SDG Goals



Life on land

- **Biodiversity governance is expanding, even as species loss continues.** Catalysed by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, countries are strengthening laws and targets for biodiversity protection, with 155 countries establishing national biodiversity targets by 2025. Yet more than 48,600 species are facing extinction, and global extinction risk continues to worsen.
- **Forest loss has slowed but persists.** Global progress in reducing deforestation and expanding sustainable forest management has eased global net forest loss, with over half of forests now under management plans and deforestation rates declining over the past decades. Yet forests continue to shrink overall, with 41 million hectares lost since 2015.
- **Protection of key biodiversity areas (KBA) has grown, but many sites remain unidentified.** Average protection of KBAs has nearly doubled over the last 25 years, yet many countries may have identified only a portion of their KBAs, leaving critical sites potentially unprotected.
- Closing the gaps in biodiversity protection, forest conservation and species preservation will require stronger governance, sustained investment and accelerated implementation, as well as stronger links between legislation and on-the-ground results.



Young people from Yurumanguí learn about community forest management in the Cauca Valley, Colombia.

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Countries are shifting from agreements to action to protect biodiversity

As countries work to halt biodiversity loss by 2030, the focus is shifting from broad environmental commitments to concrete action, including national legislation, action plans and integrated accounting systems. The adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework in 2022 has brought renewed attention and momentum to the implementation of these commitments.

Expanding ratification of frameworks for equitably sharing the benefits of biodiversity: By the end of 2025, 142 countries and the European Union ratified the Nagoya Protocol – more than double the 70 in 2015 – committing to the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources. In addition, 84 countries have published legislative, administrative or policy measures through the Access and Benefit-sharing Clearing-House, and 154 countries are now covered by the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

These frameworks are translating into real-world results. Through the International Treaty's Benefit-sharing Fund, projects in 78 developing countries have helped over 1 million small-scale farmers, researchers and breeders conserve crop diversity and expand access to climate-resilient seed varieties.

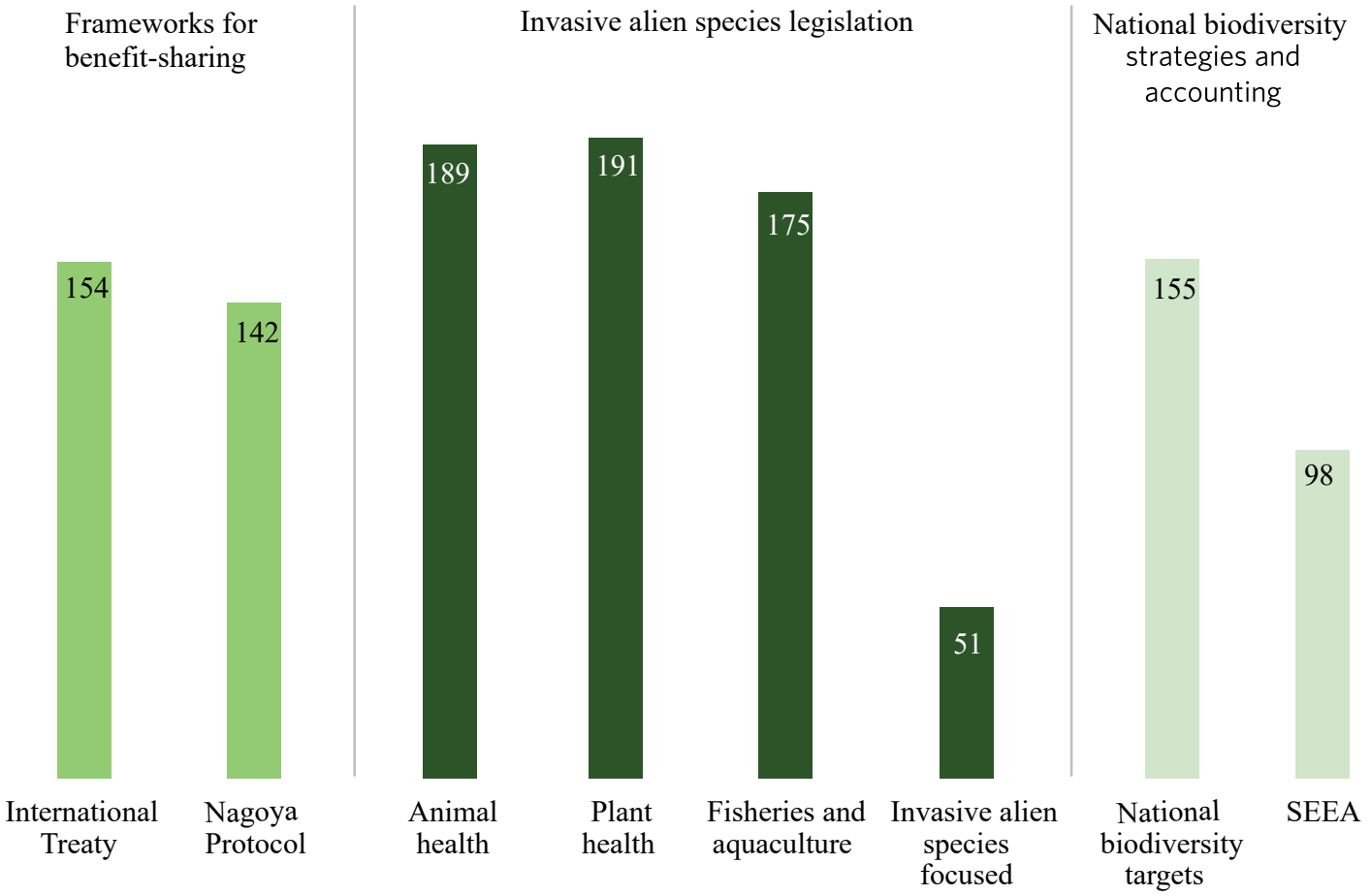
Strengthened responses to invasive alien species: Invasive species can drive extinctions, threaten food security and intensify environmental disasters worldwide. Their economic impacts have increased dramatically, with estimated damages quadrupling each decade since 1970 and reaching at least $423 billion in 2019. Today, nearly all countries have invasive alien species management legislation embedded in key sectors, including plant health (98 per cent), animal health (97 per cent) and fisheries and aquaculture (90 per cent), and 139 countries have established national targets aligned with the Global Biodiversity Framework.

