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Agenda Item 5 c): Preparations for UNEA-5

This note serves as background document for Agenda Item 5, sub-item (c): Preparations for UNEA-5.

Further to UNEP/SC/2020/9/2 entitled 'Background Document for Agenda Item 2: Preparations for UNEA5' that was considered by the subcommittee Committee of Permanent Representatives at its meeting of 2 July 2020, this document is an indicative outline of the UNEP Executive Director's report to UNEA5 on the subject theme. It is presented for the information and preliminary consideration of Member States at the 7th meeting of the annual sub-committee of the CPR to be held 12-16 October 2020.

The full report will be made available prior to UNEA 5.

DRAFT

Preliminary Outline of Executive Director's Report to UNEA 5

September 2020

Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals[1]

I. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[2] adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, is the world's blueprint for peace and prosperity. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined in the 2030 Agenda address some of the biggest challenges facing humanity, from poverty, to climate change, to conflict. While the world may be pre-occupied by the novel coronavirus, it cannot afford to fall behind on the targets contained in the SDGs.

A. The centrality of nature for achieving the SDGs

At the commencement of the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), parallel with the Decade of Action for the Sustainable Development Goals, never has there been a greater need or a greater opportunity to *Act #ForNature*.

Nature, in all its diversity and complexity, underpins our economies, our societies and our very existence. It is our life support system, providing humanity with shelter, food and water. It recycles nutrients, cleans the air and regulates our climate. Nature supports billions of jobs and is a source of spiritual inspiration for many. In a world with a rapidly-growing population that's facing multiple social and economic challenges, it is essential to recognize the benefits that nature accords to humanity and pursue a development path that recognizes the value of the services that intact ecosystems provide.

The decline of nature can be reversed if the world embraces a nature-positive development model and inclusive wealth accounting that accurately reflects the value of nature. By creating green jobs while also ensuring the equitable distribution of the wealth created, forging circular economies, curtailing pollution, renewing degraded ecosystems and investing in environmentally friendly technology, countries can drive growth while safeguarding the planet for future generations. For example, modelling by the International Resource Panel, a global science-policy platform established by the United Nations Environment Programme, shows that by 2060, the implementation of policies that limit biodiversity loss, promote resource efficiency, and combat climate change could increase global gross domestic product (GDP) by 8 per cent while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 90 per cent.[3]

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[1] This draft is based on the assumption that the ED's report should closely reflect the concept note for UNEA5, as set out in Background Document for Agenda Item 2: Preparations for UNEA5, CPR Sub-Committee Meeting, 2 July 2020 - UNEP/SC/2020/9/2

[2] See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

[3] See https://www.resourcepanel.org/

As the world struggles with COVID-19, it is important to remember that humanity already has the knowledge, the technology and the capital to create nature-positive economies. While the pandemic has undoubtedly been devastating, it has given states an opportunity to reconsider their development trajectories – and to build forward better. With the world's population expected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050[4], now is the time for political and business leaders to take concrete steps to invest in nature and make conservation of nature for the benefit of people an inseparable component of development.

B. The consequences of COVID-19 and the need to build forward better

A recent report from the United Nations Secretary General[5] noted that the COVID-19 pandemic "has exacerbated poverty and inequality and will likely cause an estimated 34.3 million people to fall below the extreme poverty line in 2020, with an additional 130 million people possibly joining the ranks of those living in extreme poverty by 2030, dealing a huge blow to global efforts to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger."

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the fragility of many economies and deepened existing inequalities, imperiling decades of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.[6] On some dimensions of human development, conditions today are equivalent to levels of deprivation last seen in the mid-1980s. The pandemic is affecting education (at its peak 9 in 10 students were out of school), livelihoods (gross national incomes fell 4 per cent world-wide) and, of course, human health (nearly 1 million people have lost their lives to COVID-19.)[7]

As leaders design and implement recovery plans, it is important for them to remember that nature, in all its diversity and complexity, underpins our economies and our societies. Managed well, ecosystems can drive economic growth, safeguard vulnerable populations, provide nutritious food at affordable prices, support green jobs and help humanity transition to a more sustainable future. Realizing such benefits, however, will require an unprecedented re-direction of funds and new investments, including investments that build on an understanding of natural capital.

