



**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS,
AGENCIES, AGREEMENTS AND
PROGRAMMES
SUPPLEMENT**

***International Conventions, Agencies, Agreements and Programmes.
Implications for peat and peatland management***

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Peatland in Central Finland. Photo: Susann Warnecke

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The Global Peatlands Initiative is a multi-partner United Nations Environment Programme initiative, launched at the Global Landscapes Forum in Marrakesh in 2016, to save one of the world's largest carbon stores and prevent it being emitted into the atmosphere as carbon dioxide. The current greenhouse gas emissions from drained or burned peatlands are estimated to amount up to five percent of the global carbon budget — approaching two billion tonnes CO₂ per year.

The Global Peatlands Initiative aims to increase the conservation, restoration and responsible management of peatlands in countries with significant peat deposits delivering benefits for agriculture, biodiversity and climate. In terms of scale and scope, the initiative goes beyond any recent collaborative efforts on peat.

Among the founding members are: Governments of Indonesia, Peru and the Republic of Congo, UNEP, FAO, IFAD, EU, International Peatland Society, Wetlands International, UNEP-WCMC, GRID-Arendal, Ramsar Secretariat, European Space Agency, World Resources Institute, Greifswald Mire Centre and SarVision/Sateligence.

Partners to the Initiative work together within their respective areas of expertise to improve the conservation, restoration and responsible management of peatlands. Their efforts will contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, maintaining ecosystem services and securing lives and livelihoods through improved adaptive capacity.

Globally the Global Peatlands Initiative will assess the extent, status and importance of peatlands to provide a comprehensive picture of peatlands as a core asset in global efforts to mitigate climate change. This will commence with a rapid assessment of peatland extent and carbon content followed by a more detailed analysis of sustainable peatland management options, South-South-North cooperation, and private sector engagement. Initially, international activities are focussing on three partner countries, Indonesia, Peru and the Republic of Congo where pilot projects are promoting sustainable management approaches to maximize the contribution of peatlands to climate change mitigation and natural resource use.

RECENT GLOBAL PEATLANDS INITIATIVE INVOLVEMENT IN SIDE EVENTS AT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

The Global Peatlands Initiative had a strong presence at the UNFCCC COP24 with Peatlands a noted topic across more than 7 side events and discussion forums.

UNFCCC COP24 Bonn, December 2018: Towards a joint peatland declaration: synergies of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) to reverse the trend of peatland degradation

This event was coordinated by UN Environment, UN Convention for Biological Diversity and Wetlands International and hosted by the Global Environment Facility in their Rio Conventions Pavilion. There were contributions from experts from the Ramsar Convention; UNCCD; UNCBD; UN Environment; Wetlands International; International Mire Conservation Group; Indonesia, Mongolia and Russia.

This event discussed if it would be beneficial to develop a joint declaration or work programme on peatland across the relevant MEAs and how it could be achieved. The aim of the collaboration is to accelerate action for peatlands protection, restoration and sustainable use by identifying synergies for joint implementation of the relevant conventions. Convention Secretariats, leading International Organizations and contracting parties all expressed their desire to work jointly on peatlands issues as an urgent and important priority. Further work will be carried out amongst the Global Peatlands Initiative partners on developing the synergies and possible work programme or declaration in collaboration with contracting parties.

UNFCCC COP24 Bonn, December 2018: The trace of haze: peat fires as local and global challenges

This Side Event was held in the German Pavilion coordinated by UN Environment and the Greifswald Mire Centre and co-hosted by the German Government. It highlighted the relevance and urgency of action to avoid and stop peat fires in the fight against climate change. Peat fires are unique as they are very difficult to extinguish and may burn undetected underground for months, even after rainfall and under snow cover. They cause huge emissions of greenhouse gases and pollute the atmosphere with health damaging carbon monoxide, fine particulate matter and (semi-)volatile organic compounds. Over the last decade, Indonesia, South Africa, and Russia have been subject to devastating fires on drained peatlands, while in 2018, European countries (e.g. UK, Latvia, Germany) also suffered under near-uncontrollable peat fires.

The only way to avoid peat fires is to restore the water level in drained peatlands. Rewetting not only prevents fire, but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions, stops peat degradation and subsidence, and enhances biodiversity. Speakers from Indonesia, UK, Russia, Poland and Germany shared key lessons and highlighted the benefits of peatland protection, rewetting, restoration and drainage-free livelihoods such as paludiculture and eco-tourism.

