

# First Meeting of Mayors Forum on Urban Nature and Biodiversity Urban Nature Program Summary Report

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The [Urban Nature Program](#) hosted its inaugural [Mayors Forum](#) on October 27 during COP16 on the Convention on Biological Diversity in Cali, Colombia. The event brought together mayors and senior representatives from over 18 cities across 16 countries, alongside key partners such as the World Bank, UNEP, ICLEI, GEF, the Inter-American Development Bank, C40, the World Resources Institute, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the Climate Change Champion Team, and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Participants reaffirmed the vital role of cities in protecting biodiversity, restoring ecosystems, and mitigating climate change, emphasizing the need for collaborative, synergistic efforts, and increased financing to scale urban solutions.



*Cities Representatives: Image courtesy of Philippe Montenegro*

## SUMMARY

The Urban Nature Program aims to scale up financing to empower cities and subnational governments in implementing actions for nature-positive development under the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Launched at Climate COP28, the program seeks to foster collaboration among a diverse network of cities and partners, driving integrated solutions to address biodiversity loss and climate change. At the First Mayor’s Leadership Forum (the Forum), mayors or senior representatives from 13 of the 18 participating cities presented their ambitions, targets, investment plans, and support needs. Projects highlighted included efficient and participatory management of Bogotá’s main ecological structure, mangrove restoration in Douala V and Samborombón for climate resilience, reducing deforestation and land degradation by 30% in Kisumu, updating Nansana’s Climate Action Plan, developing Nagoya’s Biodiversity Action Plan, and advancing Mendoza’s Resilient City Plan. Contributions from cities in developed countries, including Berlin, Montreal, Seattle, and Paris, further enriched the discussions.

Partner organizations such as UNEP, ICLEI, GEF, the Inter-American Development Bank, C40, World Resources Institute, IUCN, Climate Change Champion Team and World Business Council for Sustainable Development played a pivotal role. Their participation underscored three key messages: they are actively supporting biodiversity protection, committed to strengthening urban initiatives, and aligned on the need for more collaborative efforts to tackle urban challenges. Collectively, they emphasized the transformative potential of the Urban Nature Program in integrating urban nature into development planning.

Next Steps: Going forward, the Urban Nature Program intends to:

- Support cities in designing and preparing for green-blue-brown urban infrastructure that enhances biodiversity, resilience, and livability;
- Provide targeted deep dive training to cities on urban nature;
- Sharing good practices, especially those from the Lighthouse Cities; and

## Annex I: City Initiatives and Mayoral Commitments

### Bogotá, Colombia – Mayor of Bogotá, Luis Fernando Galán

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The mayor of Bogotá highlighted the city's focus on three key areas: Land, Air, and Water. To enhance land management, Bogotá is restoring 300 hectares in the eastern hills to prevent fires and improve air quality. For air, the city is advancing its public transport system with new BRT routes and its first metro line, aiming to cut 171,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually while establishing low-emission zones. On water, Bogotá is addressing supply challenges by developing a treatment plant for the Bogotá River, which will treat 70% of the city's wastewater, delivering significant benefits for both the city and the nation.



### Cali, Colombia – Mayor of Cali, Alejandro Eder

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Cali, one of Colombia's most biodiverse cities, hosted COP16. The mayor highlighted the city's ongoing efforts to protect biodiversity, noting the discovery of new species each year in the surrounding natural parks. He also emphasized the urgent need to raise awareness about the Chocó Biogeographic Region, a critically important but lesser-known area spanning Costa Rica, Panama, Colombia's Pacific coast, Ecuador's Pacific coast, and northern Peru. This region, which has the highest density of endemic species per square meter, is also plagued by illegal economies such as drug production and illegal mining. The mayor concluded with a powerful message from COP16: the need for a global pact to combat illegal economies, which pose a major threat to biodiversity in this vital region.



