

Canadian views on the theme of the 5th UN Environment Assembly (19 November 2019)

Canada thanks the Presidency for the document entitled *Consensual elements of the theme of the fifth session of the UNEA* (dated 24 October 2019) and offers the following views.

We support a theme on nature-based solutions (NBS) to climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental issues, given the need for accelerated action in these areas.

In its capacity as the leading global environmental authority and advocate, we see UNEA as facilitating the global conversation with a sense of focus on solutions and actions urgently needed. As such, we would like to see an explicit reference to solutions or action in the theme.

Being the overall global authority on the environment, it is difficult to conceive that UNEA would not discuss climate change which is in urgent need of accelerated action. We would like to see an explicit reference to this in the scoping paper for UNEA. One of the key advantages of NBS is that they can address the dual and interconnected global challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change. NBS support ecosystem resilience and reduce the intensification and impact of climate change with multiple co-benefits for nature and people. The synergistic approach to tackling climate change and biodiversity is essential and should be reflected in the scoping of UNEA. Reaching sustainable development objectives will not be possible without action on biodiversity loss and climate change. Similarly, biodiversity cannot be maintained globally without decisive action on climate change and vice versa, a fact also acknowledged by the UN Secretary General and in recent science reports.

Building on the concept of the value-add of UNEA, we also see value in exploring how UNEA -through a NBS related theme - can best support the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, including the outcomes of the COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity and climate COP26, as these conferences will have taken place just a few months before UNEA.

The proposed 7 sub-themes in the paper are very broad and technical, while covering the right range of terrestrial and marine issues. They take a rather sectoral approach to ecosystems. Perhaps more cross-cutting themes could bring additional value-add and break silos, such as the suggestions below. In any case, sub-themes should be worded towards action and solutions.

- Encouragement of innovative financing from a range of sources to support the development and implementation of NBS to address the interrelated global challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change
- Engaging with Indigenous peoples and local communities through NBS including to support biodiversity conservation
- Promoting NBS to promote resilience towards extreme weather