

# INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY

## INTO THE UNITED NATIONS' PLANS, PROGRAMMES AND PARTNERSHIPS



Matilda Dunn<sup>1</sup>, Caroline Howe<sup>1</sup>, Hossein Fadaei<sup>2</sup>

Matilda.dunn17@imperial.ac.uk

@MatildaDunn\_

<sup>1</sup>Imperial College London, Centre for Environmental Policy, UK

<sup>2</sup>United Nations Environmental Management Group, Geneva

Imperial College London



UNITED NATIONS

EMG

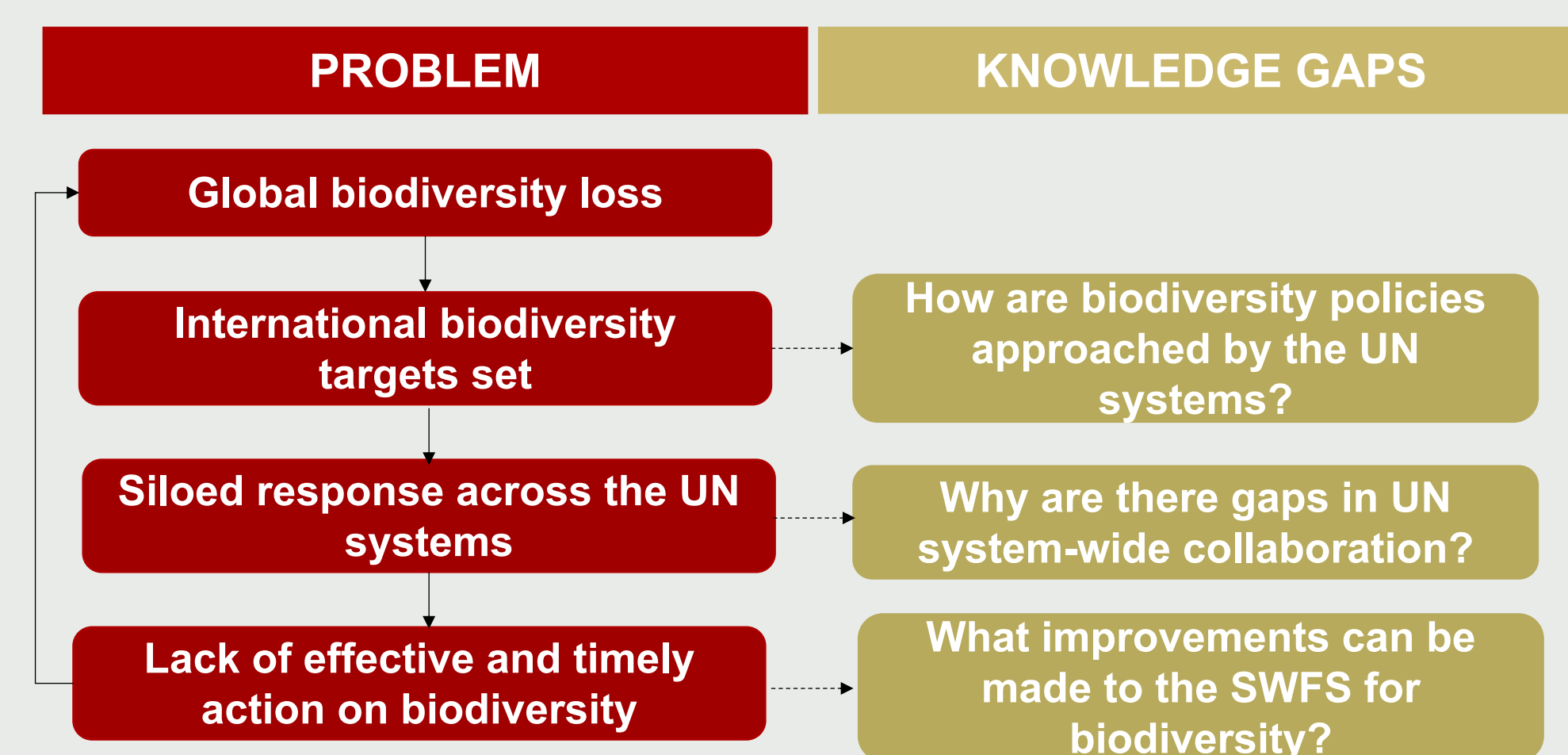


Economic and Social Research Council

### BACKGROUND

- Biodiversity loss is a “*problem without passport*”<sup>1</sup> – its impacts are transboundary and solutions require cooperation across countries.
- The United Nations offers an opportune place to catalyse change with its 197 member states, but critics argue that the UN Systems are not structured in a way to confront this modern, global challenge<sup>2</sup>.
- Despite recognition that social and economic development depends on the sustainable management of natural resources (e.g. the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals) integration of biodiversity goals across the UN systems poses a challenge due to the specific **mandates** and **jurisdictions** with which individual agencies are established<sup>3</sup>.
- In response to this issue, the UN Environmental Management Group (UN-EMG) prepare a **System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment** (SWFS) in 2014<sup>3</sup>.
- This framework aimed to achieve greater **synergy** and **coherence** in the UN System’s work on the environment.
- However, progress towards a unified UN system for biodiversity has been **limited**<sup>4</sup> and predictions estimate that we are currently not on track to meet the global biodiversity targets that have been set (Fig 1).

