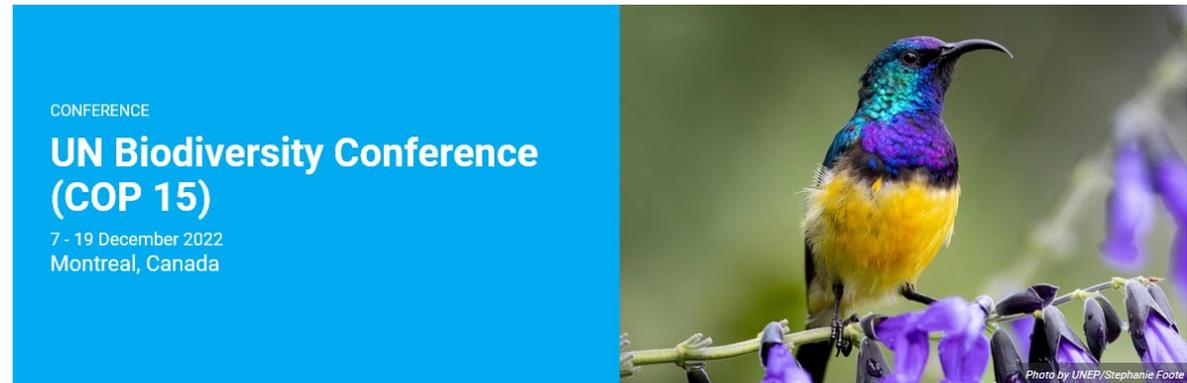


# Martha Justice Ministry at COP15

Highlights – December 2022





## Martha Justice Ministry at COP15 in Montreal

- This past December, Martha Justice Ministry Coordinator, Darlene O’Leary, attended the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in Montreal.
- COP15 was a historic gathering of states that are members of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to develop what is now the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, an agreement that will set the direction for protecting the planet’s biodiversity for the coming decade.
- It was a truly enriching experience to be part of the delegation of the Missionary Society of St. Columban and the Multifaith Coalition at COP15.

Photo: Multifaith Coalition panel

# About COP15

COP15 is the 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

- The Convention is an initiative that came out of the 1992 “Earth Summit” in Rio di Janeiro, Brazil. 196 states are party to this convention to protect the planet and its rich biodiversity.
- The conference was chaired by China, but due to Covid-19 restrictions, Canada agreed to host the event. This allowed for broader participation from civil society organizations, including Indigenous groups and faith groups, from across North America.
- COP15 does not have the high profile of the UN Convention on Climate Change (COP27), which took place in November in Egypt. However, this event was very significant due to the urgency in setting out a strong framework for protecting the earth’s biodiversity and the increased attention of the world on this issue in connection to the climate crisis.

Photo: Nature wall from Nature Canada’s cross country bus with letters to the Prime Minister, messages, and drawings.



# Biodiversity – The Sacred Web of Life



- Life on earth is a complex and interconnected web involving billions of species in relationship with each other.
- Each day, humans make use of about 40,000 species of plants and animals for food, shelter, clothing, and medicine.  
(<http://www.interfaithrainforest.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Primer-Tropical-Forest-and-Biodiversity-V9.pdf>)
- The Living Planet Index shows that between 1970 and 2018, the global populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians declined an average of 69% worldwide and one million plants and animals are currently threatened with extinction (WWF Living Planet Report, 2022: [https://wwf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/lpr\\_2022\\_full\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://wwf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/lpr_2022_full_report_en.pdf))
- Land and sea use impacts (like large-scale agriculture, mining, and deforestation), pollution, and climate change are the key drivers of biodiversity loss.
- We need a plan to halt damage and restore nature by the end of the decade.

# What is Biodiversity?

- [What is biodiversity?](#) See this World Wildlife Fund International video:



# COP15 – Global Biodiversity Framework

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- The negotiations at COP15 started in advance of the conference in Montreal, leading to a draft Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) document that would be reviewed by negotiators.
- Throughout the two weeks of the conference, parties to the convention reviewed each paragraph of the draft to negotiate the content, down to very specific wording.
- These negotiations were tense at times, leading to concerns that there would be a watered down agreement if they could not overcome these challenges.

# Global Biodiversity Framework – Key Priorities

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Key priorities raised in the draft GBF included:

- Halt and reverse biodiversity loss
- Address the drivers of biodiversity loss
- A Nature positive approach (like net-zero for climate change)
- A Rights-based, equitable approach
- Indigenous peoples and local community engagement and leadership
- Ambitious targets and timelines – protect 30% of global biodiversity by 2030 (30x30)
- Implementation mechanism
- Funding to support biodiversity protection

# JEM letter to Minister Guilbeault

- Ahead of COP15, Joint Ecological Ministries sent a letter to Minister Steven Guilbeault, Canada's Minister of Environment and Climate Change, calling for strong ambition and leadership from Canada at COP15.
- 45 Catholic communities and organizations, including Martha Justice Ministry, signed the letter.
- The letter called for biodiversity protection linked with climate mitigation, transparent and clear targets and timelines, accountability mechanisms, a justice and rights approach, and support for Indigenous leadership and management in biodiversity protection.