### Del Carmen, Philippines – Del Carmen, Mr. Alfredo M Coro II

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The city of Del Carmen faces significant challenges in biodiversity protection, risk reduction, food security, and the preservation of its landscapes and seascapes. To address these, the city is working to integrate nature-based solutions with grey infrastructure, aiming to enhance economic resilience and improve livability. Additionally, Del Carmen is seeking support to develop both local and global financing mechanisms to advance these efforts.



### Douala V, Cameroon – Mayor of Douala V, Mr. Mr. Edouard Hervé Moby.

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Mr. Edouard outlined the city's major risks, including deforestation and flooding, and highlighted initiatives such as mangrove and island restoration under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration to address these challenges. Douala V aims to become climate-resilient by investing in green and blue infrastructure and implementing wetland restoration, ecotourism, community forestry, and sustainable land management projects. However, these efforts require additional financial support.



### Kisumu, Kenya – Governor of Kisumu, Kenya, Mr. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o

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In Kisumu, preserving rivers and wetlands is a priority. The administration is focused on protecting biodiversity, ensuring food security, and developing adaptive infrastructure to mitigate flooding. Plans include halting and reversing deforestation and land degradation by 30% to safeguard natural habitats. However, innovative



financial mechanisms are needed to support these goals, as taxation poses challenges. “First, you have to convince people that what they are paying for is in their interest,” the mayor noted.

### Nansana, Uganda – Mayor Ms. Regina Nakkazzi

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Ms. Nakkazzi emphasized Nansana’s environmental ambitions, including planting 10,000 trees and restoring areas along municipal roads by 2025. The city plans to create 20 woodlots, five urban forests, and buffer zones for protected wetlands and rivers. Efforts to update the climate action plan and develop a community engagement strategy are underway, but financial limitations remain a significant obstacle.



### Samborondón, Ecuador – Mayor of Samborondón, Ecuador, Mr José Yunes

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The mayor of Samborondón highlighted the city’s promotion of ecosystem restoration and biodiversity protection through urban policies requiring green and reforested spaces in all municipal and private projects. A pilot project under the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration involves planting 6,000 mangroves and establishing a mangrove nursery, planning to replicate it in other strategic areas.



## Montreal, Canada – Deputy Mayor of Montreal, Canada, Ms. Marie–Andree Mauger

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Ms. Mauger emphasized Montreal's leadership in biodiversity protection, supported by initiatives like the Montreal 2030 Plan and Climate Action Plan. . These include ambitious ecosystem restoration programs, a pollinator strategy, and the Urban Mobility and Nature Plan. The city underscores the importance of knowledge exchange and innovative financing mechanisms to achieve its goals.



## Nagoya, Japan – Deputy Mayor, Nagoya, Ms Midori Sugino

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The Deputy Mayor of Nagoya shared the city's vision for 2100: an ideal urban environment where ecosystems, people, and economic development coexist harmoniously. Nagoya aspires to become a nature-positive city, thriving as a model for sustainability and resilience.



## Seattle, USA – Deputy Mayor Ms. Adiam Emery

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Ms. Emery outlined Seattle's commitment to becoming a resilient, equitable city prepared for climate change. Key initiatives include expanding the urban forest to achieve 30% canopy cover by 2037 and developing governance strategies through public-private partnerships and revised tax mechanisms. Seattle seeks support for a financing framework, monitoring of native species in urban forests, and public awareness campaigns on urban nature.



## Sirajganj, Bangladesh – Administrator of Sirajganj, Mr Tofazzal Hossain

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Mr. Hossain highlighted Sirajganj's climate risks and environmental responsibilities, including the protection of natural spaces and water resources. The city integrates renewable energy and waste reduction strategies and benefits from the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration pilot project. Its Environmental Management and Pollution Control Plan (2023–2043) calls for financial assistance, capacity building, advocacy, and knowledge exchange.