However, implementation gaps persist. Only about 26 per cent have dedicated invasive alien species laws and of 57 surveyed countries only 67 per cent reported dedicated national budget allocations for invasive alien species management.

Deeper integration of biodiversity into national planning: More countries are establishing biodiversity targets and accounting systems in alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework. By 2025, 155 countries had established national biodiversity targets linked to development planning, and 98 countries were implementing the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting (SEEA), representing a 42 per cent increase since 2017.

The path forward: Legislative and policy momentum is clear, but gaps in implementation and data remain, underscoring the need for countries to move faster to turn frameworks into action.

Number of countries advancing biodiversity governance through legislation, national targets and accounting systems, 2025



Note: International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources and the Nagoya Protocol country counts include the European Union; Invasive alien species legislation is measured across 195 countries; "national biodiversity targets" refer to the number of countries that have developed at least one national target aligned with target 14 of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework; SEEA refers to the number of countries implementing this framework.

Safeguarding Earth's key biodiversity areas remains incomplete and uneven

Biodiversity is unevenly distributed across the planet, making the more than 16,600 identified KBAs—sites critical for the persistence of species and ecosystems—especially important to safeguard for sustaining life on Earth. Roughly two thirds of KBAs are at least partially within protected and conserved areas, with average protected coverage of each KBA reaching 45 per cent by 2025, up from 25 per cent in 2000. However, progress has largely stalled since 2015 and remains uneven, exceeding 60 per cent in Europe and Northern America but falling below 25 per cent in parts of Oceania. Coverage across marine, terrestrial, freshwater and mountain ecosystems remains broadly similar at around 42 to 47 per cent.

A significant protection gap persists, and many countries may have identified only a portion of their KBAs – potentially as little as half – leaving some of the world's most important biodiversity sites likely unrecognized and unprotected. Expanding protection and updating KBA networks will be essential by 2030. Countries worldwide are intensifying efforts to identify and protect KBAs. In 2025, newly protected and conserved areas were established across countries including Argentina, Canada, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, French Polynesia, Indonesia, Mozambique, New Zealand and Peru.

Sustainable forest management advances, but forest loss remains significant worldwide

