



#SolveDifferent

The Fourth United Nations
Environment Assembly
of the United Nations
Environment Programme

A close-up photograph of two moths with black bodies and red spots on their wings, perched on a purple thistle flower. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brownish-gold.

Become a #SolveDifferent Champion

A guide for Member States

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**Fourth Session of the
United Nations Environment Assembly
11-15 March 2019
Nairobi, Kenya**

**Theme:
Innovative solutions for environmental
challenges and sustainable consumption and
production**

**unenvironment.org/environmentassembly
solvedifferent.eco
[#SolveDifferent](https://twitter.com/SolveDifferent)**

THINK BEYOND LIVE WITHIN

The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly will take place in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019 under the theme “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. The choice of this theme underscores Member States’ desire and commitment to deliver concrete and innovative solutions to ensure a sustainable future for all.

For all the progress inspired by the Global Goals, one barrier impedes them all: the choices we make in our everyday lives continue to fuel consumption and production habits that are increasingly extending beyond the limits of our planet.

In the run-up to the Assembly, UN Environment is leading a global campaign to #SolveDifferent. This campaign will focus on an informative and emotive approach to communicating the environmental cost of key consumption and production models through inspiring, solution-based storytelling.

Member States are critical to driving this message. As part of your commitment to the Assembly and its theme, we invite you to engage in this campaign, adapting it to your national context, and spread its message in your country and around the world.

Siim Kiisler

President of the 2019 UN Environment Assembly

The theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly: innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production

Numerous environmental challenges affect society, the economy and the environment itself, and they lead to food insecurity, poverty, energy insecurity, loss of biodiversity, pollution, land mismanagement and desertification, among other problems. Some of these challenges are long-standing; therefore, at its fourth session, the Environment Assembly will capitalize on the growing momentum in the international community, national governments, the business sector and civil society to tackle these challenges by embracing innovative approaches aimed at tackling environmental challenges that have an impact on society, the economy and the environment.

Innovative solutions are “business unusual” approaches to addressing environmental challenges, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable consumption and production. They encompass the creation of enabling environments for creative approaches in policy, financing, partnerships, processes and the use of data to understand environmental issues and improve sustainability. Innovative solutions also increase technical capacities, attract new investments, open new markets and enhance productivity and sustainability.

Sustainable consumption and production address the full life cycles of economic activities: the extraction of resources, their processing into materials and products, and the subsequent use and discarding of those products. They can also be broken down into specific economic

activities in order to do more and better with less and identify priorities according to their environmental impacts and resource demands.

Innovative solutions and systemic changes towards sustainability at various stages of the life cycle lead to sustainable consumption and production and address environmental challenges directly. UN Environment is promoting a systems approach that connects the flow of resources at each stage of the life cycle with their use and their impact on the environment, economies and societies. The approach includes, but is not limited to, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns adopted at the Rio+20 Conference, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

Types of innovative solutions:

- Policy interventions.
- Environmentally sound technologies.
- Sustainable financing schemes.
- Education, research and development.
- Sharing of best practices.
- Capacity-building and awareness-raising.
- Private and public partnerships.

Focus areas of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

The proposed focus areas will also contribute towards tackling pollution and the implementation of the outcome of the third session of the UN Environment Assembly **Towards a pollution-free planet Declaration**

Food systems, food security and curbing biodiversity loss

Our food systems are a major cause of deforestation, land use change and biodiversity loss, overfishing, groundwater depletion, excessive fertilizer and pesticide use, and account for one third of greenhouse gas emissions. Globally, malnutrition remains the greatest cause of premature mortality and impaired human capital. The double burden of malnutrition, ranging from undernutrition, micro- and macronutrient deficiencies, stunting and wasting, to excessive consumption of unbalanced diets, obesity and diabetes, persists in many low and middle-income countries, with both extremes often co-existing within the same communities.

Building sustainable food systems means not treating soil as an instrument, consuming its capacity for large-scale food growing, or simply bringing more land into production by clearing forests, ploughing and tilling, spraying and fertilizing to grow monoculture crops intensively.

Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management

The unsustainable use of resources has become deeply embedded in many industries and is closely linked to the amount of final waste and emissions generated by a number of emerging economy cities. The high demand for such raw materials will far exceed what the planet can sustainably provide. In addition, the long-term historic sprawl of cities by two per cent per year threatens to increase global urban land use from just below 1 million km² to over 2.5 million km² by 2050, putting agricultural land and food supplies at risk.

Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change

Addressing innovative business development in a time of rapid technological change will require a better understanding of what the advent of intelligent machines, digital development, artificial intelligence and automation means, both from the perspective of industry itself and in terms of what governments can do to successfully participate in tackling complex, seemingly intractable environmental challenges.

Communication objectives:

This toolkit for Member States contains practical guidance and information for use in the lead-up to and during the Assembly.

Objectives:

1. Raise awareness and engage public discussion on the importance of addressing environmental challenges, climate change and unsustainable consumption and production patterns in the lead up to the Assembly.
2. Create a conversation on sustainable consumption and production, food security and biodiversity loss that will extend far beyond the Assembly itself.
3. Build an understanding on the importance of innovative solutions to address environmental challenges.
4. Promote examples of innovative solutions leading to improvements to society, the economy and the environment.
5. Build platforms and momentum to continue from the third ministerial outcome document of the third session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEP/EA.3/HLS.1), entitled "Towards a pollution-free planet" in 2017 to the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly in 2019.

Support and get involved with #SolveDifferent campaign

1. Ensure high-level participation at the Environment Assembly.
2. Coordinate with the Communication Division to organize short videos and media interviews with journalists attending the Assembly.
3. Organize launch events of reports, new policies or national initiatives at the Assembly.
4. Make an announcement ahead of the Environment Assembly and share with UN Environment's Communication Division, so that they can disseminate and showcase it.
5. Submit op-eds on innovative solutions to address environmental challenges to national newspapers, written under the name of your Minister of Environment or Head of State.
6. Share innovative solutions of how your government is embracing sustainable consumption and production with UN Environment and global and local media.
7. Mobilize citizens to make sustainable choices.
8. Engage national celebrities to take the lead on sustainable consumption and production and inspire individuals to embrace sustainable consumption footprint.
9. Use social media to drive engagement: conduct photo competitions on Instagram or Facebook, host Twitter or Facebook chats on innovative solutions to environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production, and post videos that showcase innovative solutions. Share your activities using the #SolveDifferent hashtag.
10. Travel to Nairobi with national journalists and support media field trips that highlight innovations within the realm of sustainable consumption and production.

11. Call on your citizens to share their #SolveDifferent stories and ideas.
12. Encourage state broadcasters to give special prominence to the theme of the Environment Assembly, raising awareness and highlighting opportunities to act.
13. Convene town hall meetings in which citizens have the chance to share with lawmakers innovative solutions that can improve their lives.
14. Engage civil society in spreading the word on innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production, providing them with background information and communication tools.
15. Join UN Environment's #SolveDifferent campaign and share your story.

#SolveDifferent story contest

Storytelling is a great way to generate public engagement and share how governments and citizens across the world are leading sustainable lives and/or have innovatively addressed an environmental challenge.

UN Environment encourages all governments to run a #SolveDifferent-themed contest in the lead-up to the Environment Assembly. Below is a quick guide to doing so.

1. Put a human face on the consumption and production challenge and share promising solutions and innovations using photos, videos, illustrations and text.
2. Set up a page on your ministry's site informing users about the Environment Assembly and the call for #SolveDifferent submissions. The page should include:
 - Submission instructions and contest terms and conditions
 - A method for submitting stories and multimedia content, such as through an email address, a link (YouTube/Vimeo for videos) or by posting with the contest hashtag.
 - A notice that entrants may have their work displayed at the United Nations Environment Assembly.
3. Publicize the contest through social and traditional media and let UN Environment know so that it can help with its promotion.
4. Share the winning entries with UN Environment so that they can be profiled on the organization's digital channels and at the Environment Assembly.

Supporting facts and figures

What is sustainability?

- Meeting the needs of the present without compromising needs of future generations.
- Taking action to restore and replenish what is lost.
- Regenerating economies, societies and the biosphere.
- Using ingredients and materials that are responsibly sourced.
- Putting in place cleaner manufacturing processes.
- Reducing our footprint, including our carbon footprint.

Natural resource management

- Today, we are using three times more resources than in 1970.
- In 2017, resource use reached 90 billion tons and more than 50 per cent of these resources were dispersed or wasted while only 10 per cent was cycled back in the economy.
- Every year, we extract 90 billion metric tons of resources to feed our US\$77 trillion economy.
- On a per capita basis, high-income countries consume 10 times more materials than low-income countries.
- Land degradation decreases resilience to environmental stresses, which has a direct impact on the poor, women and children, leading to intense competition for scarce natural resources and an irreversible and continuing decline in genetic and species diversity.
- Over the last two decades, approximately 20 per cent of the Earth's vegetated surface showed persistent declining trends in productivity, due to climate change, biodiversity loss and poor management practices.
- If our consumption pattern does not change by 2050 we need the resources of three planet earths to sustain us.

