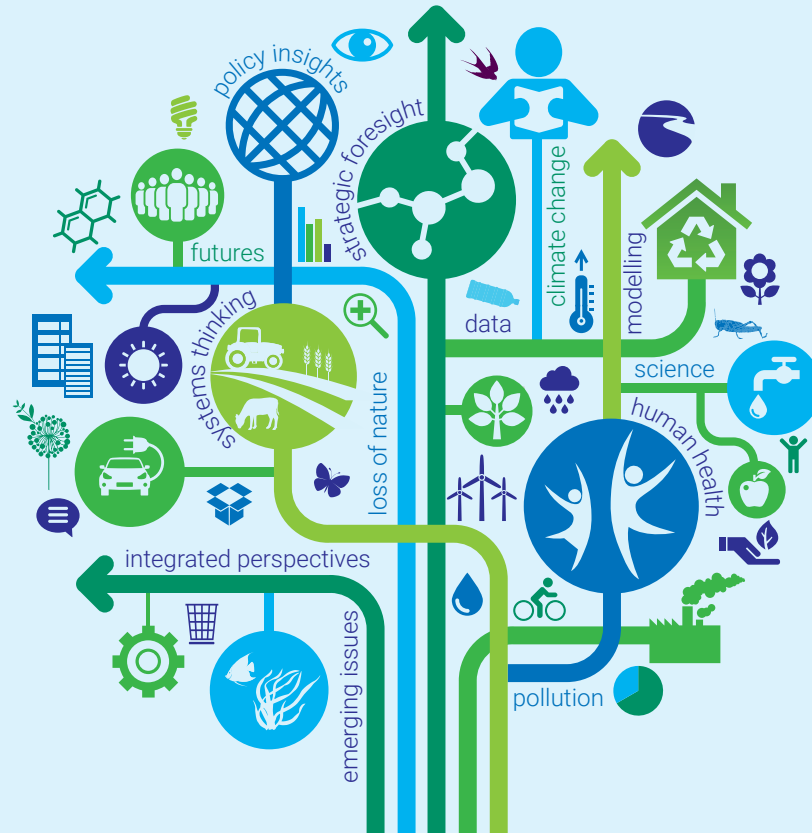


# Foresight, Emerging Issues and Futures



**UN**  
environment  
programme



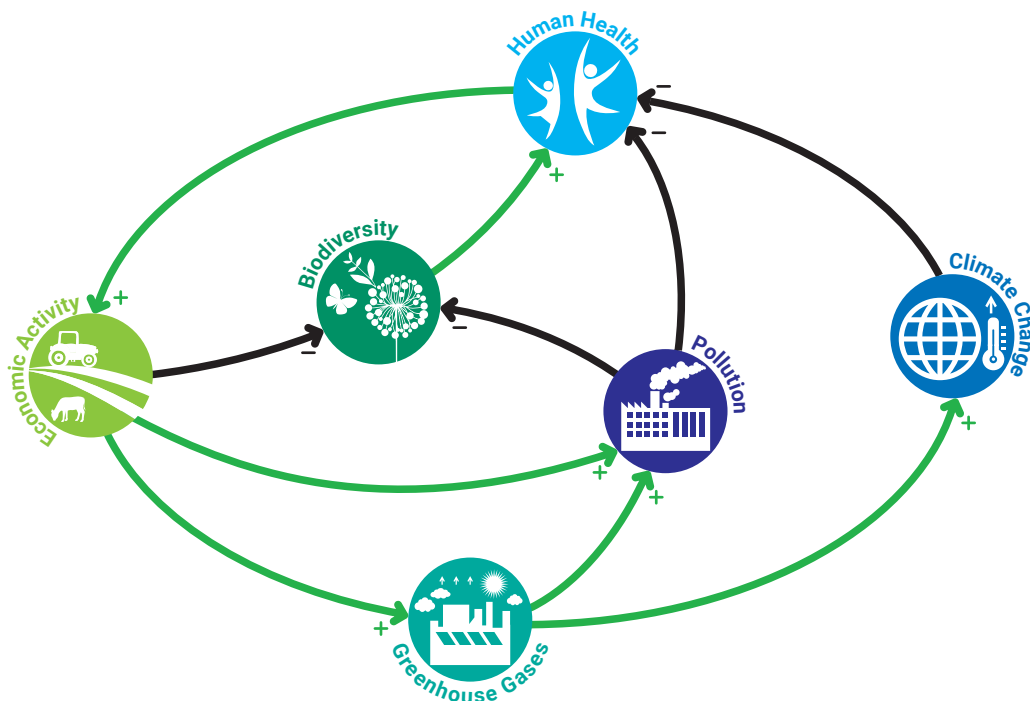
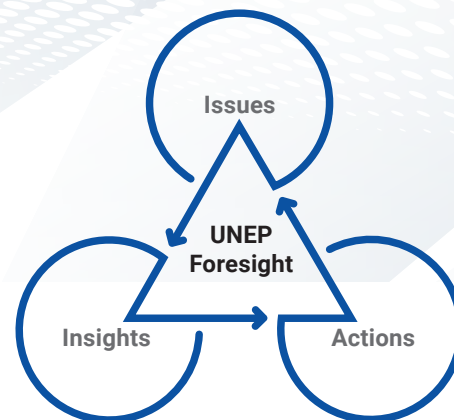
*'Foresight...' the capacity to think systematically about the future to inform decision making today'*

## Foresight Unit

The Foresight Unit, situated in the Big Data Branch of UNEP's Science Division, publishes regular science-based Foresight Briefs that **highlight hotspots of environmental change**, feature emerging science topics, or discuss contemporary environmental issues. The **public at large** and **decision makers** at all levels are provided with the opportunity to find out what is happening to their changing environment and the consequences of everyday choices, and to think about **future directions for policy** which they can influence through their policy processes.

