

Leadership Dialogue 1: Super-highway or still in slow-motion: Are science, data and digitalization really speeding our transition to a sustainable future?

The Leadership Dialogue focused on the role of science data and digitalization in accelerating our shift towards a sustainable future. It explored how scientific assessments and digital tools could address environmental crises (Biodiversity loss, Pollution, Climate Change) and enhance early warning systems. It emphasized building on the UN Secretary General's Early Warning for All (EW4All) initiative to enhance early warning systems. H.E. Dr. Yasmine Fouad, Minister of Environment, Arab Republic of Egypt, shared experiences from Egypt, underscoring the urgent need to close the gap between sustainability and socioeconomic development. She shared on key policy shifts that can be actualized by leveraging science, data, and digitalization to this end, including projecting investment opportunities that can be tapped from sustainability, prioritizing to address the interconnectedness and cascading nature of the triple planetary crises, where priority is given to solutions that create synergy and amplify impact across different commitments; building on the success of flagships, where tools and technologies applied in the EW4All, are leveraged to monitor nature/biodiversity loss, pollution, and the cascading risk of the triple crises, and also monitor solutions and their investment enablers to enhance uptake; and enhancing the role of indigenous communities through targeted incentives. She emphasized the role of digitalization in bridging the gap between science, policy, and investments. Dr. Jim Skea, Chair of the IPCC, shared insights on the need for policy-level support for science, data, and digitalization, communication strategies, and the importance of actionable scientific data.

Contributions from the floor, including from member states, UN entities, NGOs, CSOs and the private sector, stressed the significance of digital technologies and science data in supporting sustainable transitions. They highlighted the importance of socio-economic data, responsible AI use, and engaging local communities. The emphasis was also on finance for sustainability, leveraging technology for climate action, and enhancing global coordination based on scientific evidence. Speakers also highlighted the necessity for a cohesive approach that aligns science, policy, and investment towards mitigating the impacts of climate change, halting biodiversity loss, and reducing pollution.

The dialogue concluded with strong recommendations for leveraging science, data and digital solutions in policy-making. Calls to action emphasized the need to put into action the key messages from the keynote speakers and those who intervened from the floor. Emphasis was on investing in data platforms for nature-based solutions, ensuring responsible AI use, engaging in science-policy processes, addressing interlinked environmental crises, making digital tools accessible, and empowering communities for sustainable practices. The importance of bridging the data-action gap to translate scientific insights into effective policies was underscored. A strong call to action was made for enhancing early warning systems to include risks related to biodiversity loss and pollution, alongside climate change, under the Early Warning for the Environment (EWE) approach. Emphasizing community engagement and leveraging citizen science and digital technologies were identified as vital for translating early warnings into effective, actionable solutions to protect, restore, and conserve environmental resources, in line with the Global Biodiversity Framework and complementing the EW4All initiative.

Leadership Dialogue 2: Show me the money: Can the global financial system really tackle climate change, nature loss and pollution?

Leadership Dialogue two: Show me the money: Can the global financial system really tackle climate change, nature loss and pollution? focusing on aligning public and private finance of more than USD 480 trillion with global sustainability goals. Keynote speaker Maria Susana Muhamad Gonzalez, Minister of Environment for Colombia, highlighted the challenges many developing countries face of a vicious cycle of higher debt payments, fiscal constraints exacerbated by the impacts of climate change, and the need to transition sectors but the risk of being downgraded in the financial system for doing so. This exacerbates the challenge of fulfilling commitments to an energy transition and ambitious goals on climate and nature. The Minister called for reform of the global financial system so that developing countries can access capital in a fair way for a new cycle of productivity for the transition. We have to move fast to change the financial system and the rules of the game to step up and help countries address the triple planetary crisis. For the transformative agenda the key issue is transition. She said incremental advancement is important but is not at the scale required to tackle the systemic crisis we are facing. For example, government use of taxonomies is important to guide investment in a country to the sectors that will help to tackle environmental and biodiversity issues and will give a clear signal to the financial sector. Keynote speaker Sean Kidney, CEO of the Climate Bonds Initiative said there are ways to redirect financial flows from USD7 trillion invested in destructive economic activities compared to USD250 billion in nature. The green and sustainable bonds market has grown 100-fold to USD4 trillion in 10 years; 52 countries are issuing green and sustainable bonds with USD52 bn outstanding. Governments are providing support and subsidies for green industries, renewable energy and the climate transition and green transformation.

Germany said governments need to provide the national framework conditions and incentive systems, and we can't manage the crisis without funds from the private sector. Bangladesh said it is important for public and private financial flows to go to adaptation as part of climate finance, and for governments to provide leadership and incentivize the private sector to invest in adaptation. Indonesia recognized the need to take action right now for significant financing for nature-based solutions, including scaling up sustainable finance from business and the financial sector, encouraging and enabling them to reduce negative and increase positive impacts on the environment to reduce emissions and ensure sustainable production. Canada said we need to turn the financial system on its head to work for us, including phasing out harmful subsidies, whether on climate or nature, or plastics linked to fossil fuels. The UK said collaboration is critical for standards and regulations that interlink, as is mobilization of finance to support sound management of chemicals and waste and nature-positive solutions with an integrated approach. The Netherlands said we should consider finance to deal climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and governments need to reduce risks to make clean investment more attractive for private finance. Gabon called for transformative changes in the market including environmental standards and incentives to unlock resources to invest climate, biodiversity and nature-positive activities.

Overall, there was a call for aligning all financial flows with a green transition to nature-positive, circular economies. Countries called for multilateralism to phase out harmful subsidies and apply standards and interlinked regulation universally across sectors for transformative changes in the market. Governments need to reduce risks to make clean investment more attractive for private finance to draw in private capital. Priorities include integrating financial frameworks that supports mobilizing finance from all sources. Governments should do everything in their power as legislators to create appropriate guidelines and incentives to ensure investment decisions that will shape economic and

ecological development for decades to come are in line with climate and biodiversity targets.
We have to change priorities.

Leadership Dialogue three: Alive and kicking: Environmental multilateralism is a beacon of hope but is it delivering fast enough?

Leadership Dialogue three explored key innovations, initiatives, and ideas, to advance the effectiveness, inclusivity and sustainability of environmental multilateralism. Keynote speaker Inger Andersen highlighted the importance of multilateral environmental agreements and the UN Environment Assembly as the 'big tent and tapestry' that can advance and weave together an environmental multilateralism that delivers. She reflected on the opportunity of reimagining business as usual, and drawing inspiration from other intergovernmental instruments outside of the environmental space. Keynote speaker Grace Catapang, Youth representative from The Philippines, challenged us with a powerful, authentic, and emotional message. To remind us we are talking about actual lives, now and into the future. To urge us to be more inclusive, to avoid tokenism, and to be more empathetic to those not here.

We heard from Member States and UN entities. Calls and recommendations were made on the need for strengthening and accelerating environmental multilateralism, emphasizing the urgency of the triple planetary crises. Recommendations were given for further environmental action to be 'future-fit', people-centered, and innovative. For example, could we redefine what constitutes 'consensus'? Could we put a stop on new instruments and focus on strengthening what we have? Could we radically rethink the spaces and fora for exchanging information across different actors and in decision making, especially with those impacted and/or disproportionately affected by our decisions. Finally, calls were made for the reimagination of environmental multilateralism to be action-oriented, based on scientific-evidence and focused on people.