Clothing and footwear industry

- Clothing and footwear industry is valued at between \$2.5-3 trillion, and it employs approximately 60 million people worldwide.
- Nearly 20 per cent of global wastewater is produced by the industry, which also emits more carbon emissions globally than all international flights and maritime shipping combined.
- The clothing and footwear industry has been identified in recent years as a major contributor to plastic pollution in our oceans, which seriously threatens marine ecosystems.
- A third of all primary microplastics in our oceans come from washing textiles, including our clothes. Some forms of “fast fashion” are also linked to unfair labor standards and dangerous working conditions due to unsafe processes and hazardous substances used in production.

Food system

- Over 500 million smallholder farmers provide food for two thirds of the Earth's growing population.
- To feed the world population agricultural production will likely need to increase by 50 per cent by 2050, while the environmental impact of food production will need to decrease by two-thirds.
- The environmental impacts of unsustainable agricultural practices cost an estimated \$3 trillion per year.
- 77% of agricultural land is currently linked to the production of meat. Livestock is the largest source of agricultural anthropogenic methane which has an acute effect on the global climate system.
- Achieving a zero-hunger world by 2030 depends on increasing smallholder productivity and mitigating crop loss from pests, diseases and post-harvest losses.

Fresh water

- 40 per cent of the world's wetlands have been lost since 1970 due to land-use changes.
- Agriculture accounts for 70 per cent of the world's freshwater water withdrawals.

Resource efficiency

- By increasing resource efficiency, we save 25 per cent of resource requirements and can have three to five per cent more economic growth.
- Research from the International Resource Panel indicates that investments in resource efficiency represent one of the least-cost approaches to meeting the sustainable development goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- The economic benefits from decoupling technologies could provide, globally, resource savings of USD 2.9 to 3.7 trillion each year by 2030.
- Policies to improve resource efficiency can:
 - reduce global resource use by 28 per cent.
 - cut greenhouse gas emission by 74 per cent.
 - increase global economic activity by six per cent.

Say no to “Take-Make-Dispose” and embrace sustainable consumption and production

- Consuming and producing more sustainably is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goal (Global Goals).
- Sustainable consumption and production is a cross cutting enabler of Global Goals.
- Research shows that companies employing eco-innovation measures show an average of 15% growth, even when markets are flat ¹.
- The finance community is also becoming more interested in sustainable consumption through their engagement on circular economy.
- To drive investments into circular, green and low-carbon growth and to align global financing and investments to the Sustainable Development Agenda, governments and regulators must pay increased attention to the ‘rules of the game’ governing financial and capital markets.

¹ The Business Case for Eco-innovation. UNEP. 2014

- The finance sector can also adopt responsible banking principles in line with their respective responsibilities. The “Principles for Responsible Banking”, launched by the UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative in 2018, is a promising and innovative approach that will help banks align their business models with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Our linear “Take-Make-Dispose” model of production and consumption is inherently unsustainable.
- Companies employing eco-innovations experience 15 per cent growth.

To decouple or not to decouple? That is the question.

- We can achieve resource efficiency if we decouple economic activity from economic growth and environmental impact.
- We can increase production and reduce our consumption footprint by adopting and embracing circularity.
- Circular material flow through a combination of extended product life cycles, intelligent design, reuse, recycling and manufacturing leads to sustainable economic growth.
- Globally, economic benefits from decoupling technologies can provide an annual saving to the tune of US\$2.9 to 3.7 trillion.

What can you do to improve resource efficiency and lead a sustainable lifestyle?

- Set targets and monitor progress.
- Put in place policies that include incentives to correct market failures.
- Promote innovation towards a circular economy.
- Provide space and resources for business and citizens to develop resource-efficient solutions.
- Ditch “take-make-dispose” model and embrace circular economy.
- Foster a culture of innovation that values creativity, openness and participation across all sectors.
- Address food security through a systems approach that tackles all aspects of production and consumption, and that makes best use of the latest technologies and innovative thinking.

- Adopt life-cycle approaches in manufacturing and production to ensure a more efficient use of resources.
- Support innovative business practices that enhance livelihoods and sustainable development.
- Hold companies accountable for investing in better and sustainable materials, processes and infrastructure.
- Buy goods from ethical brands that provide reliable sustainability information about their products.
- Ask your government to lead the agenda and invest in sustainable solutions which restore nature.
- Find opportunities to transform our linear, consumption-oriented economic system into a circular one.
- See new possibilities in working for billions of people as opposed to few billionaires.
- Help find ways to decouple human prosperity from environmental impact.

