



Born Free Foundation

<https://www.bornfree.org.uk>

Born Free is a UK-based international wildlife charity. Our Vision is a world where individual wild animals are treated with respect and compassion, as we strive to secure mutually beneficial co-existence enabling wild animals to live their lives free from harmful human exploitation as part of functional, viable ecosystems. As a leading wildlife charity, we oppose the exploitation of wild animals in captivity and campaign to keep them where they belong – in the wild.

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Chapeau

The importance of **accelerating actions for environmental and animal protection** must be underlined in the Chapeau and should be mainstreamed throughout all chapters of the Pact. Whilst the three pillars of the United Nations – development, peace and security, and human rights – are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, it is crucial to fully recognize that **biodiversity underpins sustainable development** and is fundamental to human health, well-being, and prosperity. We recommend explicitly referencing the **2019 Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services¹**, which identified land and sea use change, as well as the direct exploitation of organisms, as some of the major causes of biodiversity loss.

Holistic approaches that leave no one behind and expressly account for the interconnectedness between human, animal and environment health and well-being², such as the **One Health and One Welfare³ approaches**, as well as an environmentally resilient approach to ending poverty, must be adopted, integrated across policy sectors, operationalized through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, and accompanied by the establishment of **clear financing pathways** to mobilize sufficient resources.

Tackling wildlife exploitation, the second main direct driver of recent biodiversity loss worldwide⁴, must be prioritized as humanity strives to address the three intersecting global crises of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss. For example, the coronavirus pandemic brought into sharp focus the risks that

¹ 2019 IPBES Global Assessment: <https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

² As recognized in UNEA-5 Resolution on Animal welfare–environment–sustainable development nexus, adopted in 2022 ([UNEP/EA.5/Res.1](https://www.unep.org/press/2022/05/2022-05-11-uea5-res-1))

³ One Welfare: <https://www.onewelfareworld.org/>

⁴ IPBES Summary for Policy Makers of the Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3553458>

commercial wildlife trading poses to human society. Applying an animal health and welfare perspective to the issue will result in positive and sustainable outcomes for all.

The Pact must **consolidate existing treaty commitments**⁵ and **set a high level of ambition** while encouraging **concrete action-oriented solutions**, holding relevant actors accountable for implementing measures that ensure the lasting protection of the planet and all its living beings. **Effective and inclusive partnerships** should be promoted, and adequate space should be made for **civil society voices**, including through accountable decision-making processes.

With the **precautionary principle** at its core, the Pact must invigorate the development and implementation of new and existing transformative commitments aimed at **breaking silos** and **filling gaps** in UN system governance, such as the lack of a global agreement to **end wildlife and environmental crime**, and the absence of **anticipatory action and governance of biological and health risks from the use and trade of wild animal species**.

Chapter I. Sustainable development and financing for development

The collective ambition for global environmental governance within the multilateral system must be raised, including by **elevating the environmental pillar of sustainable development**, in line with **paragraph 19 of the 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration**⁶.

Human activities are driving species to extinction⁷ and accelerating the loss of biodiversity, climate change and pollution. The Earth Overshoot Day date has been consistently moving earlier each year due to humanity's increasing demand on nature exceeding the Earth's annual biological capacity to regenerate.

Chapter I must encourage **transformative changes in the way we treat the natural world**, in order to achieve an equitable and sustainable world where people live in harmony with nature and animals.

Implementing transformative change requires **breaking the structural barriers to addressing the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss** and other global challenges, such as policies and measures that incentivize the use and exploitation of wildlife and ecosystems.

The Pact should reaffirm all the principles of the **Rio Declaration**⁸, which states that the only way to have long term economic progress is to link it with environmental protection.

Resetting the global economy in such a way as to protect life on Earth is critical, as we have grown economic and social assets at the expense of natural assets. Financial deficits have worsened due to the multiple global crises the world has faced in recent years. It is urgent to **close the global biodiversity financing gap**, and in line with Target 19 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to raise, by 2030, at least USD 200 billion annually in domestic and international funding from all public and private sources.

⁵ Including the Rio Conventions, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Paris Agreement and the ongoing plastics treaty process.

⁶ [A/RES/78/1 - 2023 SDG Summit Political Declaration \(un.org\)](#)

⁷ 1 million species at risk of extinction and many withing decades, according to the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, 2019 IPBES Global Assessment (<https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>)

⁸ [A/CONF.151/26/Vol.I: Rio Declaration on Environment and Development \(un.org\)](#)

The Pact should encourage governments and investors to use effective and innovative financing solutions aimed at **generating, delivering and realigning finance for biodiversity**, such as the tools and guidance produced by the Biodiversity Finance Initiative of the United Nations Development Programme⁹.

We also recommend the following actions to be included in this Chapter: addressing obstacles to sustainable development including **combatting financial crime**, making **long-term investments that safeguard our shared life-support systems and are tailored for local needs, and a global transition to circular economy**. These will necessitate a **reform of the international financial architecture**, realigning the way biodiversity is financed, enabling and facilitating regulatory frameworks for financial flows, strengthening the global debt mechanisms, pursuing global taxation reforms, enacting governance changes at global financial institutions, repurposing subsidies that are harmful to nature, in line with SDG Target 12.C, or else establishing transparent frameworks to ensure standards for the integrity of carbon and biodiversity credits.

We particularly recommend building on the outcomes of the 2020 Report of the IPBES Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics¹⁰ and **investing in strengthening animal health systems**, not only to prevent spillover of zoonotic disease to humans and **reduce the risk of future pandemics** (more than 75 per cent of emerging infectious diseases originate in animals), but also to **attain sustainable development**, including by supporting communities, particularly across low and middle-income countries, who live closely together with and depend on animals for their survival and livelihoods.

