

# A GLOBAL NETWORK OF BIODIVERCITIES BY 2030 – WHY AND HOW

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**Most of us reading this article live in a city, as does 57% of the world's population. Drawn from our personal experience and increasingly supported by well-designed long-term research, it is recognized that frequent interaction with biodiversity is essential for our physical, mental, and psychological wellbeing. We are embedded in nature, and for our survival, we must conserve biodiversity in areas where we live, play, and work – cities.**

Healing the urban-rural linkages is critical for making progress on global agendas such as the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Global Biodiversity Framework, among others. To effectively conserve and restore biodiversity, we need to address the current

weak ties between urban and rural areas by implementing a policy strategy and working to mitigate urban sprawls, protect local food systems and raise awareness of the social and economic cost of biodiversity loss.

As biodiversity knows no boundaries, its conservation and restoration must be carried out by everyone through global partnership at all levels. Many areas, widely spread geographically, face the daily existential challenges of biodiversity conservation and climate change, manifested as floods, droughts, rising sea levels, soaring temperatures, etc. Urgent action must be taken before we reach the tipping point.

### WHERE DO WE START?

The Global Commission on BiodiverCities by 2030, comprised of a committed team of multidisci-

plinary expertise, is a joint initiative of the World Economic Forum and the Alexander von Humboldt Institute. Championed by the Government of Colombia, it was established to inspire, motivate and assist city governments, businesses, and people in cities to thrive in harmony with nature by 2030. The Commission published a report titled "BiodiverCities by 2030: Transforming Cities' Relationship with Nature" in January 2022. The Alexander von Humboldt Institute has taken one step further by compiling this handbook.

### WHO CAN WE DRAW LESSONS FROM?

Colombia and Singapore are highlighted as two countries that have success stories to share, despite differences in their physical size,

culture, geographical features, and history. Both are firmly committed to the biodiversity agenda, as reflected in their numerous biodiversity conservation efforts. Medellín adopted a local action plan on urban biodiversity, "Medellín, a city of life," linking biodiversity and human wellbeing through ecosystem services. Singapore evolved from a Garden City to a City in a Garden in the past 50 years. To counter current existential challenges, Singapore is transforming into a City in Nature through nature's restoration in the city for liveability, sustainability, and wellbeing. This is achieved by applying nature-based solutions for climate, ecological and social resilience.

While the implementation details might differ, the key CREATE principles to adhere to for biodiversity conservation are:

- **C**onserve indigenous natural ecosystems
- **R**estore, rehabilitate and enhance ecosystems
- **E**cologically connect natural areas
- **A**pply science and technology, especially nature-inspired ideas and nature-based solutions
- **T**otally involve everyone
- **E**valuate and monitor biodiversity efforts using tools like the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity, IUCN Urban Nature Index, etc.

The processes of biodiversity conservation must be facilitated by key enablers, this is:

- 1** Active, comprehensive, and all-inclusive participation by everyone. Active involvement by youth as they must play a prominent role in helping shape the future responsibly.
- 2** Application of science, technology, and digitalization will help make the journey more efficient.

It is imperative for our survival that we hasten the momentum to convert cities worldwide to become BiodiverCities by 2030 and beyond. We have no other choice. Let's collaborate now to make our cities BiodiverCities!