# Multifaith Coalition

- The Faith & Biodiversity UN Coordination Group became a key space for faith and conservation groups to come together in advocacy at the international level for biodiversity protection.
- Ahead of COP15, this group developed a response to the draft post-2020 GBF, which Martha Justice Ministry and the Sisters of Charity Federation signed, along with a range of faith-based groups:  
<https://www.biodiversity.faith/policy>
- The recommendations cover key areas, including the protecting the sacred web of life, ambition, a rights-based approach, cross cutting issues, production & extraction, and an implementation mechanism.



Photo: Panel hosted by the Brahma Kumaris and A Rocha; Moderator David Fletcher

Photo: Agnes Richard (MLSM Canada), Darlene, Caroline Kiiru (LSM Kenya), and Anna Johnson (LSM US)



## Faith-based presence at COP15

MJM connected with several faith-based representatives at COP15, including:

- **Amy Woolam Echeverria**, Central JPIC Coordinator, Missionary Society of St. Columban, Co-coordinator of the Vatican's Ecology Taskforce, and Multifaith Coalition co-lead
- **Josianne Gauthier**, Secretary General, CIDSE (Europe-based Catholic Organization - International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity)
- **Sister Sue Wilson**, Executive Director, Office for Systemic Justice, Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada, and **Sabrina di Mateo**, Canadian Religious Conference
- **Agnes Richard**, Coordinator, Mouvement Laudato Si' Movement Canada; **Anna Johnson**, Laudato Si' Movement (US) and **Caroline Kiiru**, Laudato Si' Movement (Kenya)
- **Joe Gunn**, Centre Oblat, and **Mark Hathaway**, Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice
- Other groups included the Brahma Kumaris, the Parliament of World Religions, A Rocha, Development and Peace, and many others

# MJM at the March for Biodiversity and Human Rights

- MJM joined the Laudato Si' Movement, Centre Oblat, Development and Peace, and Archdiocese of Montreal representatives at a civil society rally to support biodiversity protection and human rights.
- This was the first ever rally at a UN Biodiversity conference.





The Multifaith Coalition had a chance to meet with Elisabeth Mrema (centre), Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, who took time out of her schedule to talk with us about the importance of faith groups at COP15 and in the work of protecting biodiversity.

Multifaith Coalition meeting with Elisabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biodiversity

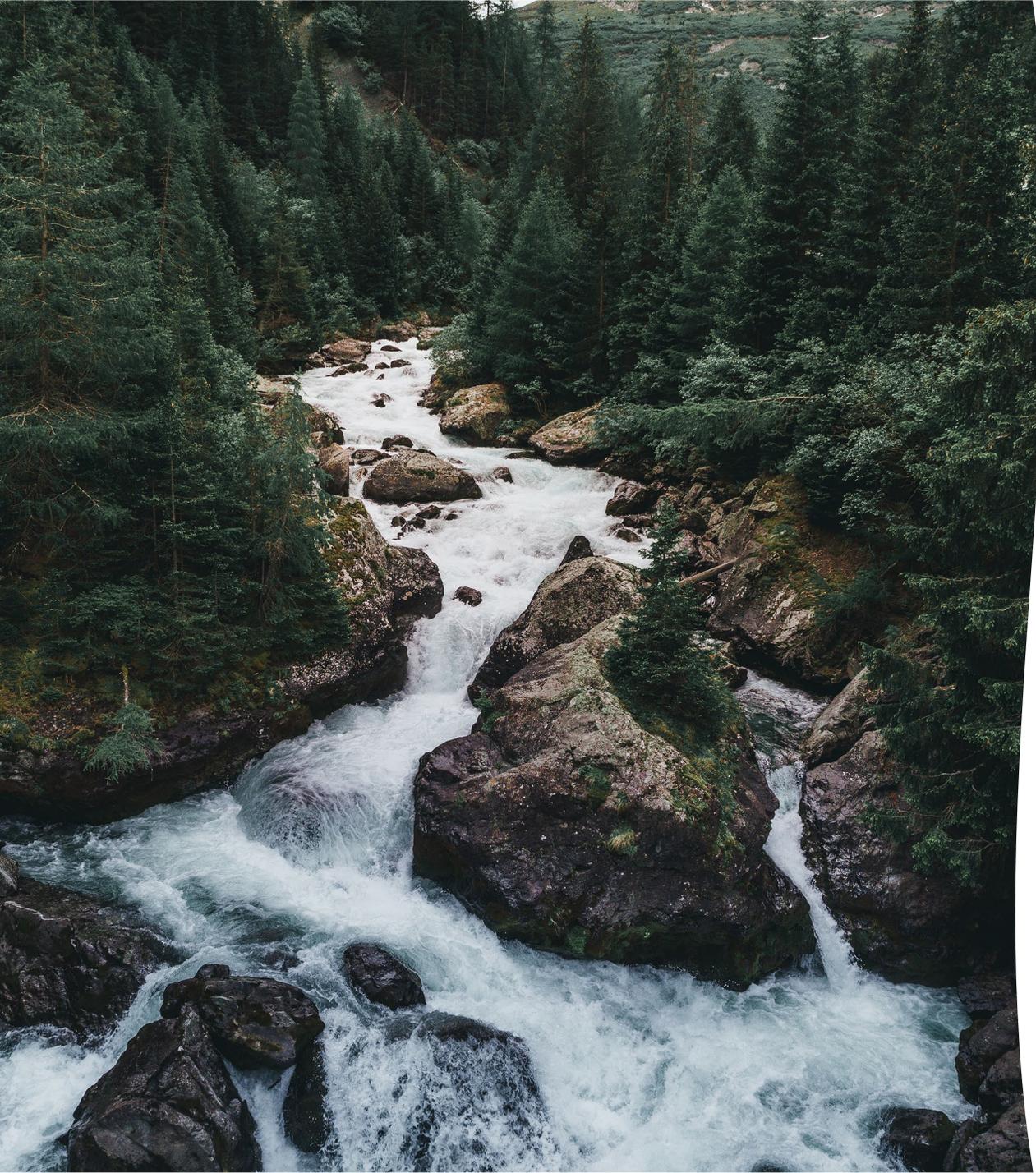
# COP15 Final Outcome – The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