REMEMBER: Sustainability is a journey and not an overnight transformation. Embark on this journey and become a #SolveDifferent Champion!

Campaign resource and visual identity toolkit

The **Environment Assembly** and **SolveDifferent.eco** websites lie at the heart of the #SolveDifferent campaign. Please feel free to share these links with your constituents and provide your #SolveDifferent stories to UN Environment for dissemination.

The **brand toolkit** provides a suite of assets to launch your own #SolveDifferent campaign.

Social media

Environment Assembly official hashtag is #SolveDifferent. Social media resources are available at **#TrelloBoard**

You may view and download **#SolveDifferent** multimedia content from our **Digital Asset Management System**.

Or view #SolveDifferent Playlist on **YouTube**

Social media during the Assembly

Please feel free to share your own messages about innovative solutions to environmental challenges through your channels. Please make sure to use the hashtag #SolveDifferent.

In the lead-up and during the conference, UN Environment will be communicating using the following social media channels:

English:

<https://www.instagram.com/unenvironment/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/un-environment/>
<https://twitter.com/unenvironment>
<https://www.facebook.com/unenvironment>
<https://www.youtube.com/user/UnepAndYou>

French:

<https://twitter.com/ONUEnvironmt>
<https://www.facebook.com/unep.fr/>

Spanish:

<https://twitter.com/ONUmedioamb>
<https://www.facebook.com/ONUMedioAmbiente/>

Russian:

<https://twitter.com/UNEnvironmentRU>
<https://www.facebook.com/UNEPruasian/>

Arabic:

<https://twitter.com/UNEnvironmentAR>
<https://www.facebook.com/UN-Environment-Arabic-334320739972622/>

Chinese:

<https://www.weibo.com/unepandyou>

Media during the Assembly

Media will have access to all official sessions taking place during the Assembly and will be allowed to use host broadcast footage of the main events. The media centre is located in the Press Room inside the UN Gigiri Complex and the Sustainable Innovation Expo.

Media liaison officers will be on hand to facilitate interviews. Please let your session leader know in advance if you would like to make interview arrangements.

Below please find a press release template. We encourage you to use and adapt this to your needs.

Press release template

Your headline is the one thing you want people to know

- Use this section to provide a snapshot of your message – provide a “so what?”
- What are the three things your audience should learn from this release
- These lines should be short, to the point, memorable

LOCATION, DATE – Your lede should make clear what is new about the content your sharing – why are you distributing this, what development are you announcing? [THIS SECTION EXPLAINS WHAT]

Use this first graf to briefly establish the players – organizations taking part, individuals making the announcement or achievement – who deserves credit and who is the subject of this announcement? [THIS SECTION IDENTIFY WHO]

This section should provide some basic context to the announcement – you’ve made your announcement and who is responsible, now tell your reader why it is significant. Provide some very basic background on the issue you’re addressing and what is new about the content you’ve introduced. [THIS SECTION EXPLAINS WHY]

“xx,” said Joyce Msuya the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. “xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.” [THIS SECTION PROVIDES A QUOTE FROM A PRINCIPAL]

This section should provide additional details and context on the announcement – you’ve made your main point, established the players and emphasized the importance, now tell your reader how it came to be and what else might be significant about the process or the nature of the announcement [THIS SECTION EXPLAINS HOW]

“xx,” said Tim Christophersen, Head of Freshwater, Land and Climate Branch at UN Environment. [THIS SECTION PROVIDES A QUOTE FROM AN EXPERT OR SUBJECT]

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The final sections of your release should provide additional background context and explain what comes next – you've made your announcement and addressed all the components someone would need to write a story, now explain where this info goes from here.

NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Publication/Report:

Use this section to provide additional material context including links to download, other resources, multimedia links (broll, photos) etc.

Download: [In English](#)/ [In French](#)

About UN Environment

UN Environment is the leading global voice on the environment. It provides leadership and encourages partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations. UN Environment works with governments, the private sector, civil society and with other UN entities and international organizations across the world.

<https://www.unenvironment.org/>

About Environment Assembly

The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. It addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today. Here, representatives from more than 190 countries convene to outline cooperation and action for the protection and preservation of our global environment.

<https://www.environment.org/environmentassembly>

<https://www.solvedifferent.eco>

For more information, please contact:

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We are here to help

Our team is eager to help you develop and adapt the #SolveDifferent campaign to your national context. Please feel free to get in touch should you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

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