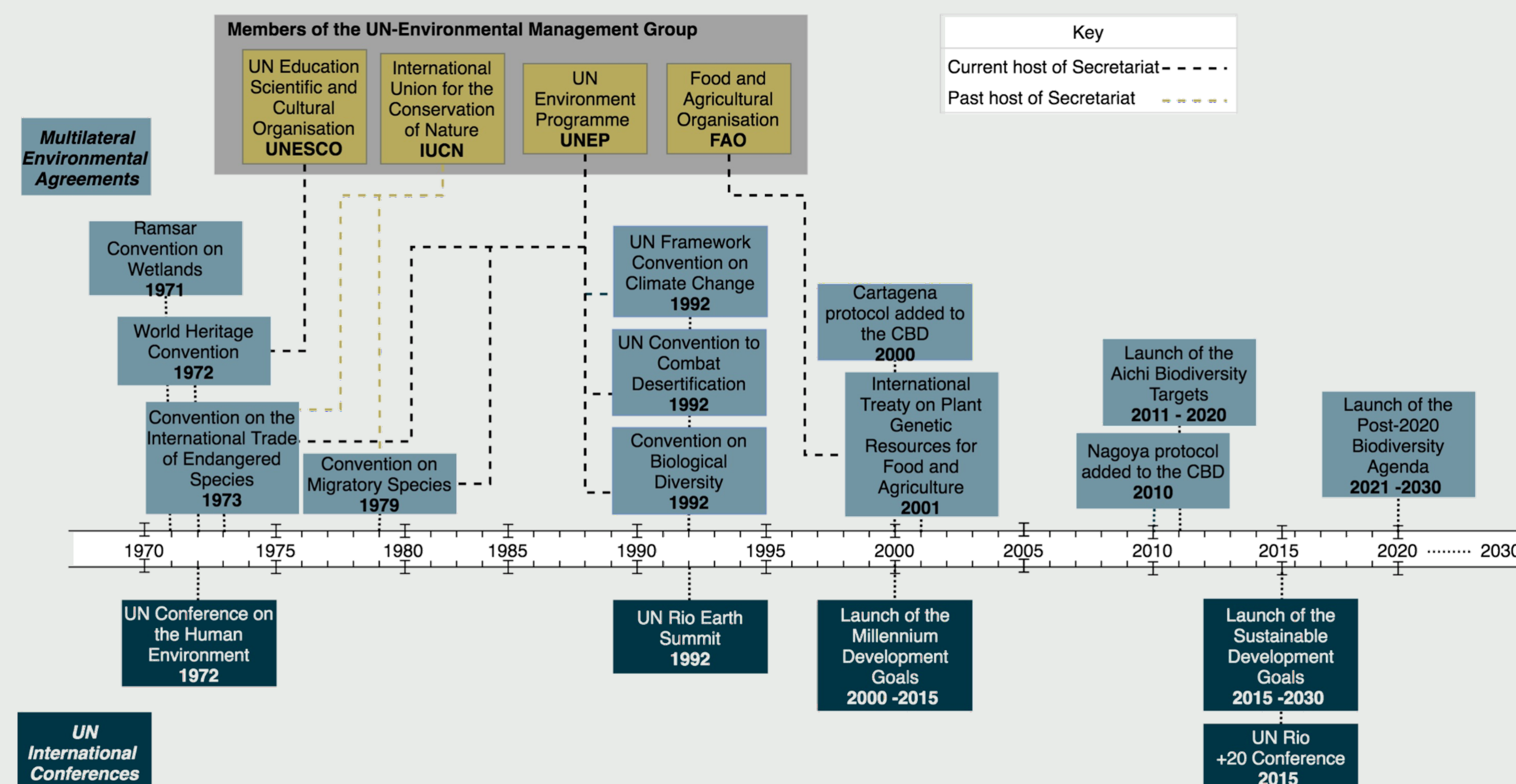
### PROBLEM STATEMENT



#### RESEARCH AIM:

This research aims to analyse how the UN systems’ plans, programmes and partnerships contribute to global biodiversity policies and what are the barriers and opportunities surrounding this area to develop an improved SWFS.

Figure 1. The global biodiversity policy landscape



### GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY GOALS

- Fig. 1 shows the increasing prioritisation of biodiversity at the international policy level.
- The UN systems feeds into these MEAs through hosting the secretariats of the conventions (fig 1).
- A number of global biodiversity targets have been set out across the UN global goals as well as by MEAs.
- However, while there has been progress made, none of these biodiversity targets have been met.

### 1: PROPOSED METHODS

#### 1. Social Network Analysis and agency mandate rating

- Data on UN system-wide partnerships related to biodiversity will be collected through:
  - A systematic review of published UN agency reports,
  - past survey data collected by the UN-EMG (2017 and 2018).
- The data will be used to build a social network map.
- Agency mandates will also be analysed against a set criteria to rate the relevance of biodiversity to each agency’s programmes.
  - This ratings will be included in the social network model as an explanatory factor.

#### 2. Key Informant Interviews

- From the SNA, a sample of UN-agencies will be selected for in-depth semi-structured interviews covering the barriers and trade-offs to forming partnerships on biodiversity within the UN-systems.
- The rich data collected will be analysed using an inductive method to identify the key themes that emerge.