There is a growing need to **keep information brief, visual and relevant for policymakers** while describing the implications of environmental change in terms of human impacts.

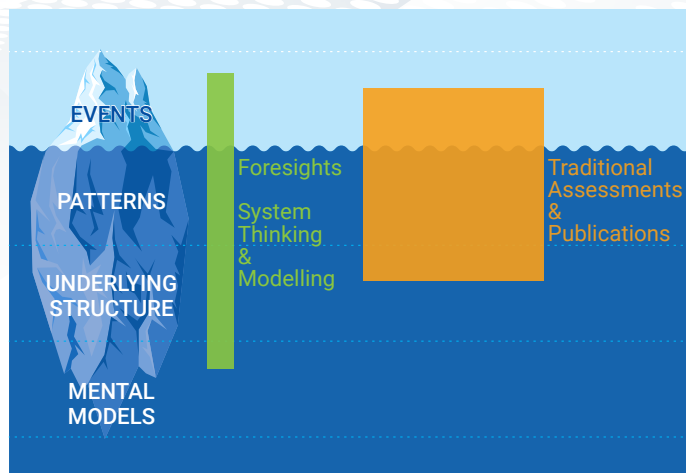
Systemic insights demonstrate the interconnectedness of the emerging environmental issues that we face, and in particular the three interconnected mutually reinforcing challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution that are the key strategic objectives identified in **UNEP's 2022-2025 Medium Term Strategy** and the importance of foresight as outlined in the **Secretary-General's 'Common Agenda'** of UN's transformation through the **Quintet of Change**, and ultimately, how they all impact human health and well-being.



*Growth in traditional economic activity results in increased global warming causing green house gases and pollution as well as reduced biodiversity. These in turn adversely impact human health and this reduces economic activity. Policies that enables economic growth that is also good for the environment will improve human health and further increase economic activity through reinforcing feedback. (+) Influence is in the Same direction (-) influence is in the Opposite direction.*

There are 3 key categories of foresight initiatives in UNEP – continuous and dynamic early warning (includes monthly Foresight Briefs) medium-term or annually (includes Frontiers) and longer-term, for example, 21 Issues for the 21st Century and the Global Environmental Outlook. Foresight briefs have a production schedule that is flexible and frequent with their primary focus being on informing the public, but also with good quality production so that they can be presented to policy makers for quick and deep insights.

**UNEP's Foresight Briefs** are open to the participation of all relevant public and private research centres from all over the world, and also enable greater internal cooperation on highlighting emerging issues with other partners. Foresight Brief topics: <https://wesr.unep.org/foresight/briefs>



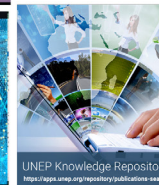
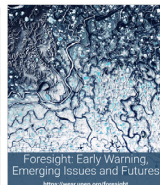
Photos © Shutterstock.com

The Foresight Unit also provides unique insights using **systems thinking based analysis** and **system dynamics modelling** of emerging issues with a foresights focus. Current project is using population dynamic modelling to further improve the understanding of the impact of the level of Proportion of Illegally Killed Elephants (PIKE) on elephant populations at the Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) sites across Africa and climate related security risk modeling.

Foresight Projects: <https://wesr.unep.org/foresight/projects>

## UNEP is a member of the UN HLCP Informal Foresight Network

The Foresight Unit, on behalf of UNEP, coordinates liaison with the High Level Committee on Programs Informal Strategic Foresights and **develops proposals** for the use of **strategic foresight initiatives** to provide policy insights to complex emerging problems.



UNEP's participation in UNESCO Futures Literacy Summit

# Foresight Briefs 2017-2022



001 Saving Lake Faguibine



002 Marine plastics litter and microplastics



003 The changing Aral Sea



004 Lake Urmia: Signs of recovery



005 Emerging sponge cities



006 Hacking economics for people and planet



007 Smoke-haze: A trans-boundary air pollution issue in Southeast Asia



008 Faith for earth



009 Revisiting ocean acidification, food security and our earth system



010 Alternatives for the use of glyphosate



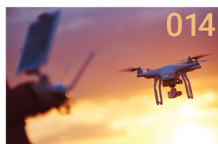
011 We are losing the "Little things that run the world"



012 Environment, climate change and security



013 The potential of carbon sequestration in the soil



014 Building a digital ecosystem for the planet



015 Growing popularity of alternate food systems for environment and health



016 Seagrasses, the forgotten ecosystems



017 Challenges for the growth of the electric vehicle market



018 Unveiling plastic pollution in oceans



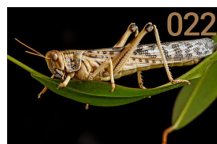
019 Blockchain technology and environmental sustainability



020 The need to eliminate lead paint globally



021 Food loss and waste in the Sustainable Development Goals' nexus



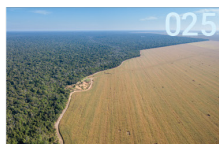
022 Desert locusts' upsurges: A harbinger of emerging climate change induced crises?



023 Nature-Based Solutions for Urban Challenges



024 Sargassum: Brown tide or golden jewel?



025 Working with plants, soils and water to cool the climate and rehydrate Earth's landscapes



026 People's livelihood and cities - building back greener



027 The growing footprint of digitalisation



028 The shrinking Arctic Sea Ice



029 Plastics in agriculture - an environmental challenge



030 Charcoal as a global commodity: is it sustainable?

<https://wesr.unep.org/article/foresight-briefs>

<https://wesr.unep.org/foresight>

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