Peatland experts stressed the need to pay attention to fires in drained peatlands as “hotspots within the hotspots” and called for a strengthened global exchange, collaboration and commitments to abate this serious threat to climate change mitigation, human health, biodiversity and sustainable livelihoods. They proved that the benefits of protecting and restoring peatlands outweigh the costs, and countries with high peatland emissions should take immediate action to rewet their peatlands as part of their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) a simple way to reduce carbon emissions.

Global Landscape Forum Bonn, December 2018: Lessons learned and best practices for the management of tropical peatlands: an inter-tropical dialogue

Peatlands are carbon sinks that have been storing dead organic material for thousands of years. Land use change and climate change are threatening to release this stored carbon through drought, drainage, land cover change, and fire. This has large consequences not only for climate change (increasing the atmospheric concentration of CO₂) but also as a threat to economies and human health.

In the spirit of intra-tropical cooperation, the session highlighted key lessons learned and best practices for the management of tropical peatlands with the aim to advance creative land management solutions based on practical insights, on-going activities and efforts on working toward sustainably managing their tropical peatlands. The challenges and solutions that practitioners can use to balance decision making between supporting livelihoods, supporting production, and maintaining the ecosystem services provided by these valuable ecosystems were considered.

GLF Landscape Forum Bonn, December 2018: High level South-South Cooperation in action – Protecting Tropical Peatlands Together – a Triple win for the Climate, People and the Planet

Peatlands are unique ecosystems that offer a triple win for the climate, people and the planet. Peatlands are enormous carbon sinks; they protect unique biodiversity, control water supply and quality, cool the atmosphere, prevent floods, and more, provide essential ecosystem services that peoples' lives depend on. Despite their importance and the extent of the threats they face, tropical peatlands are one of the least understood and monitored ecosystems. As peatlands become more accessible through development and investments in large scale commodity production, their functions are put at risk.

This side event highlighted the steps being taken by key peatland countries to tackle major challenges and imminent threats to peatlands. The session included knowledge sharing through diverse experiences and exchanges of ideas to help others leap forward for the sustainable management of peatlands and thus avoid disasters, learning from mistakes and approaches of the past.

The Global Peatlands Initiative partners shared progress, innovations, discoveries and the German Government announced their support of 2 million Euros through the International Climate Initiative for the UN Environment led Global Peatlands Initiative. The event was a celebration of the achievements so far such as the [Brazzaville Declaration on Peatlands](#), partnership commitments, and the launch of the [International Tropical Peatlands Centre](#) and to advance collaborative research on restoration, protection and sustainable use through innovations on paludiculture (wet agriculture) of tropical peatlands. Other participants and partners were also invited to share their experience and join in to support the efforts to strengthen and further establish the Centre of Excellence through academic fellowships, innovative research collaboration, technology transfer and capacity building.

Ramsar COP13 Side Event: Towards a joint peatland declaration: MEAs answer to reverse the trend on peatland degradation

Peatlands are unique ecosystems that offer important ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, water supply and purification, atmospheric cooling, flood prevention, biomass production for food and others. The services peatlands provide are globally and locally relevant both for urban and rural areas. Peatland conservation, restoration, wise use and management can be realized and supported by different Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

Co-organized by UN Environment, Wetlands International and the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, this Global Peatlands Initiative brought peatlands into the spotlight at the [Ramsar COP13](#) in October 2018 hosting a collaborative side event that highlighted the ecosystems as wetlands of global significance. To strengthen synergies and amplify efforts to maintain and restore ecosystem services of peatlands, the Ramsar Convention, UNCCD, UNCBD and UNFCCC are looking at how to work together on a joint declaration. The exchange between Contracting Parties and technical experts will inform and inspire how stakeholders can work together to include peatland measures in implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), National Action Plans for Disaster Risk Reduction (NAP) etc.

The session resulted in a dialogue with contributions from Austria, South Africa, Convention on Migratory Species, UN Environment and other international experts urging support for the next steps towards a joint peatland declaration amongst the MEAs. The primary parties agreed to take the discussion forward at other international events such as the UNFCCC COP 24 in Katowice, Poland so that the collaboration is in response to countries needs and reflects their experience of implementation of programmatic synergies.