C. Four transformative action areas for nature

To put the world on a path to a more sustainable future, governments and industry may consider focusing on four key areas.

1. Building back better and using nature to eradicate poverty, create jobs and drive long-term economic prosperity.
2. Recalibrating humanity's relationship with nature to improve public health and slow the tide of zoonotic diseases, like COVID-19.
3. Leveraging nature to combat the biggest threat facing the planet – climate change.

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[4] https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/news/population/world-population-prospects-2019.html
[5] A/75/269. See https://undocs.org/en/A/75/269
[6] United Nations Development Programme, COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery
[7] See https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html

4. Fighting hunger and malnutrition by creating sustainable food systems that work with nature.

The coming sections will explore these ideas in more detail.

II. Nature for Poverty Eradication, Jobs and Economic Prosperity

A. Building back better from the pandemic by investing directly in nature

Reversing the draw-down on nature – particularly in areas that are reaching ecological tipping points – will require significant effort and investment. Yet done well, this can create jobs and income opportunities while building the planet's resilience to future pandemics and a changing climate. Targeted ecosystem restoration is a key element of investing in nature, but this must be complemented by changes to economic systems that currently favour the degradation of nature. Moving to an inclusive wealth approach that accounts for manufactured, human and natural capital, while mitigating the drivers of biodiversity loss and enabling nature-positive development is challenging but essential. Among other things, this involves moving away from a linear model of "take, make, use and dispose" to a nature-positive approach that reduces demand for raw materials and sees products and materials continually reused.

Increased transparency in the provenance and supply of natural resources should be an early action in moving to a nature-positive model and addressing inequalities. Both governments and industry can harness the power of big data to ensure that consumers are aware of their environmental footprint and the implications of their consumption decisions.

B. *Green and blue stimulus packages and investments*

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the countries of the world have pledged over US$11.8 trillion[8] in relief and recovery packages, including US$3.5 trillion directly into sectors that have a large and lasting impact on nature and as a result, reduce the services that ecosystems provide. That number is unprecedented and will have a lasting impact on the direction of our economies. It is critical that stimulus packages reinforce the commitments world leaders have made to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

States should consider aligning their national economic planning and accounting with the SDGs, their commitments to the Paris Agreement, and other multilateral environmental agreements. By mainstreaming climate, nature and pollution considerations into budgetary decisions, governments can both help sustainably finance a green COVID-19 recovery and provide powerful market incentives for scaling up financing for eco-friendly projects.

Infrastructure investments — which can quickly create jobs while providing fundamental services for society — are at the heart of many recovery plans. As states contemplate these investments, they should focus on nature-positive investments that restore and maximize the direct use of nature, e.g. wetland restoration for wastewater treatment, while also enabling the participation of micro- small-

[8] https://www.vivideconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/200820-GreenStimulusIndex_web.pdf

and medium-sized enterprises and incentivizing the use of labor-based and local-resource-based solutions and technologies.

It is important to ensure that sustainability and resilience are incorporated throughout an infrastructure project's lifecycle, from strategic planning, to financing, delivery, operations, and decommissioning. Given that much infrastructure is publicly funded[9], applying sustainable procurement policies, which incentivize contractors to embed sustainability criteria into bids for infrastructure contracts, is another important tool for states.

C. Launching the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), are unlikely to be met unless ecosystem degradation is halted and concerted efforts are made to restore natural areas lost to development. Globally, 3.2 billion people are impacted by land degradation and drought, while biodiversity loss drags down the world's gross domestic product (GDP) by 10 percent annually[10]. This loss of nature is causing poverty and hunger.

The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 is designed to reverse those trends. Announced in 2019, the campaign is being led by UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Through the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a platform will be created for societies across the world to put humanity's relationship with nature on a new trajectory for centuries to come. Gender equality, restorative justice and human rights will be the pillars of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. The initiative will work in conjunction with other key United Nations efforts to combat biodiversity loss and climate change, including the UN-REDD Programme, Nature-Based Solutions for Adaptation Action Track and the follow up to the Secretary General's 2019 Climate Summit.

