



# Reconnecting people and planet through integrated planning for nature, biodiversity, and resources

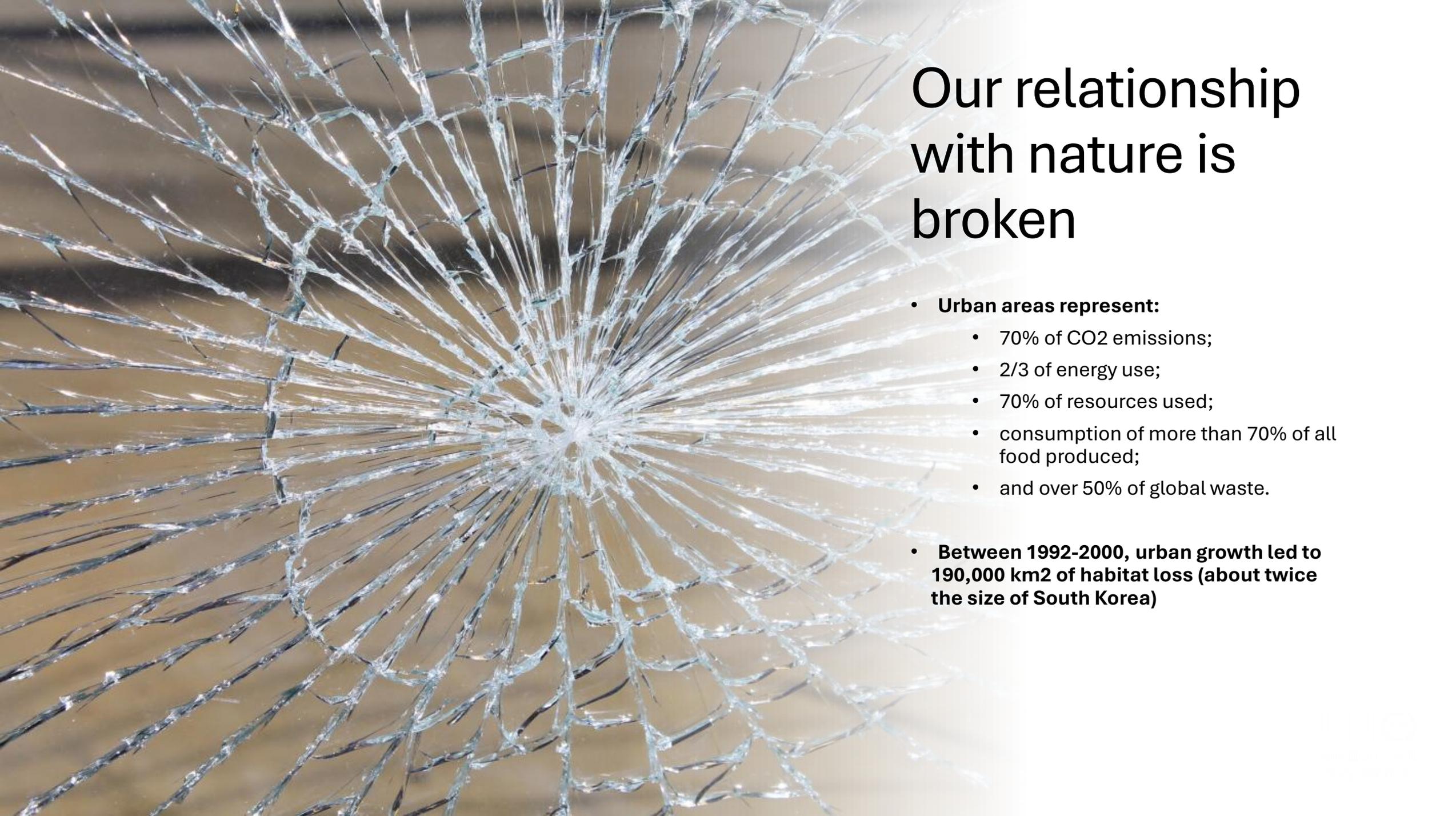
Sharon Gil, *UNEP*



# Healing cities: nature-based solutions and urban biodiversity

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## UNEP's Work on Urban NbS



# Our relationship with nature is broken

- **Urban areas represent:**
  - 70% of CO2 emissions;
  - 2/3 of energy use;
  - 70% of resources used;
  - consumption of more than 70% of all food produced;
  - and over 50% of global waste.
- **Between 1992-2000, urban growth led to 190,000 km<sup>2</sup> of habitat loss (about twice the size of South Korea)**

