

# *COP26: Indigenous peoples call to end the war on nature*

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Glasgow, November 6 (RHC)-- As millions took to the streets of cities around the world over the weekend, demanding greater climate action, some countries taking part in the COP26 negotiations made new pledges to invest in nature-based solutions and a greener approach to farming.

Mother Nature, or “Pachamama”, as they say in Latin America, took center stage as the pivotal UN climate conference reached the halfway point. Nature is critical to our survival: it provides the oxygen we

need to breathe, regulates weather patterns, supplies food and water for all living things, and is home to countless species of wildlife, and the ecosystems they need to survive.

According to the UN Environment Program (UNEP), human activity has disrupted almost 75 per cent of the earth's surface and put some one million animal and plant species on the endangered list.

We have overexploited nature's resources, deforested lands for agriculture and the cattle industry, while climate change is now exacerbating that process faster than ever, increasing erosion and desertification.

Oceans have become polluted, which absorb around one-third of our carbon emissions, meaning they are losing the ability to be 'climate change buffers', according to the UN scientific agency, UNESCO.

It is clear humanity is "waging a war on nature", as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said several times in recent months, urging greater action. "We can't continue to push nature into a corner and expect it to deliver. We want it to sequester carbon, to provide the buffers for the high storms and mangroves and to be the lungs of the world.

"But when we mess with nature, nature will send us these invoices in the forms of greater intensity storms, more fires, more heatwaves and more droughts", the Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, told UN News at COP26 on Saturday.

Solving climate change cannot be done without solving the challenge of biodiversity loss and degraded ecosystems, a high-level panel that included Ms. Andersen heard. She called for unity and cooperation to find the solutions needed to restore nature and address climate change.

"The social-economic transformations we need, will only happen when we reset our relationship with nature, understanding that we can no longer invest in that which harms our planet", she said.

As countries recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a big push for nature-based solutions against climate change, and in terms of aiding economic recovery. These are initiatives that provide benefits for nature and for people, UNEP's chief explained to UN News.

"How can nature help us, and how we can help nature...There are two billion hectares of degraded land and we all need to eat. So, the question is if we are going to cut down virgin forests, or restore that land into a working landscape," she underscored.

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