III. Nature for Human and Ecosystems Health

A. Protecting nature can limit the impact and emergence of zoonotic diseases

The destruction of the natural world is a major driver behind the increasing emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases.[11] As natural areas are destroyed and fragmented to meet human needs for agriculture, infrastructure and materials, pathogens are more easily transmitted between humans and animals.[12] Deforestation, particularly in the tropics, has been associated with an increase in

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[9] See https://blogs.worldbank.org/ppps/who-finances-infrastructure-really-disentangling-public-and-private-contributions

[10] IPBES (2018): The IPBES assessment report on land degradation and restoration. Montanarella, L., Scholes, R., and Brainich, A. (eds.). Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Bonn, Germany. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3237392

[11] Zohdy, S., Schwartz, T.S. and Oaks, J.R. (2019). The Coevolution Effect as a Driver of Spillover. Trends in Parasitology, 35(6), 399–408. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pt.2019.03.010; Preventing the Next Pandemic Zoonotic Diseases and How to Break the Chain of Transmission https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32316/ZP.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[12] Keesing, F., Belden, L.K., Daszak, P., Dobson, A., Harvell, C. D., Holt, R.D. et al. (2010). Impacts of biodiversity on the emergence and transmission of infectious diseases. Nature, 468, 647-652. https://doi.org/10.1038/nature09575

infectious diseases, such as dengue fever, malaria and yellow fever.[13] Furthermore, the illegal trade in wildlife brings animals face to face with humans. In unregulated sectors, the chance is high that a potentially catastrophic disease will jump species.[14]

Inefficient food systems, including unsustainable production, transportation and rampant food waste, is eroding planetary health and increasing the risk of future pandemics. For example, rising demand for meat has intensified livestock production and brought animals and people closer together, with not nearly enough attention paid to hygiene and preventing the spread of disease.

B. Addressing marine pollution, including marine litter and microplastics

A long-standing challenge for the international community is to plan, resource and implement a coordinated effort to tackle the issue of marine pollution, one that treats marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems as interconnected networks. Pollutants, such as heavy metals, persistent organic pollutants, hydrocarbons, excess nutrients and discarded pharmaceuticals, continue to pose a significant threat to riverine, coastal and open ocean ecosystems, as well as the communities that reside and work in or alongside these ecosystems.

Litter from human activity, deliberate or accidental, is a direct threat to both nature and public health, and despite the relatively limited presence of humans in the marine environment, litter is found in all the world's oceans, even in remote locales far from human civilization. Member States supported by the United National Environment Programme are considering a global response to the threat of marine litter and microplastics, a need identified by the third and fourth sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

C. Identifying a new global chemicals and waste management framework

While many existing and emerging chemicals are beneficial for humanity, some also have adverse public health effects, causing endocrine disruption and neurological problems, for example. Others have direct ecological impacts, such as reducing populations of pollinators. Pollution, including from the unsound management of chemicals and waste, is one of the key drivers threatening biodiversity, as recognized by the Convention of Biological Diversity and Aichi Target 8 which aims to bring pollution to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function and biodiversity by 2020.

To further reduce the impact that many chemicals and waste have on biodiversity and ecosystem loss, the new global chemicals and waste management framework will establish the future

[13] Wilcox, B.A. and Ellis, B. (2006). Forests and emerging infectious diseases of humans. Unasylva, 224(57), 11-19. http://www.fao.org/tempref/docrep/fao/009/a0789e/a0789e03.pdf

[14] Johnson, C.K., Hitchens, P.L., Evans, T.S., Goldstein, T., Thomas, K., Clements, A. et al. (2015). Spillover and pandemic properties of zoonotic viruses with high host plasticity. Scientific Reports, 5, 14830. https://doi.org/10.1038/srep14830; Johnson, C.K. et al. Global shifts in mammalian population trends reveal key predictors of virus spillover risk. Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences, 2020; 287 (1924): 20192736 DOI: 10.1098/rspb.2019.2736

arrangements of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM)[15] and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, informed by lessons learned since 2006.