#### 3. Collaborative Workshop

- Members of the UN-EMG will be invited to take part in a collaborative workshop using participatory methods such as prioritization ranking.

### 2: EXPECTED RESULTS

- The social network map will be analysed to provide information on:
  - Which agencies are linked together in the network?
  - Which agencies are central and which are peripheral to the network?
  - Which are the agencies that frequently collaborate?
  - Where are the gaps in partnerships?
- The key-informant interviews will provide information on:
  - How are partnerships across the UN formed?
  - What are the trade-offs that have to be managed across these partnerships?
  - What are the barriers to creating and maintaining partnerships?
- The collaborative workshop will provide information on:
  - What are the improvements that can be made to the SWFS to improve partnerships on biodiversity?

#### OUTCOMES:

This research will help to unpick some of the complexities across the UN systems and help bridge this gap in understanding biodiversity governance at this UN level. These findings will also contribute towards the UN-EMG’s mandated triennial efforts to report on the progress of the SWFS as well as produce the first thematic synthesis report.

#### References

- UN Press Release, 1998. ‘Environmental Threats Are Quintessential ‘Problems Without Passports’, Secretary General Tells European Environment Ministers.
- Conca, 2015. *An Unfinished Foundation: The United Nations and Global Environmental Governance.*
- Chebli, UN-SWFS Synthesis Report, 2017.
- UNEP et al, 2021. *A common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the UN’s policy and programme planning and delivery.*