**The GBF commits to 4 goals and 23 targets for 2030, including:**

- Effective conservation and management of 30% of lands and waters (inland, coastal, and ocean)
- Restoration underway or completed of 30% lands and waterways
- Cut to zero loss of areas of high biodiversity importance
- Cut global food waste in half, reduce over-consumption and first ever mention of “agroecology” (sustainable farming that works with nature)
- Halt human induced extinction of all threatened species
- Protection of traditional knowledge in use of genetic material and fair and equitable sharing
- Prioritize the rights and roles of Indigenous peoples and local communities
- Ensure adequate means to implement the framework, including funding



[Photo: Convention on Biological Diversity - https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-cbd-press-release-final-19dec2022](https://www.cbd.int/article/cop15-cbd-press-release-final-19dec2022)



# Canada's commitments

- \$350 million in new financing for biodiversity
- \$800 million over 7 years to four Indigenous-led conservation projects
- Strong support for the target of protecting 30% of biodiversity (lands and waters) by 2030 (currently at 13.5% of lands and 14.6% of waters)
- Support for Indigenous leadership in conservation management and planning
- Committed to legislating federal protected areas targets and creation of accountability act to do so.
- See this helpful video overview from Endangered Ecosystems Alliance:  
<https://www.endangerecosystemsalliance.org/news>

However, follow through on these commitments is essential.

# COP15 – links to resources

- [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (final document)
- [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (website)
- [Faiths at COP15](#) (Multifaith Coalition website)
- [Faiths at COP15 YouTube channel](#) (videos of panel discussions)
- [Singing with the Earth: Catholic Responses to Creation Care](#) (Faiths at COP15 video)
- [Evaluation of COP15 Kunming-Montreal GBF](#) (Faiths at COP15 video)
- [EarthBeat COP15 coverage](#) (series - *National Catholic Reporter*)
- [March for Biodiversity and Human Rights interviews](#) (video - *Montreal Gazette*)
- [Coming Home – We are part of the land that we know](#) (reflection by Josianne Gauthier, CIDSE)
- [Advent of an epiphany on biodiversity](#) (reflection by Joe Gunn, Centre Oblate – *Catholic Register*)
- [Protecting Biological Diversity Requires a Just Transition](#) (Dr. Sue Wilson, CSJ)



Photo: Laudato Si' Movement presentation and panel on "The Letter" including Stephen de Boer, Assistant Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada



# Bringing COP15 Back Home

- Learning more about species at risk in our region
- Doing a biodiversity audit of properties
- Pushing for local, provincial, national levels of government to act on commitments
- Learning from Indigenous communities about Indigenous Traditional Knowledge
- Supporting Indigenous conservation and management
- Supporting local, organic, small-scale farmers
- Connecting protection of biodiversity with climate justice