

SUMMARY - BUILD BACK GREENER – UNEA multi-stakeholder dialogue, 1st March 2022

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Despite the extraordinary ~~health, societal and economic challenges and shocks wrought and continuing~~ by COVID-19 to all parts of the world, the ~~multistakeholder Build Back Greener dialogue largely concluded that COVID~~ global response ~~has not 'yet' has not yet sparked been~~ a transformative moment to accelerate our transition to green and fair economies.

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~~This was the conclusion of the "Build Back Greener" multi-stakeholder dialogue convened by the Green Economy Coalition at UNEA 5.2 in Nairobi, Kenya, on March 1st 2022. It was~~ Crucial to this conclusion is that fact that ~~of-remarked that over the~~ \$14trn ~~has been~~ spent by governments in extraordinary measures to support economies ~~and societies during the pandemic, but~~ very little of ~~this money~~ has been either nature positive or ~~conducive to a~~ green economy ~~positive~~.

~~We acknowledged that the pathway to 1.5°C is fading, progress on SDGs slowing or reversing, and we all face the scourge of plastic pollution.~~ We acknowledged ~~that~~ governments face unprecedented challenges: ~~shifting from short-term stabilisation and stimulus measures to deeper transformative policies in achieving that will shift us to a~~ nature positive, net zero, zero pollution, fairer ~~and~~ more inclusive ~~economies society, as well all while~~ struggling with ballooning public debt, ~~and~~ an ongoing health crisis, ~~and a destabilising world order.~~ ~~But we do not have time to recover first, and then go green: the window to securing 1.5°C is closing rapidly, progress on SDGs is slowing or reversing, and the problem of plastic pollution is intensifying rapidly. Therefore, and so we~~ ~~must need to~~ redouble our efforts to Build Back Greener ~~now~~.

~~Towards this end, the dialogue~~ With this as context the ~~Build Back Greener dialogue, convened by the Green Economy Coalition,~~ focused on answering 2 main questions – **why has this COVID moment not been transformative?** and secondly, **what we can do to ensure it is transformative?**

The **absence of sufficient pPolitical Wwill** was proposed as an overarching answer to the inadequate progress to Build Back Greener. To catalyse this ~~Ppolitical Wwill~~ requires both the **leadership from the top of governments** (presidents, prime-ministers, finance and planning ministers) and secondly recognition that this is an all-society transition where the **mandate of the people should be actively sought**.

~~We heard~~ ~~The first intervention comes from Ms. Gitika Goswami of, Development Alternatives, India NGO,~~ one of the authors of the background document ~~– Build Back Greener, – Ms Goswami~~ brought attention to the nine recommendations of the report: ~~:~~

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~~1. Embed circular economy into recovery agendas and address the problem of plastics.~~

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~~2. Screen stimulus measures and embed sustainability in budget design and implementation.~~ ~~3.~~

~~Prioritise financing to enable micro, small and medium size enterprises (MSMEs) to pursue sustainability goals.~~ ~~4.~~

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~~Prioritise job-rich, community-led and nature-based solutions.~~ ~~5.~~

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~~Prioritise debt for nature swaps and other innovative sustainable finance solutions.~~ ~~6.~~

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~~Embed the just transition into stimulus and reform programmes.~~ ~~7.~~

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[In India the highest policy priority to accelerate a green recovery must be enabling access to finance and support for greening for small and micro enterprises.](#)

IUCN reiterated that nature has largely been invisible from the recovery efforts [to date](#). [The core interest of society is long-term stability, and therefore governments at a minimum, should commit to the principle of “do no harm to nature”. This can be achieved by screening stimulus measures for their environmental impact, embedding nature in budget design](#)

The dialogue then moved onto the issue of plastic pollution – an iconic issue of a transformation towards green and fair economies. [The Business Major Group supported a legally binding resolution on plastics, arguing that business can help innovate solutions to ensure plastics stay in the circular economy rather than disposed into the environment. Attention to the importance of including informal waste community and pointed out the need to develop ways of tracking progress and working with stakeholders.](#)

[Chile’s Break Free from Plastics then took the discussion to a deeper level, reminding us of the broken relationship between people and nature and shared examples of the indigenous communities and cultures damaged by hundreds of years of industrialisation and the great acceleration of the 21st century.](#)

We heard an inspirational story [of Fiji’s green recovery](#), prioritizing community support and small green businesses, [and nature-based solutions were sought that could protect coastlines, biodiversity, and food security all at once. Partnering with communities and the private sector, the new Fijian sea defence project uses natural solutions to keep sea-level rise at bay, at a fraction of the expensive of pouring tonnes of concrete.](#) This work is taking off across the Pacific and Fiji stand ready to support others technically or on policy around the world.

German [Government](#), strongly supported the importance of dialogue and transformative multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances as the key to unlocking transformative change. [The German government supports international partnerships to do this and will direct public funds towards this end](#). [The German COVID-19 response package supported green recovery in 25 countries around the world, with stimulus spending designed to align with the 2030 SDGs agenda and the Paris Climate Agreement.](#)

He reiterated this transition can only be achieved with stakeholder expertise - from environment, trade unions, youth, science, and indigenous wisdom – because this moment demands we combine forces more strongly than before

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Belgium [government](#) reminded us to leave no one behind. [The pandemic disrupted all societies, and human and economic welfare, and made clear our vulnerability, especially low-income groups. She urged the delegates to use this opportunity to build systemic resilience that respects planetary boundaries, in a scientific and transboundary approach, that can halt environment loss and achieve the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.](#)

Youth delegate [in Finland argued that local must](#) play a crucial role on inclusive green

recovery. She reminded us that what matters most to people is community and local businesses and livelihood. Change should start with prioritizing community business to prosper and go green.

WWF reminded us of the importance of nature positive, which is as important as net zero. [He argued that the economic system needs more nature integrity, and that building back greener](#) should focus on changing the economic drivers that deliver nature loss.

FAO stated [agriculture must become more inclusive, resilient, sustainable](#).

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands reminded us of the critical role played by wetlands. We can't have water without wetlands, and we can't have recovery without wetlands. Wetlands are also an essential carbon store. So we must keep in mind Wetlands in our Build back Greener and Bluer, emphasizing the importance of blue recovery.

Women Major Group, reminded us that women have both been disproportionately impacted by Covid [and called for:](#)

1. **Ensure social protection for all.** [This must be universal, but not gender neutral.](#) (On this point it was noted, according to ILO, only half of the world have access to social protection, secondly estimates have been made that Investments in essential social protection policies can generate a GDP multiplier effect of between 0.7 and 1.9).
2. [Direct support for women in the informal sector, women-owned and led micro and small businesses, and those who feed us.](#)
3. That Stimulus packages must be about people, not just profit. [It must provide support for and promotion of community innovations, recognizing the importance of traditional and indigenous knowledge.](#)

The moderator thanked the panel and concluded by pointing out one significant insight from the dialogue – [those governments that had already started on their transition to green economies were better equipped to act on BUILD BACK GREENER.](#) With that insight he commended two assets to assist governments:

The [Build Back Greener report](#), and the [Green Economy Tracker](#) – the most important policies to transform towards greener fairer economies.