D. Deepening the Implementation Plan "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet"

In 2019, the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly adopted a roadmap[16] to help stem the tide of pollution. Named the *Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet* it called for, among other things, greater investments in nature to address air, water, land, soil, marine and coastal pollution.

Innovative technologies and solutions that restore and utilize the benefits of nature can play an important role in preventing and managing pollution. There is a need to bring such innovative technologies and nature to the forefront so that they become more widely used. The involvement of the private sector is key to driving that agenda forward.

IV. Nature for Climate

A. Scaling up the direct use of nature to build climate resilience

The world's poorest are under threat from climate change and urgent action is required to protect them and the ecosystems they depend on. Already today, 800 million people (11 per cent of the global population) are vulnerable to climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods, heatwaves, sea-level rise and other extreme weather events[17]. By 2050, sea levels could rise so high that 300 million people will be living in coastal areas that endure severe floods at least once a year[18]. Further expansion of interventions on ecosystem-based adaptation are needed to support countries in their efforts to directly utilise nature as they adapt to climate change and the *Global Ecosystem-based Adaptation Fund* will be launched at UNEA-5 to support these efforts.

B. Highlighting the linkages between Nationally Determined Contributions and Nature

Building on the outcomes of the 2019 UN Secretary General's Climate Action Summit, continued coordinated global effort is needed to popularize solutions to climate change that actively utilize nature. UNEA 5 presents an opportunity to underline the importance of being more ambitious in setting goals for climate and for nature in the lead up to the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2021. Clear examples of successes to mainstream nature into the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the country-specific targets at the heart of the Paris Agreement, are needed. Together with increased investment, popular

[15] The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) is a voluntary multi-stakeholder multi-sectoral global policy framework. Since its inception in 2006, SAICM has aimed to achieve the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle so that by the year 2020, chemicals are produced and used in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health.
[16] UNEA Resolution 4/21. See https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28484/English.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y
[17] https://www.conservation.org/stories/11-climate-change-facts-you-need-to-know
[18] https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-019-12808-z

mobilization, and a complementary action agenda, this would help tackle climate change, spur development, safeguard biodiversity and support a green recovery from COVID-19.

C. Launching the 1 Green Gigaton Challenge with public and private partners to increase the flow of finance for nature-based-solutions for climate change

With developed and developing economies suffering the impact of COVID-19, it will be important that UNEA 5 and COP26 produce a very clear signal that sufficient and predictable funding will be available for countries to invest in solutions to climate change that are nature-positive. UNEP, with the support of the UN-REDD Programme, is launching the 1 Green Gigaton Challenge at UNEA 5. The short-term goal is to secure the equivalent of a gigaton in private and public sector investments in nature, with forest conservation and restoration as priorities.

D. Promote innovative pathways to sustainable consumption and production

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed light on the fragility of consumer societies and laid bare their disruptive impacts on the climate and on nature. To lay the foundation for a greener future, more should be done to shift towards more nature-positive investments, underpinned by sustainable patterns of consumption and production. UNEP is supporting this process by fostering the development of value chains that are clean, resource-efficient, resilient, responsible and inclusive. UNEP is focusing on high-impact sectors, including building and construction, textiles, plastics, mining and food. Partnership with industry and the finance sector will be fundamental to meeting this ambition and ensuring the widespread adoption of innovative solutions.

An important element of conservation has always been helping individuals, firms and entire countries understand the environmental and climate impact of their decisions. By leveraging big data, it will be increasingly possible to more comprehensively and precisely measure the environmental footprint of consumer choices and spur changes in behaviour[19], bringing to scale the initiatives of the multi-partner One Planet [20] network's Consumer Information [21] and Sustainable Lifestyles and Education [22] Programmes.

