



## TREES IN DRY CITIES COALITION

# Dry Lands, Green Cities: United for Urban Land Restoration

## *Advancing the Trees in Dry Cities Coalition's Action Agenda: Key Messages and Pathways for Greening Urban Landscapes in Drylands*

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Time:** 15:30 –17:00

**Where:** UNCCD COP16

In person side event

The side event highlights strategies to scale urban forestry and nature-based solutions (NBS) to advance land restoration, climate resilience, and biodiversity conservation in arid urban areas.

The session emphasizes the transformative potential of urban forestry as a nature-based solution that supports the objectives of UNCCD and other Rio Conventions. Specifically, reflecting the Coalition's key messages and Action Agenda, the event presents actionable guidance for funding and integrating urban forestry into national policies and plans to strengthen climate, biodiversity and land restoration goals. This includes national plans under the Rio conventions National Action Plans (UNCCD), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) (UNFCCC Paris Agreement), National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) (UNCBD).

Practical insights will be shared on how urban forestry drives sustainable urban development in dry cities, along with innovative funding models to support these efforts. Participants will engage in a cross-sector dialogue, fostering collaboration between local and national governments, financial institutions and international organizations, highlighting tools and replicable models for embedding urban greening into national plans and budgets for resilience in dry regions.

The Trees in Dry Cities Coalition operates as a collaborative network of UN Member States, cities, civil society, NGOs, private sector partners, and international organizations, including the UNCCD. This collective effort aligns urban greening initiatives with key global commitments, creating a cohesive approach to tackle environmental and urban challenges. The Coalition champions urban forestry as a scalable, impactful solution to build resilient, sustainable, and ecologically sound urban landscapes in arid regions.

The outcomes of the event will be an important input to shaping the work and activities of the Coalition over the coming year and beyond.

# PROGRAMME

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15h30 – 15h40

## Welcome and Opening Remarks

Ms. Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab, Chief, UNECE Forest and Bioeconomy Section

- Overview of the Trees in Dry Cities Coalition (including Key Messages and Action Agenda of the Coalition)
  - Objectives of the COP16 side event and the role of urban forestry in addressing climate resilience and land restoration
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15h40– 15h50

## COP16 Presidency Keynote Address

M Eng. Ahmad Alanazi, Director National Greening Programme, NCVG

- Delivering Trees in Dry Cities at National Scale: Insights from the Saudi National Greening Programme
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15h50 – 16h10

## Pannel discussion 1: Integrating Urban Trees into National Policy and Plans under UNCCD, UNFCCC, and UNCBD

Moderator: UNECE

- Mr. Francesco Corvaro, Special Climate Envoy, Italy
- Ms. Iara Bueno Giacomini, Director of River Basin Rehabilitation and Water, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Brazil
- Ms. Carlos Eduardo Correa Escaf, former Minister of the Environment and Sustainable Development of Colombia
- Ms. Carol Chouchani Cherfane, Director, Climate Change and Natural Resource Management Cluster, ESCWA
- Ms. Firdaous Oussidhoum, Assistant Secretary General for Monitoring and Evaluation, UCLG World Secretariat Barcelona
- UNCCD, representative TBC

The panel will include two rounds of questions, with ~1 minute answers by each panelist per question, followed by an opportunity for panelists to engage with and react to each other.

1. *How can urban forestry be practically integrated into National Action Plans (NAPs), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and municipal policies to support long-term resilience in arid cities?*
2. *What policy tools, incentives, or governance structures have proven effective in ensuring urban forestry is prioritized and funded at both national and local levels?*

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16h10 – 16h30

## Panel discussion 2: Financing Trees in Dry Cities to Deliver Local, National and Global Goals

Moderator: Mr. Adonai Herrera-Martínez, Director, Environment and Sustainability, EBRD

### Panelists

- Mr. Bilal Qteshat, Director for Nature Protection Directorate, Jordan
- Mr. Daouda Ndiaye, Manager, Climate Change & Environment Division, IsDB
- Ms. Ruth Tiffer-Sotomayor, Senior Environmental Specialist, World Bank
- Mr Felipe Ortega, Head of Division in the Bioeconomy Division, EIB

The panel will include two rounds of questions, with ~1 minute answers by each panelist per question, followed by an opportunity for panelists to engage with and react to each other.

1. *What innovative financing models (such as blended finance, public-private partnerships, green bonds, or climate finance mechanisms) have shown promise for supporting urban forestry projects in arid regions?*
2. *How can financial institutions, governments, and cities collaborate to secure long-term investments for urban forestry projects in arid cities?*

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16h30-16h50

## Open Discussion and Action Plan Development

Moderator: UNECE

After both panels have discussed the questions, the moderator will invite panelists to collaboratively answer one key question:

**"What are the immediate next steps we can take to scale urban forestry in arid cities, based on the insights shared today?"**

Format: The session will be a **rapid-fire** brainstorming session where panelists highlight **1-2 immediate actions** they will take (or recommend) in the coming months, based on what was discussed.

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16h50-17h00

## Closing Remarks

Closing Address by UNECE Representative

- Summarizing key takeaways from the session
  - Next steps for the Trees in Dry Cities Coalition and future collaboration opportunities
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### Additional Information:

The **Trees in Dry Cities Coalition** was established at COP28 in Dubai during the “**Trees in dry cities: luxury or a fundamental climate and SDG solution?**” event organized by UNECE and WGEO. It includes representatives from governments, cities, international organizations, development banks and the private sector. The Coalition emphasizes the significance of urban trees and nature in dry climates. The Coalition has developed collaboratively an Action Agenda, focusing on key priorities and actionable steps.



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