# Cities are at risk

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- **By 2050, 90% of coastal cities** will be hit by sea level rise, and 1.6 billion city residents will face extreme heat.
- **We need to mobilize \$8 trillion by 2050** to tackle the triple planetary crisis.
- **Cities impact our waterways:**
  - 70% of urban areas are along water bodies.



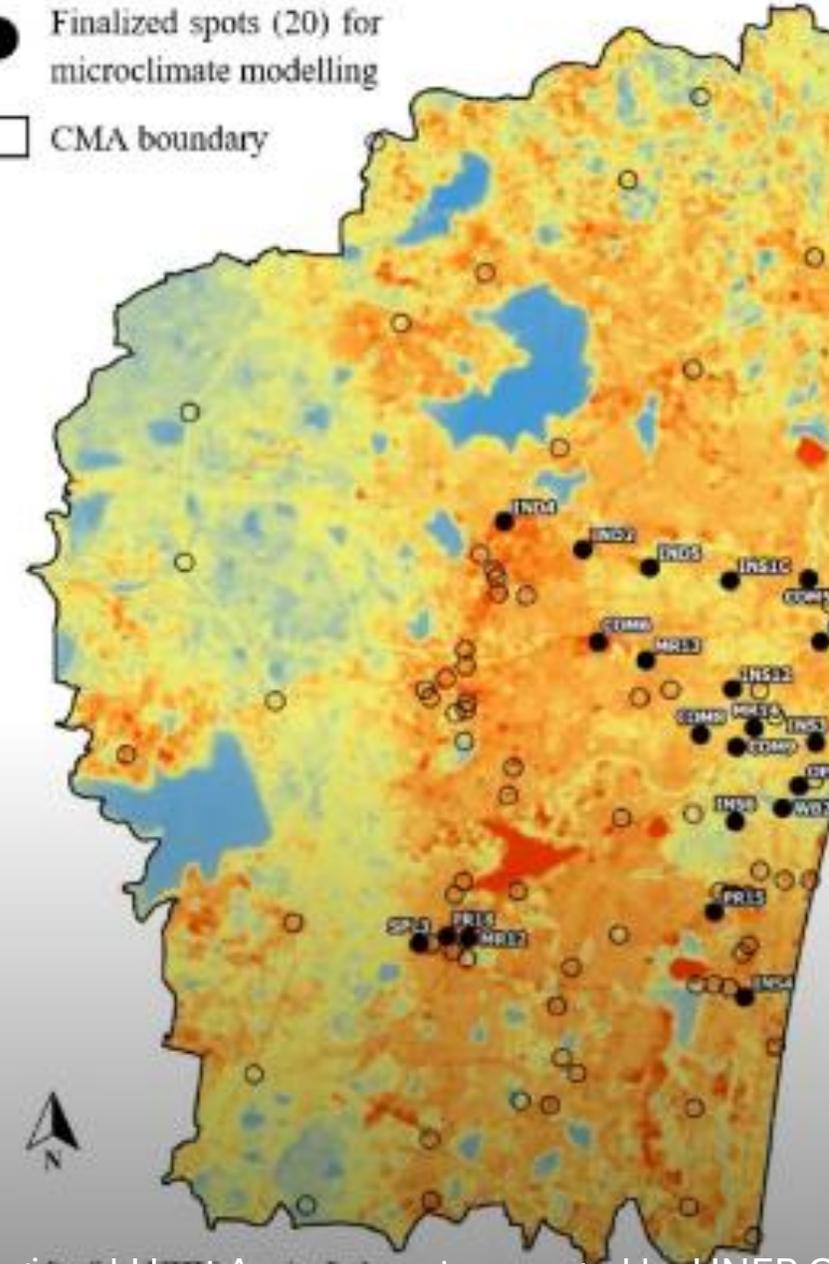
# Planning for Extreme Heat & Cooling in Cities