V. Nature for Sustainable Food Systems

A. Reducing biodiversity loss to benefit agricultural and foods systems

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a pressing need to make food and agricultural systems more sustainable. Food production is the biggest driver of biodiversity loss, land-use change

[19] https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/24797GSDR_report_2019.pdf
[20] The One Planet network was formed to implement the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. The network is an operational partnership with more than 700 partners through which efforts in implementing SDG 12 can be strategically channelled.
[21] https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/consumer-information-scp
[22] https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/sustainable-lifestyles-and-education

and deforestation today.[23] It also uses 70 percent of consumed freshwater[24] and is a major driver of climate change.[25] But it is not just how food is produced that is problematic. About 30 percent of the food produced is thrown away or lost during processing and distribution.[26]

A switch to sustainable food systems can boost nutrition, reduce food loss and waste, optimize resource use, prevent deforestation, curtail biodiversity loss, limit greenhouse gas emissions, avoid harmful chemicals and support small-scale farmers.[27] To make a transition to more sustainable food systems, the world should consider a broad range of actions including: shifting to nature-positive production systems, repurposing agricultural and food subsidies, transforming consumption habits, embracing more sustainable diets and reducing food waste, developing an integrated policy for nature-positive food systems, and redirect private capital and agricultural support towards sustainable production of food and commodities.

A fresh approach to agricultural production and forest management could include incentives and provisions to protect forest ecosystems and restore degraded lands. Agricultural support should align with sustainability and contribute to both climate change mitigation and adaptation. Moving towards sustainable, multi-functional landscapes will contribute to meeting the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals as well as to keeping global temperature rises to below 2˚C as agreed in the Paris climate agreement.

Investment vehicles such as the AGRI3 Fund and Restoration Seed Capital Facility can incentivize banks, impact investors or others that are willing to invest in deforestation-free commodity production and restoration of degraded land by reducing the pre-investment costs, and lengthen the loan tenor of a broader investor base.

Private capital can play an important role, but governments should create enabling systems that stimulate and reward sustainable land use. Such systems need to recognize the benefits of increased agricultural production while simultaneously restoring degraded landscapes, protecting forests and mitigating climate change. Business-as-usual approaches will not allow the planet to transition to more sustainable land use.

B. *End illegal wildlife trade*

Addressing the illegal wildlife trade is critical for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Wildlife, both fauna and flora, is often a major driver of tourism, which contributes significantly to GDP and is a foreign exchange earner in many countries.[28] The legal wildlife trade also provides sustainable jobs, livelihoods and incomes for many people, in developing and developed countries

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[23] IPBES (2019): Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.
[24] FAO (2017) Water for Sustainable Food and Agriculture Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome. See https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/water-in-agriculture
[25] IPCC (2020) Climate Change and Land An IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems
[26] FAO (2011). Global food losses and food waste — Extent, causes and prevention. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
[27] FAO (2018) Sustainable food systems; Concept and framework , see http://www.fao.org/3/ca2079en/CA2079EN.pdf;
UNEP (2019) Collaborative Framework for Food Systems Transformation: A multi-stakeholder pathway for sustainable food systems
[28] https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-1-4020-6799-0_8

alike. The illegal wildlife trade undermines these legitimate means of development while also exposing people to potentially catastrophic zoonotic diseases.

VI. Bringing about change

A. Reversing the degradation of natural landscapes

The global benefits of conservation have been well documented. The mere existence of species-rich landscapes provides the public opportunities to visit these amazing sites. Vast quantities of carbon stored in trees and soils act as a hedge against climate change. Improved land use and management, such as low-emissions agriculture, agro-forestry and ecosystem conservation and restoration, could reduce the remaining emissions gap by about a third.[29] Natural products have tremendous potential as medicines.[30] Furthermore, living species, from the large to the microscopic, interact in ways that maintain delicate natural cycles – like the provision of fresh water and fertile soil – that make the planet habitable for humans.

The opportunity exists for states to enact strong incentives to encourage private sector companies and financial institutions to invest in the planet. By making conservation profitable for investors, governments can unlock potentially game-changing private sector financing.