The Brazzaville Declaration 2018

The third meeting of the Partners of the Global Peatlands Initiative took place in Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo in March 2018. After the meeting, the United Nations Environment Programme, one of the organisers and funder of the meeting, put out a press release announcing that a “historic agreement” had been signed “to protect the world’s largest tropical peatland” in Cuvette Centrale region of the Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation. The Brazzaville Declaration was signed jointly by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo and Indonesia.

During the meeting partners:

1. Shared technical knowledge, tools and approaches
2. Held a ministerial level policy dialogue on strengthening decision making, policies, legal and institutional frameworks and opportunities
3. Agreed upon joint actions including developing an outline for the Peatlands Global Assessment.

The peatlands in the Cuvette Centrale are estimated to hold about 30 billion tonnes of carbon. The recognition of this peatland makes the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Congo the second and third most important countries in the tropics in terms of peatland area and carbon stocks after Indonesia. The near-pristine peatlands of the Congos are globally significant and are an important source of ecological stability for the entire region and home to unique animals and plants. The Congo Basin has been inhabited for more than 50,000 years and today is home 75 million people who need it for shelter, food and fresh water.

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What is IPBES?

IPBES is the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. It is an independent body, established by 100-member States in 2012 with the objective to strengthen the science-policy interface for biodiversity and ecosystem services for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development. Its membership has continued to grow as IPBES' impact has increased.

IPBES currently has over 130 member States. NGOs, conventions, other organisations, and civil society groupings also participate as observers, together with several thousand individual stakeholders, ranging from scientific experts to representatives of academic and research institutions, local communities and the private sector, contributing to and benefiting from IPBES work.

IPBES organisation and structure

Plenary: The governing body of IPBES – made up of the representatives of IPBES member States – usually meets once per year.

Observers: Any State not yet a member of IPBES; the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and other biodiversity-related conventions; related UN bodies; as well as many other relevant organizations and agencies.

Bureau: Comprising the IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson, four Vice-Chairs and five additional officers who oversee the administrative functions of IPBES.

Multidisciplinary Expert Panel (MEP): Five expert participants from each of the five UN regions, overseeing all IPBES scientific and technical functions.

Stakeholders: All contributors to and end-users of the IPBES outputs.

Expert Groups & Taskforces: Selected scientists and knowledge holders, carrying out the IPBES assessments and other deliverables.

Secretariat (Includes Technical Support Units): Ensures the efficient functioning of IPBES through support to the Plenary, Bureau and MEP, as well as implementing the Platform's work and administrative functions. Led by the Executive Secretary of IPBES, Dr Anne Larigauderie. The headquarters of the secretariat is hosted in Bonn by the Federal Government of Germany.

Why does IPBES matter?

Biodiversity and nature's benefits to people underpin almost every aspect of human development and are key to the success of the new Sustainable Development Goals. They help to produce food, clean water, regulate climate and even control disease. Yet they are being depleted and degraded faster than at any other point in human history. IPBES is unique – harnessing the best expertise from across all scientific disciplines and knowledge communities – to provide policy-relevant knowledge and promote the implementation of knowledge-based policies at all levels of government, the private sector and civil society.

What does IPBES do?

The work of IPBES can be broadly grouped into four complementary areas:

- **Assessments:** On specific themes (e.g. “Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production”); methodological issues (e.g. “Scenarios and Modelling”); and at both the regional and global levels (e.g. “Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services”).
- **Policy Support:** Identifying policy-relevant tools and methodologies, facilitating their use, and promoting their further development.
- **Building Capacity & Knowledge:** Identifying and meeting the priority capacity, knowledge and data needs of our member States, experts and stakeholders.
- **Communications & Outreach:** Ensuring the widest reach and impact of our work.

What does an IPBES output look like?

The first IPBES thematic assessment, on “Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production”, was completed in 2016 – the result of two years of intensive work by 77 experts from all over the world. The assessment cites about 3,000 scientific papers and includes information about practices based on indigenous and local knowledge from more than 60 locations around the world. Its Summary for Policymakers was approved word-by-word by the IPBES Plenary.

Who can become a member?

All Member States of the United Nations are eligible for IPBES membership, with a large number of NGOs, organisations, conventions and civil society groupings participating in the formal IPBES process as observers.

Why become a member?

To strengthen knowledge foundations for better policy through science, for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, long-term human well-being and sustainable development.

How to become a member?

