targets, promoting biodiversity-friendly policies such as blue and green infrastructure, climate adaptation, and environmental education.
- » The pact's innovative governance model enables cities to **share knowledge** and build capacity, ensuring that cities with fewer resources can still meet ambitious biodiversity goals through partnerships and shared learning.

5. Importance of Financial Mechanisms:

- » **ECLAC** highlighted the need for **financial restructuring** to support biodiversity conservation. In Latin America and the Caribbean, unsustainable development has caused significant biodiversity loss. To counter this, public funds and investments need to be redirected toward positive biodiversity outcomes.
- » Costa Rica and Mexico's **taxonomies** for biodiversity-focused investments were discussed as models for other countries. The restructuring of financial systems to address biodiversity risks was identified as critical to achieving lasting impact.





6. Digital Solutions and Data-Driven Approaches:

- » The session emphasized the role of **digital tools** in driving biodiversity initiatives. Tools like UN-Habitat's **City-Wide Public Space Assessment Toolkit** and the **Hybrid Risk Index Map** allow cities to map green spaces and biodiversity risks, helping them make informed decisions on urban planning.
- » These tools integrate data on urban expansion, biodiversity hotspots, and climate risks, providing cities with granular insights that support **evidence-based urban development** while conserving biodiversity.

7. Challenges and Opportunities for the Future:

- » A core discussion revolved around the need for a **whole-of-society** and **whole-of-government approach** to biodiversity. Integrating biodiversity into broader governance structures, including national biodiversity strategies and local biodiversity plans, is essential.
- » There was also recognition of the need for **greater engagement from local authorities** in biodiversity planning, especially in sectors like **urban planning, agriculture, and climate adaptation**. Cities and intermediary urban centers play an increasingly pivotal role in implementing biodiversity-friendly strategies.

8. Global Events and Collaborative Platforms:

- » Several upcoming global events, such as **COP16** and the **World Urban Forum**, were mentioned as platforms for further advancing urban-rural linkages and biodiversity efforts. These events will focus on scaling up best practices from countries like **Colombia** and Tanzania, encouraging cities worldwide to adopt similar approaches.
- » **Collaborations** across global networks are expected to drive the biodiversity agenda forward. The session underscored the importance of coordinating between **local, national, and international actors** to promote cohesive action on biodiversity conservation.



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CAIRO, EGYPT | 4–8 NOVEMBER 2024





Core Actions Moving Forward



- » **Encouraging cities to implement urban biodiversity strategies**, such as green corridors and urban forests, that provide ecological, climate, and economic benefits.



- » **Support local governments in developing biodiversity action plans and engaging communities** in conservation efforts to ensure sustainability.



- » **Leverage Data and Technology for Better Planning** - Utilize tools like biodiversity mapping and risk indices to integrate biodiversity conservation into urban planning and development processes.



- » **Promote Financial Innovation for Biodiversity** - Develop financial instruments and restructuring to direct public and private investments toward biodiversity-friendly projects.



- » **Prepare for Global Platforms:** Use upcoming global events to share lessons learned and advance collaborations on urban-rural linkages and biodiversity integration across countries and regions.

