

# A message from the Hot or Cool Institute and the One Planet Network for International Day for Biodiversity 2025

## Living better and lighter can make nature positive changes!

Nature faces rapid decline. The path forward lies in systemic solutions that make living sustainable lifestyles the foundation of a thriving and sustainable future.

This year's International Day for Biodiversity calls on us to build harmony with nature through sustainable development. It is an opportunity to remind us that reversing biodiversity loss is not only about protecting species or restoring habitats. It's also about transforming the deeper systems and behaviours that are pushing planetary boundaries – and ensuring no one is left behind.

## Thriving nature sustains us

Nature is not just the scenery in our lives, it's the foundation of our wellbeing. From the food we eat to the air we breathe; we depend on thriving ecosystems and rich biodiversity. But our current trending lifestyles—how we consume, produce, travel, eat, and live—are among the main drivers of nature loss.

Even though nature is essential to our lives, most biodiversity efforts focus on treating the symptoms—like protecting species and restoring habitats. But the deeper causes, such as unsustainable lifestyles and the systems that underpin them, are largely overlooked. This offers a huge opportunity for change!

To truly halt and reverse biodiversity loss, we must broaden the scope of nature policy and integrate a lifestyle perspective. Policies must target the **sectors and behaviours** with greatest impacts - food, mobility, housing, and consumer goods – and **recognise gendered patterns in consumption** to inform targeted and effective solutions. Many policies and initiatives exist already, and can be upscaled. Examples:

- **Promote plant-rich diets** (reduce overall red meat and overexploited seafood consumption);
- **Encourage active and shared transport** over private fossil-fuel vehicles;
- **Reduce material consumption** to minimise waste, extend product lifespans, and support compact, resource-efficient living;

- **Address overconsumption by those** whose lifestyles have disproportionate influence and footprints.

The goal is to create conditions that make sustainable living the default—not the exception. Only by shifting the underlying systems behind our choices can we build a future where people and nature thrive together.

**Sustainable choices aren't just personal, they're shaped by our systems, values and culture.**

Changing unsustainable consumption and production patterns goes beyond what we can do as individuals and requires shifting **systems** and **societal aspirations** through ambitious, systemic policies. While our choices matter, they don't happen in a vacuum. Our values, norms, and desires are shaped by media, education, marketing, and culture—just as much as by what products and services are made available, and how.

To create lasting change, sustainable lifestyles need to become the easiest, most affordable, and most desirable choice. That means transforming the systems that provide food, transport, housing, and more—**and** aligning them with new aspirations and narratives about what a good life looks like. Some policy solutions:

- Create **systemic policy packages** to reshape how goods and services are designed, produced, accessed and ultimately experienced;
- Embed **sufficiency principles** into economic and planning systems;
- Leverage **urban design** and **public investment** to make sustainable lifestyle choices more convenient and aspirational;
- Shift values and desires through **media, education, advertising regulation, and cultural storytelling**.

Policies, business models, cultural storytelling, and social influencers all have roles to play. Without changing aspirations, we risk resistance to systemic shifts. And without changing systems, sustainable aspirations remain out of reach.

It's about choosing behaviour change **and** system change together. Nature-positive lifestyle change requires broad societal participation, including actors often excluded from formal decision-making processes. Collaborative options:

- Build inclusive platforms to engage policymakers, business, civil society, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, youth, creatives, and researchers.
- Embed these platforms in governance processes.
- Learn from models such as the **Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies** to coordinate participatory approaches.

- Leverage the new **Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities subsidiary body** adopted at COP16 to support community leadership in shaping nature-positive lifestyles.

### **Climate and nature are deeply connected.**

Nature loss and climate change are deeply connected. They may seem like separate crises—but they share the same root causes: unsustainable consumption and production patterns and ways of living. The actions taken to reduce emissions can also help reduce pressure on nature.

Key shifts in how we eat, move and live—like choosing more plant-based foods, driving less, reducing housing energy use, or cutting waste—can dramatically benefit both climate and biodiversity. These aren't just environmental wins; they're also good for our health, innovation, jobs and the well-being of our societies.

But to unlock these co-benefits, policies need to go beyond treating symptoms. We need to address the everyday systems that shape our choices in priority sectors, particularly in food, mobility and living. When we make sustainable lifestyles easier, we strengthen both climate and biodiversity action—and we create better conditions for human wellbeing.

A nature-positive, climate-resilient future starts with everyday shifts that can meet everyone's needs and bring a better quality of life.

**This International Day for Biodiversity, let's reaffirm our commitment to living in harmony with nature.** By transforming lifestyles, values, and systems, we can make sustainable development a reality—and ensure that biodiversity thrives, now and for generations to come.