B. An economy that works with, rather than against, nature

Seventy percent of the world's poor depend on natural resources for all or part of their livelihoods.[31] Investing in natural capital will greatly help the world realize inclusive and sustainable development, yet natural resources are in a state of decline. Add to these challenges COVID-19, which has devastated lives and livelihoods around the world. The pandemic has underlined the importance of nature to our health and the global economy, while grimly underscoring the fact that the prevention of zoonotic diseases is more cost-effective than controlling them.

In order to build a prosperous and resilient future, ways to measure human well-being and sustainability more directly are needed – and humanity must act collectively upon the knowledge gained.

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[29] One way to understand the contribution of forest to fighting climate change is to compare its annual mitigation potential to the total reductions needed to stabilize the climate below 2°C and 1.5°C. The latter is also called the "carbon emissions gap", or the measure of what countries have committed to achieve and what is needed to limit warming below 2°C and 1.5°C. How big is that gap? The full implementation of the unconditional NDCs would leave a gap of about 15 GtCO2e/year compared to the below 2°C scenario by 2030. This gap grows to about 32 GtCO2e/year when the goal is to limit warming below 1.5°C. Nature-based solutions, which includes things like climate smart management of forests, agriculture, bioenergy, diets and demand-side management, can contribute 10-12 GtCO2e/year towards closing the gap. Forests is the biggest contributor within NBS with a potential of 4.1–6.5 $GtCO_2e$/year in emission reductions (IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land; 2019)

[30] Yuan, H., Ma, Q., Ye, L., & Piao, G. (2016). The Traditional Medicine and Modern Medicine from Natural Products. *Molecules (Basel, Switzerland)*, *21*(5), 559. https://doi.org/10.3390/molecules21050559

[31] https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2018/05/9.pdf

The United Nations' Inclusive Wealth Index provides a key source of hard data, offering a true measure of a country's wealth by taking into account its manufactured, human and natural capital. By focusing on indicators like education, infrastructure and natural resources, it offers a more complete view of human well-being than purely economic measures, like gross domestic product. The use of inclusive wealth as a measure of sustainable economic growth can help governments facilitate the transition to green and blue economies.

C. Building a prosperous and resilient future for all

Shifting finance and business practices to embrace nature-positive investments and to move towards responsible patterns of consumption and production – ultimately limiting climate change, nature loss, and pollution – is one of the defining challenges of our times. It is central to the 2030 Agenda.

Businesses and citizens are becoming increasingly aware of the long-term costs of environmental degradation, including widespread loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Progressive policies, responsible business and novel sources of capital to turn the environmental tide are needed. This has created an opening for political leaders to take bold steps to manage natural resources more responsibly, while addressing poverty, inequality, unemployment and insecurity. Transformational change will require dialogue, innovation, regulation and behavioral modifications.

Mobilizing the financial sector and providing the frameworks, norms and knowledge resources to stimulate market transformation is critical to realigning the real economy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 12 (Sustainable Production and Consumption), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water) and SDG 15 (Life on Land).

VII. Conclusion

The final report will highlight how nature, in all its diversity and complexity, delivers a host of essential services to humanity. Nature provides humanity with food, cleans the air, sequesters carbon, filters water, protects us from floods and stabilizes the land under our cities. Improving circularity, waste management and enabling low-polluting practices all require infrastructure that can be complemented by the smarter use of nature. The grey (built infrastructure) and the green (nature) are not opposites but can work together.

Solutions for protecting and restoring nature for sustainable development exist, but more ambitious worldwide actions by all stakeholders are urgently required. These include:

- inspiring political will to act at national and local levels;
- sharing knowledge and information, including the use of science to monitor progress, set priorities and guide policy making;
- devoting stable financing and other resources to nature-related challenges;
- strengthening multisectoral and multi-stakeholder collaboration;
- improving monitoring frameworks to assess progress;

- reducing inequality between developed and developing countries and addressing human rights issues to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups; and
- strengthening the linkages to the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

Delegates will be invited to consider and announce at UNEA 5 targeted actions their respective governments will implement to protect and restore the extent, connectivity and diversity of healthy ecosystems. It is hoped UNEA 5 will show the world that, despite the challenges wrought by COVID-19, Member States remain committed to creating a better, more sustainable future for their citizens.