

# Cop27 must pave the way for ‘a Paris moment’ for nature, says UN

Outcome of climate summit is crucial to ensuring strong targets at Cop15 in December, warns biodiversity head



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, UN head of biodiversity, speaks during the first part of Cop15 in Kunming, China, October 2021. Photograph: China News Service/Getty Images

The age of extinction is supported by

[About this content](#)

**[Phoebe Weston](#)**

[@phoeb0](#)

Fri 11 Nov 2022 11.37 GMT

The outcome of **Cop27** will be crucial not just in terms of tackling the climate crisis but to help ensure a future for nature, the UN’s head of biodiversity has said, outlining plans for “a Paris moment for biodiversity” at Cop15 in Montreal in December.

“Clearly the world is crying out for change, watching as governments seek to heal our relationships with nature, with the climate,” said Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, executive secretary of the convention on biological diversity (CBD), at a

media briefing on Thursday. “Scientists have told us in no uncertain terms ... that climate change and biodiversity loss are intrinsically connected and that’s why we are looking at the [Cop15] framework as, basically, a Paris moment for biodiversity.”

In Paris in 2015, governments agreed legally binding targets to limit global temperature rises for the first time, pledging to hold global heating to well below 2C, with an aspiration not to breach **1.5C above pre-industrial levels**.

At the Cop15 summit in December, organised by China but hosted in Canada, governments are expected to agree a UN agreement to halt the destruction of the natural world. Top officials have warned the nature agreement – the UN CBD – depends on strong climate commitments.



What is Cop15 and why does it matter for all life on Earth?

“We’re seeing more and more biodiversity agenda appearing in the discussions under the climate Cop,” Mrema said. “The outcomes from Cop27 will be instrumental, and will influence a lot the discussions and specific targets under the framework.”

David Cooper, deputy executive secretary of the CBD, said the climate crisis is one of the main **drivers of biodiversity decline**. “If we don’t have successful outcomes in the climate process, then we cannot hold and reverse biodiversity loss ... we depend on the success of the climate conference, but they also depend on the success of the biodiversity conference,” he said.

Heads of states or government are not expected to attend Cop15, Mrema said. This confirms reports last month that China **did not invite world leaders**, with suggestions Beijing was downplaying the crucial meeting in order not to embarrass the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, whose presence is not anticipated at the conference.

Many have raised concerns that the absence of world leaders will lessen the importance of Cop15, which already **clashes with the World Cup**. But Mrema said: “I think we need to be optimistic. I’m not worried at all. The leaders have made their commitments. We need them to really guide and instruct their negotiators to come to Montreal with an open mind, ready to arrive at consensus.”

Twenty-one targets are being negotiated, including protecting **30% of land and sea by 2030**, reducing the rate of introduction of invasive species by half, reducing pesticides by two-thirds and eliminating plastic waste.

Other draft targets include getting businesses to look at and **report on their impacts on biodiversity** and create a framework to reduce those impacts. There are also plans to increase money spent protecting biodiversity – from all sources public and private – to at least \$200bn a year, and redirect environmentally damaging agricultural subsidies.

The world negotiates biodiversity targets once a decade and governments will agree them for the 2020s at Cop15 in December after more than two years of pandemic-related delays.