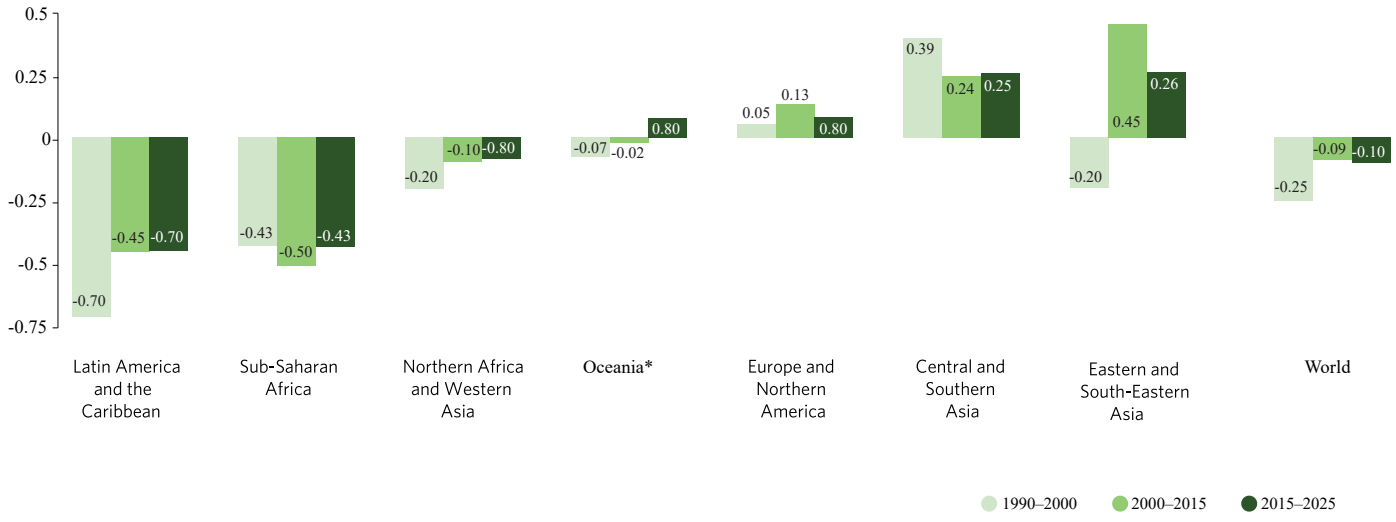
Forests sustain biodiversity, regulate water cycles, buffer climate extremes and provide livelihoods for hundreds of millions of people. But they face mounting pressure from climate-induced wildfires, pests and ongoing land conversion. Over the past 35 years, global forests shrank by 203.1 million hectares, including a loss of 41 million hectares since 2015. This translates to a decline from 33.3 per cent of Earth's land in 1990 to 31.8 per cent today. While the world continues to lose forest area, the pace of loss is slowing. Deforestation fell from 17.6 million hectares per year in 1990–2000 to 10.9 million hectares per year in 2015–2025. When combined with forest expansion in some countries, the net loss rate has dropped by more than half – from 10.7 million hectares per year in the 1990s to 4.1 million hectares per year in 2015–2025. However, this recent rate slightly exceeds the average for 2000–2015, as forest expansion slowed.

Yet progress in sustainable forest management is tangible. One fifth (20 per cent) of the world's forests are in legally established protected areas and more than half (55 per cent of total forest area) are under long-term management plans. Above-ground biomass – the total mass of living plant material above the soil, including trees, shrubs and vines – has also increased. These improvements point to stronger governance and growth in many forests.

However, these gains cannot offset losses in regions where deforestation persists. While forest area expanded in parts of Asia, Europe and Northern America through afforestation, including restoration and natural expansion, three regions account for most global losses. Latin America and the Caribbean, sub-Saharan Africa and South-Eastern Asia have each lost more than 14 per cent of their forests since 1990, and the pace has not slowed since 2000. Sub-Saharan Africa alone is home to 8 of the 10 countries with the largest percentage declines in forest area since 1990; some have lost more than 50 per cent of their forest area.

Arresting forest loss at the global scale requires targeted action where it matters most – particularly in the regions most affected, where agricultural expansion for crops and livestock remains the primary driver. Stronger policies to curb deforestation, investment in restoration and sustainable agriculture, and political commitment will be essential.

Annual forest area change rate, 1990-2025



*Excluding Australia and New Zealand.

Corals are the fastest deteriorating species group, severely impacting biodiversity and livelihoods

Global biodiversity loss continues to worsen, with more than 48,600 species under threat of extinction. The Red List Index, which measures trends in overall extinction risk across species, has declined from 0.80 in 1993 to below 0.75 in 2025, as species have been increasingly pushed towards extinction. Declines have been particularly pronounced in Southern Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

Corals – the most rapidly deteriorating of any species group – exemplify the accelerating biodiversity crisis. One third of warm-water reef-building corals were at high risk of extinction in 2008, rising to 44 per cent by 2025. Climate change, pollution and unsustainable fishing compound these deterioriations. As reefs decline, so do the livelihoods of almost 1 billion people who rely on the fisheries, tourism, coastal protection and cultural values they provide.

Goal 14 (/sdgs/report/2026/Goal-14/)
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Goal 16

ABOUT

This is the official website of the United Nations providing information on the development and implementation of an indicator framework for the follow up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is maintained by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) (http://unstats.un.org/), a division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) (http://www.un.org/desa/).

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