Should your Government wish to join IPBES, all that is required is for this intention to be officially communicated to the IPBES secretariat, by way of a formal letter, issued by or on behalf of the authority that would normally issue credentials for your national delegation to participate in a session of the IPBES Plenary, in other words by your Head of State or Government or minister for foreign affairs, consistent with your national policies and law. Organisations seeking observer status should contact the IPBES Bureau.

IPBES Secretariat

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Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is a multi-stakeholder platform, formed in 2013, with a global secretariat led by the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR). Core funding is provided by the Government of Germany. The GLF promotes action towards the creation of productive, prosperous, equitable and climate-resilient landscapes and the implementation of the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and UN Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030). Charter members: CIRAD, CIFOR, Conservation International, Eco-agriculture Partners, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, IPMG, CIAT, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, INBAR, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, Rights and Resources Initiative, UN Environment, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation part of Wageningen Research, World Agroforestry Centre, WWF Germany, Youth in Landscapes Initiative (YIL), World Bank group

Global Landscape Forum is the world's largest knowledge-led platform on sustainable land use, dedicated to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. 3,900 organizations and 150,000 participants have been connected to gatherings in Warsaw, Lima, London, Paris, Marrakech, Jakarta, Bonn, Washington D.C. and Nairobi – and reached over 231.5 million from 185 countries. GLF members and stakeholders are greening Africa through the AFR100 and Latin America through Initiative 20x20. GLF is fighting to save the world's peatlands through the Global Peatlands Initiative (GPI) and its coastal communities through the Blue Carbon Partnership. We are developing innovative finance mechanisms to invest in sustainable farming and supply chains with the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) and the Tropical Landscapes Finance Facility, among others. GLF aspires to spark a movement of 1 billion people around sustainable landscapes.

GLF believes in taking a holistic, fact-based approach to the most pressing global challenges: restoring billions of hectares of idle, degraded land; tackling insecure tenure, community and gender rights; addressing food insecurity and declining rural livelihoods; confronting inadequate finance and unsustainable supply chains; and finding a universal framework of indicators to measure progress. GLF supporters share a positive vision of what the world's diverse landscapes – from the Andean Mountains to the peatlands of the Democratic Republic of Congo to the everyday places where we live, work and raise our children – can look like if we all work together. Let's tear down the fences and connect our backyards.