## Berlin, Germany – Permanent Secretary for Climate Protection and the Environment, Berlin, Britta Behrendt.

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Ms. Behrendt emphasized Berlin's leadership in biodiversity integration through the Berlin Urban Nature Pact. Home to over 3.8 million residents, the city ensures all citizens have access to green spaces within 500 meters and aims to achieve 17 biodiversity targets by 2030. Berlin calls for support in developing innovative financial mechanisms to enhance investments in urban nature.



## Mendoza, Argentina – Secretary of Environment, Sebastián Fermani

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Mr. Fermani highlighted Mendoza's wineries as a key economic activity, which face significant challenges from climate change. The city prioritizes strengthening the bond between people and nature, supported by UNEP through the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration pilot project. With 36% of the local budget allocated to climate mitigation and 16% to adaptation, Mendoza requires further technical and financial assistance, as well as technology transfer.



### Paris, France – Head of Ecological Agency of Paris, Mr. Francois Moreau.

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Paris remains a benchmark for sustainable development. Mr. Moreau highlighted the city's commitment through its third Biodiversity Plan (2025–2030) and a new bioclimatic urban master plan. Policies include greening all public spaces, planting over 170,000 trees, and maintaining zero pesticide use. Paris advocates for better measures to highlight the ecosystem services of urban nature and promote public acceptance of native vegetation.



### Barranquilla, Colombia – Head of International Relations of Barranquilla, Ms. Ana Maria Badel.

The city of Barranquilla has undergone a remarkable urban transformation, creating spaces where people and nature coexist harmoniously. With significant investments in urban projects aimed at restoring ecosystems, the city's current development plan includes 14 initiatives aligned with the Kunming–Montreal objectives. These efforts are focused on reducing threats to biodiversity and promoting sustainable urban growth.

### Mexico City, Mexico – Director of International Cooperation, Mr. Jorge Liber Saltijeral Giles

Mexico City plans to \$380 million over the next six years in conservation land projects. The city is prioritizing local participation in identifying key sites for restoration and is committed to restoring rivers, wetlands, and lakes with an emphasis on conservation and sustainable use.

### Quezon City, Philippines – Head of Parks Development and Administration Department, Mr. Baltazar Avelino

Quezon city is actively addressing climate change with the support of organizations like C40, aiming to accelerate urban nature initiatives. Its Local Climate Change Action Plan

(2021-2050) demonstrates the city's long-term commitment. Quezon has ambitious targets, such as planting one million trees by 2030 and integrating pollinator gardens and corridors into existing infrastructure. However, the city highlights the need for external support to achieve these goals.

The Forum welcomed the participation of Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife of Zimbabwe, Honorable Ms. Sithembiso G.G Nyoni. She underlined Zimbabwe's commitment to addressing climate change and protecting biodiversity while acknowledging the significant challenges the country faces. Her intervention underscored the importance of collaboration and mutual support between entities and cities to tackle these global issues effectively.



*Ms. Sithembiso G.G Nyoni, Minister of Environment, Climate and Wildlife of Zimbabwe in her intervention.  
Image courtesy: Philippe Montenegro.*

During the Forum, UNFCCC High-Level Champion and IUCN President, Ms. Razan Al Mubarak, stressed the need for collective action and a synergistic approach to integrating nature into cities' climate transition plans. Her remarks highlighted the vital role of mayors and urban leaders in turning ideas into actionable work plans, urged participants to adopt an interdisciplinary approach and strengthen collaboration between cities globally.



*On the left, Ms. Razan Al Mubarak. On the right view of the city's representatives. Image courtesy of  
Philippe Montenegro*

## Annex II – Key Messages from Partner Organizations: Elevating Urban Ambitions for Biodiversity and Climate Action

The Forum's opening session served as a compelling reminder of the need for cities to elevate their ambitions to achieve Target 12 of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Target 12 focuses on enhancing urban green spaces and integrating green and blue infrastructure to support both human well-being and biodiversity. Participation in the Urban Nature Program offers cities critical support to align their local goals with these global objectives.