About [Beat the Heat & Canopy Pact](#)

- ❑ **Bioclimatic urban planning rules** (canopy protections, green roofs, permeable soils)
- ❑ **Cooling performance standards** embedded in building regulations and street design
- ❑ **Heat-risk mapping** to protect vulnerable groups and prioritize investments
- ❑ **National incentives and de-risking tools** to finance cooling infrastructure

Glasgow used a **Digital Environmental Twin** to map canopy deficits, identify heat-vulnerable areas, and guide tree-planting and open space upgrades. This tool directly supported the plan to reach **20% canopy cover by 2034**.

- Identified spots (100) for data collection
- Finalized spots (20) for microclimate modelling
- CMA boundary



# Water-Sensitive Planning Against Droughts & Flooding

About  
[Generation  
Restoration  
Programme](#)

- ❑ **Climate risk & vulnerability assessments** (flood risk hotspots, drought exposure, hydrological modelling and socio-economic data)
- ❑ **Functional Territory mapping** (plan across natural hydrological systems, not administrative boundaries, and align municipalities around shared risk)
- ❑ **River, Wetland and Canal Restoration frameworks** (rehabilitate waterways through invasive species removal, water-quality improvement, bank stabilisation)

**Istanbul** implemented **basin rehabilitation**, ecological restoration along waterways, and created **green-roof bus stops** that support rainfall absorption while improving habitat quality along the **African–Eurasian flyway**, where many migratory birds depend on urban stopovers.



Winner in a kid's competition organized as part of the  
UNEP-backed project to restore Kochi's TP Canal [UNEP](#)

# Circular Food systems: urban and periurban agriculture

About Food  
is Never  
Waste  
Coalition

- ❑ **Urban Agriculture Decision-support tools** (identify suitable plots, map soil quality, water availability, land tenure, mapping best initiatives and practices, modelling ecosystem services and carbon credits)
- ❑ **Governance Platforms for Circular Food Systems** (multi-sectoral working groups, aligning food security, climate land-use and biodiversity strategies; integrated composting and urban farming systems within short supply chains)
- ❑ **Nature-based soil restoration approaches** (strengthening soil health for climate-resilient and productive farming)

Manaus developed a **Municipal Urban Agriculture Application**, a decision-support tool that maps existing food-growing initiatives and identifies priority areas for expansion. It is supported by a **29-member multisectoral working group**, bringing public agencies, researchers and communities together to integrate agriculture into city planning





We are on a mission to repair our  
relationship with nature  
*for a healthy, prosperous, and resilient people and planet*

# Our partnerships – and 2026 milestones

- **UrbanShift (GEF, ICLEI, C40, WRI):** 23 cities in 9 countries advancing integrated planning and NbS.
  - **Generation Restoration (with BMZ, ICLEI):** 24 cities in 19 countries restoring ecosystems and embedding NbS.
  - **Greener Cities Partnership (UN-Habitat):** joint support for SDG 11 delivery in cities.
  - **Local2030 Coalition:** tools and know-how for SDG localization and access to finance.
  - **SURGe & CHAMP:** get **urban/subnational content into NDCs** and back it with on-the-ground assistance.
- **Beat the Heat** scale-up — 200 cities, 100+ partners.
  - **IKI—Brazil (€10M):** water-sensitive NbS in **7 metropolitan regions.**
  - **Belém–Yerevan Canopy Pact (COP30 → CBD COP17).**
  - **SHIFT** (with Brazil’s Ministry of Cities): multilevel governance & finance.
  - **Food Waste Breakthrough:** five-year plan to halve food waste.
  - **Lausanne Sustainable Buildings Summit (Apr 2026):** retrofits, whole-life carbon, NbS.
  - **MEA report @ WUF13:** how subnationals engage with MEAs.



# THANK YOU

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Sharon Gil,

Subnational Climate Action Lead

[sharon.gil@un.org](mailto:sharon.gil@un.org)