Chapter II. International peace and security

Chapter II should promote a culture of peace and diplomacy, countering terrorism in all its forms and focusing on the prevention of conflicts which create enormous long-term risks on human, animal and nature health, well-being, livelihoods, and quality of life.

Addressing and **eliminating illicit and legal forms of poaching and wildlife trafficking and trade** should be prioritized. Wildlife trafficking links to organised crime, corruption, fraud, and terror, threatening global security and development. Curbing illicit trafficking in wildlife and conserving and restoring biodiversity and functioning ecosystems can also contribute to reducing the risk of emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases.

These interlinked threats can be addressed through bans, sanctions, and enforcement of international legal instruments including, but not limited to, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Further, the Pact should reiterate commitments to UN General Assembly resolutions 69/314¹¹ of 30 July 2015, 70/301¹² of 9 September 2016, 71/326¹³ of 11 September 2017, 73/343¹⁴ of 16 September 2019, A/RES/75/311 of 23 July 2021 on tackling illicit trafficking in wildlife¹⁵, and Resolution 77/325 on 25 August 2023.

⁹ [Little Book for Investing in nature | BIOFIN](#) (2021)

¹⁰ [IPBES Workshop Report on Biodiversity and Pandemics](#) (2020)

¹¹ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/69/314>

¹² <https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/301>

¹³ <https://undocs.org/A/RES/71/326>

¹⁴ <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/343>

¹⁵ [Adoption of Resolution on Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife | General Assembly of the United Nations](#)

This chapter should also aim to **integrate environmental considerations in peacebuilding process and post-conflict recovery**. Environmental peacebuilding integrates natural resource management in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery to build resilience in communities affected by conflict.

Chapter III. Science, technology and innovation and digital cooperation

Delivering a just, green transition requires shifts to **improve access to technology, transfer knowledge**.

This Chapter should also focus on **ensuring that artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are safe, under human control and governed fairly and transparently**.

We suggest including the following language adopted in the Bletchey Park Declaration¹⁶ on the future regulation and control of AI: *“We recognize that this is a unique moment to act and affirm the need for the safe development of AI and for the transformative opportunities of AI to be used for good and for all, in an inclusive manner in our countries and globally. This includes for public services such as health and education, food security, in science, clean energy, biodiversity, and climate, to realize the enjoyment of human rights, and to strengthen efforts towards the achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals”*.

We also recommend acknowledging with concern the growth in online and cybercrime as well as the role of social media platforms in the context of illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which require innovative strategies and increased intergovernmental cooperation, as appropriate.

Chapter IV. Youth and future generations

So as to ensure the meaningful, inclusive, and effective engagement of youth as well as the need to think and act in the interests of Future Generations and leave the world in a better place, States must **commit to the United Nations General Assembly recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment**, adopted in 2022, including a rights-based approach to a healthy environment. Children experience the effects of climate change and environmental degradation more intensely and are subject to the short-term and cumulative, long-term effects of warming temperatures, air and water pollution, and climate-related disasters. We therefore strongly recommend addressing eco-anxiety in children including by **linking environmental rights to normative and legal obligations at international and national levels**.

Younger generations’ voices during decision-making processes must be heard. This could be enabled by encouraging funding opportunities for young people across the world, especially from the global south, to actively participate in high-level meetings for them to share their insights, as well as learn firsthand how these processes work.

Further, States must adopt commitments aligned with General Comment 26 of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which includes **the right of children to freedom from all forms of violence, such as exposure to violence inflicted upon animals**¹⁷¹⁸. It is crucial to encourage positive

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ai-safety-summit-2023-the-bletchley-declaration/the-bletchley-declaration-by-countries-attending-the-ai-safety-summit-1-2-november-2023>

¹⁷ Committee on the Rights of the Child. General comment No. 13 (2011). [The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence](#).

¹⁸ European Link Coalition. 2023. [NGO Thematic Report Informing on UN General Comment 26 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child & Unification with UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals](#).

interactions between children, animals, and the rest of the natural world. These obligations may be achieved through humane education, legal protections, and enforcement.

Education for sustainable development, including nature's multiple values, gender equality and human rights, should be mainstreamed at all levels in national education policies and curricula. Of particular importance is the promotion of the benefits of biodiversity and access to nature to human health and well-being, with a focus on nature's intrinsic value¹⁹.

Chapter V. Transforming global governance

It is time to **fully integrate the diverse values of biodiversity into decision-making**²⁰ at all levels, including by adopting an economy of well-being where economic and social progress are not solely measured by GDP and founded on market-based models. For instance, **recognizing and accounting for the multiple values of biodiversity** including animals' contributions to ecosystem services leads to better outcomes for people and nature. The IPBES Values Assessment Report²¹ finds that **emphasizing principles such as unity, responsibility, stewardship and justice, both towards other people and towards nature**, will lead to better sustainability outcomes and is a really important part of the transformative change that is needed to address the multiple global crises, including the loss of nature.

Finally, despite the severe impacts of wildlife crimes, there is no global agreement on wildlife crime and existing wildlife trade laws are not adequately enforced. In order to address gaps in the current international legal framework to prevent and combat illicit trafficking in wildlife, we recommend the **adoption of a new protocol to combat wildlife trafficking** under the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC).

²⁰ The [Dasgupta Review](#) (2021) sets out a framework to understand the sustainability of our interaction with nature and prioritize efforts to enhance nature and prosperity.

²¹ The [IPBES Values Assessment](#) (2022) explores how to concretely consider the multiple values of nature in decision making to build more sustainable and just futures.