Mr. Ming Zhang, Global Director at the World Bank, emphasized their vision of not just a world free of poverty, but one where livable cities enable a livable planet that supports economic growth and prosperity. On behalf of the Urban Nature Program, he called on cities to take the following actions:

- **Integrate nature into all aspects of urban planning.** Especially, urban land use planning must integrate the consideration of a city's ecosystem and reflect it in zoning and green space allocation.
- **Build green and blue infrastructure to enhance ecological connectivity by linking nature across urban and peri-urban areas, and beyond.**
- **Avoid investments that damage urban nature.** More financing from public and private investment is needed for green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to protect cities from climate change impacts.

Xueman Wang, Program Manager of GPSC at the World Bank, outlined the Urban Nature Program three core work streams:

- Upstream Policy Support to help cities incorporate nature into land-use planning.
- Midstream Project Preparation Support to translate ideas into feasible project designs.
- Downstream Investment to channel funding into green and blue infrastructure alongside traditional grey infrastructure. As Wang succinctly stated, "The overall objective of this program is to scale-up financing for nature."



*On the left Mr. Zhang. On the right Ms. Xueman Wang. Image courtesy of Philippe Montenegro*

The Kunming–Montreal GBF marks the first formal recognition of the role cities play in biodiversity conservation, placing a significant responsibility on urban areas. This milestone challenges NGOs and multilateral banks to create accessible mechanisms for cities to advance toward Target 12 while aligning with national climate commitments (NDCs).

The Forum’s final session, moderated by Alfredo Redondo, Lead of the Nature Team at the Climate Champions team, brought together representatives from financial institutions and implementing organizations. The session focused on integrating green and blue infrastructure into urban development. Key speakers included representatives from the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UNEP, Global Environment Facility (GEF), and ICLEI Secretariat—core partners of the Urban Nature Program.

Doreen L. Robinson, Chief of the Biodiversity and Land Branch at UNEP, stressed the need to move beyond profit-driven systems by collaborating with cities to measure well-being and prosperity inclusively.



*On the left Ms. Uribe. On the right Ms. Robinson. Image courtesy of Philippe Montenegro*

Aloke Barnwal, Thematic Lead from GEF on Urban and Infrastructure, highlighted the importance of quantifying the economic value of nature and building global partnerships to drive transformative change. Maria Camila Uribe IDB Cities Network Coordinator and Principle Technical Lead, noted that 40% of IDB operations and loans are directed toward biodiversity goals, fully aligned with the Paris Agreement. Ingrid Coetzee, representing ICLEI, underscored their role in connecting cities to global frameworks like the Rio Conventions and providing technical support for nature-based initiatives.



*On the left Mr. Barnwal. On the right Ms. Goetzee. Image courtesy of Philippe Montenegro*

In conclusion, the participating cities collectively stressed the need for enhanced financial and technical support to implement nature-based solutions and develop green and blue infrastructure. They called for greater collaboration between cities, governments, and cross-sectoral entities to tackle challenges associated with investing in nature. Finally, they emphasized the importance of continuous knowledge-sharing and good practice exchanges to keep cities aligned with global targets.

The agenda, photos, and additional event details are available on this webpage: <https://www.thegpsc.org/events/first-meeting-mayors-forum-urban-nature-and-biodiversity>