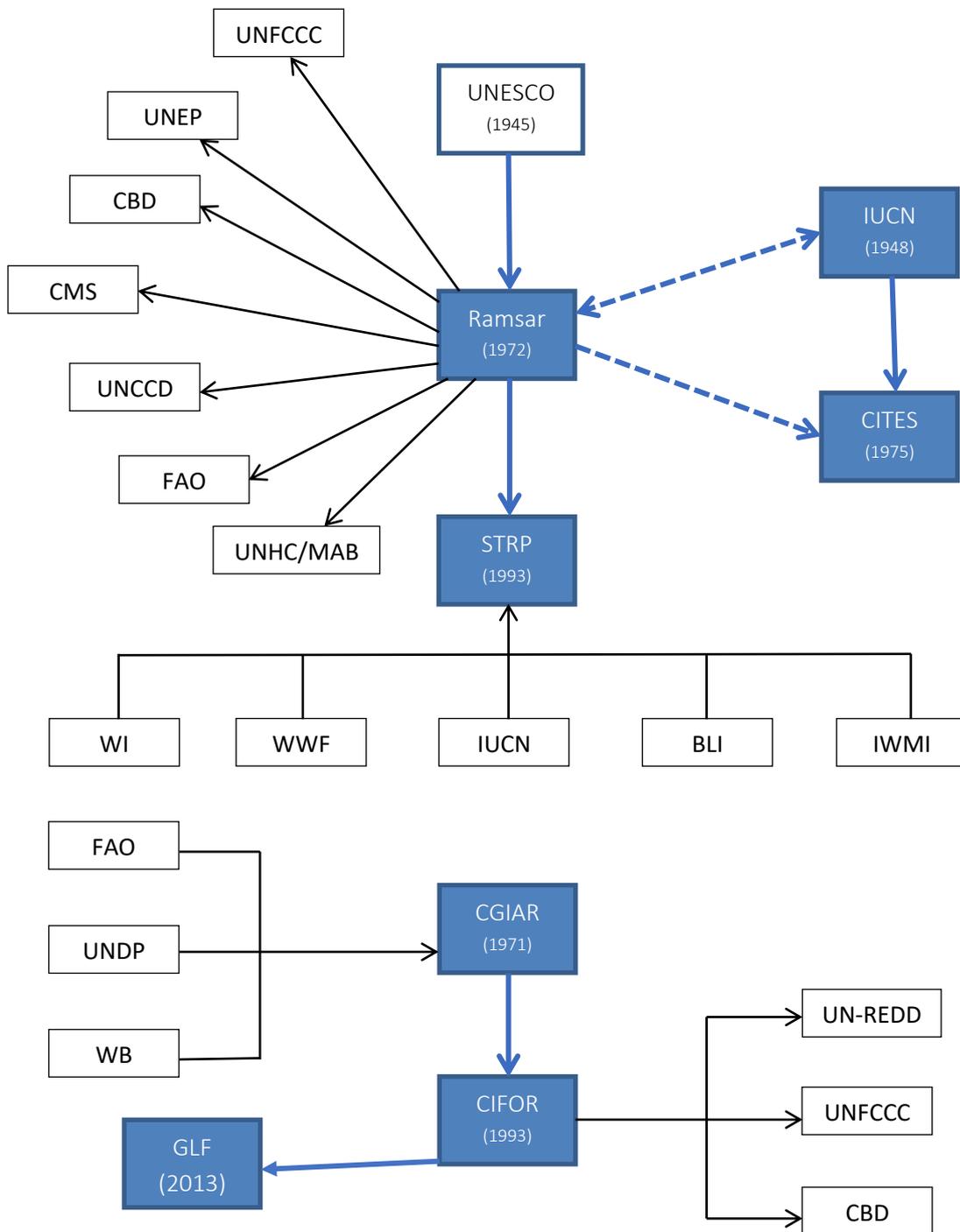
The GLF puts communities first in addressing landscape-level issues. With science and traditional knowledge at the core, GLF outreach, events and projects are designed to initiate dialogue, and follow-through addressing some of the most complex and multi-stakeholder problems facing our earth and our communities. Sustainable landscapes are essential for the future of this planet: for food, livelihoods, health, renewable materials, energy, biodiversity, business development, trade, climate regulation and water. Recognizing this complexity, and the need for holistic approaches, the GLF is founded on four principles, aiming to engage 1 billion people: connecting, sharing, learning and acting.

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Figure 2

Relationships between Principal Non-United Nations Conventions, Agencies, Programmes and International NGOs that have implications for Peatlands and Peat (dates of establishment in brackets)



Annex 1

Acronyms

AR – Assessment report

AFOLU – Agriculture, forestry and other land use (MICCA Programme)

CBD – Convention on Biological Diversity

CCAFS – Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security Program

CDM – Clean Development Mechanism (Kyoto Protocol)

CER – Certified emission reduction

CGIAR – Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research

CIFOR – Centre for International Forestry Research

CITES – Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora

COP – Conference of the Parties (CBD)

CSPMA – Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association

ERU – Emission reduction units

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FAOSTAT – Statistics and data by the FAO

GEF – Global Environment Facility

GGAP – Guidelines for Global Action on Peatlands (Ramsar)

GHG – Global Greenhouse Gas

GLF – Global Landscapes Forum

GPI – Global Peatlands Initiative

IAC – Inter-Academy Council (IPCC)

IMO – International Maritime Organization

IPBES – Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

IPCC – International Panel on Climate change

IPS – International Peat Society

ISPMs – International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures

IUCN – International Union for Conservation of Nature

LCA – Life Cycle Analysis (MICCA Programme)

LMOs – Living modified organisms

MICCA – Mitigation of Climate Change in Agriculture

NAMA – Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (MICCA Programme)

NBSAPs – National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (CBD)

SBI – Subsidiary Body for Implementation (UNFCCC)

SBSTA – Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (UNFCCC)

SBSTTA – Subsidiary body for Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (CBD)

SRPM – Strategy for Responsible Peatland Management (IPS)

STRP – The Scientific and Technical Review Panel of the Ramsar Convention

TFB – Task Force Bureau (IPCC)

TFI – Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories (IPCC)

TSU – Technical Support Units (IPCC)

UN – United Nations

UN-FCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UN-REDD – United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

UNCED – UN Conference on Environment and Development (1992, Rio de Janeiro)

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

WG – Working Group

WMO – World Meteorological Organization