## Annex III – Agenda Overview

Time	Session	Speaker
10:30 – 10:40 (10 min)	<b>Opening Remarks by the Chair</b> <b>Welcome Remarks by Mayor of Cali, Alejandro Eder</b>	Chair <b>Marie-Andree Mauger</b> Deputy Mayor of Montreal, Canada
10:40 to 10:45 (5 min)	<b>Overview of Urban Nature Program</b> <i>Presented by the World Bank on behalf of the Partner Organizations</i>	<b>Xueman Wang</b> Program Manager, GPSC, World Bank
10:45 – 10:50 (5 min)	<b>Keynote speech – Call for Action</b>	<b>H.E. Ms. Razan Al Mubarak,</b> High-Level Champion UNFCCC COP28 President of IUCN
10:50 – 12:00 (70 min)	<b>Vision and Ambition – from Mayors</b> The mayors will demonstrate their city's commitment and action to urban nature and biodiversity, especially the action in implementing <b>Target12 of the Global Biodiversity Framework</b> – Enhance Green Spaces and Urban Planning for Human Well-Being and Biodiversity.	Moderated by <b>Gregor Robertson</b> Former Mayor of Vancouver, Canada
12:00 – 12:25 (25 min)	<b>Support from financial institutions and partner Organizations</b>	<b>Ming Zhang</b> Global Director, World Bank <b>Doreen Robinson</b> Chief for Wildlife. UNEP <b>Maria Camila Uribe</b> Sector Principal Leader Cities Network Coordinator IDB <b>Aloke Barnwal,</b> City Lead, GEF Secretariat <b>Kobie Brand</b> Global Director, Biodiversity, Nature & Health, ICLEI
12:25– 12:30 (5 min)	<b>Conclusions and Next Steps</b>	Chair <b>Marie-Andree Mauger</b> Deputy Mayor of Montreal, Canada

## Annex IV– Participants

### Participating Cities

City	Entity Country	Full name	Title
Berlin	Germany	Britta Behrendt	Permanent Secretary for Climate Protection and the Environment
Bogota	Colombia	Carlos Fernando Galán	Mayor
Cali	Colombia	Alejandro Eder	Mayor
Del Carmen	Philippines	Alfredo M Coro II	Mayor
Douala IV	Cameroon	Edouard Hervé Moby Mpah	Mayor
Kisumu	Kenya	Peter Anyang' Nyong'o	Governor
Mendoza	Argentina	Sebastián Fermani	Secretary of Environment
Montreal	Canada	Marie-Andrée Mauger	Deputy Mayor
Nagoya	Japan	Midori Sugino	Deputy Mayor
Nansana	Uganda	Regina Nakkazzi	Mayor
Paris	France	Francois Moreau	Head of Ecological Agency
Samborondón	Ecuador	Juan José Yúñez Nowak	Mayor
Seattle	USA	Adiam Emery	Deputy Mayor
Sirajganj	Bangladesh	Tofazzal Hossain	Administrator

### Other Participating Cities

City	Entity Country	Full name	Title
Barranquilla	Colombia	Ana Maria Badel	Head of International Relations
Mexico City	Mexico	Jorge Liber Saltijeral Giles	Director of International Cooperation
Quezon City	Philippines	Baltazar Avelino	Head of Parks Development and Administration Department- Department head
Los Angeles	USA	Doug Walters	Chief Sustainability Officer

## Participating Organizations

Full name	Title	Entity
Alfredo Redondo	Nature Team Lead, High Level Climate Champion	Moderator
Aloke Barnwal,	Thematic Lead – Urban and Infrastructure	GEF Secretariat
Doreen L. Robinson,	Chief, Biodiversity and Land Branch, Ecosystems Division	UNEP
Gregor Robertson	Former Mayor of Vancouver, Canada	Moderator
H.E. Ms. Razan Al Mubarak,	President of IUCN	UN Climate Change High-Level Champion UNFCCC COP28
Ingrid Goetsee	Director of Biodiversity Nature & Health	ICLEI, Africa
Ming Zhang	Global Director, Urban, Resilience, and Land	World Bank
Maria Camila Uribe	Coordinator, IDB Cities Network and Principal Technical Lead	Inter- American Development Bank's (IDB)
Sharon Gil	Programme Management officer and Cities Lead	Cities Unit of UNEP
Xueman Wang	Program Manager, Global Platform for Sustainable Cities	World Bank

## Partner Organizations

