

Input from MGs at AMCEN for UNEA 5 Theme

Major Groups note the growing support for a UNEA 5 theme of “nature-based solutions in the context of sustainable development”, as a way of sharing successful approaches and solutions. But – whatever theme is chosen - we strongly feel that the focus should be on the urgently needed transformational change stressed in the recent IPBES report and other flagship reports. In particular, it is vital that the root causes and direct and indirect drivers of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are addressed.

We are very concerned that unless the NBS theme scope is extremely well-defined, and the structure and format of the UNEA effectively designed, there is a strong possibility of hi-jacking for green-washing, “business as usual”, the commodification of nature for big business (instead of equitable, people and nature-centered solutions), band-aid solutions and techno-fixes.

We therefore suggest that – if chosen - NBS should be clarified and defined as a tool for achieving transformative and systemic change with a clear focus on planetary survival and restoration.

We further suggest that if NBS is chosen, it is clearly in Africa’s interest that this explicitly includes both the blue planet and the food-water-energy nexus in its scope. NBS should be addressed in a multi-stakeholder approach to make sure all own the process, and take a part in implementation..

We also suggest the following sub-themes for consideration:

1. Participatory, inclusive and transparent stakeholder engagement

- NBS offers huge opportunity for engagement of various Major Groups. For instance communities through CBOs, indigenous people, farmers, Youth...etc. in data collection, analysis, presentation and knowledge sharing - to ensure that their inputs can be harnessed and presented effectively.

- Role of traditional knowledge in natural based solution including traditional medicines, foods, habitat and so on.
- Role of Women and Empowering women so they can really help to develop and spread nature based solutions
- Governance and policies and support systems (such as Natural Capital Accounting) to help successfully apply, manage, monitor and evaluate the success of NBS.

2. Making a case for application of nature - based solutions for development challenges

- Education and awareness in relation to natural based solutions.
- Potential of biodiversity economy as a means of implementation of SDGs to eradicate poverty, eliminate hunger, etc
- Climate change as a cross cutting issue and climate natural based solution (soil carbon, forest, oceans, regenerative agriculture etc).
- Role of Citizen engagement (citizen science) is needed for natural based solution , for instance, in waste management, biodiversity/species stock-checks etc.. These are areas where citizen engagement is vital.
- NBS and Circular Economy. How circular economy is creating jobs, and how civil society can be engaged in this.

3. Strategies for successful application of nature - based solutions

- Policies and incentives to encourage investment in nature based solution businesses and projects.
- Need for innovative social change that can promote NBS, change consumption, production, mobility, housing habits...etc (change style of life).
- Economic models and policy systems to move beyond economic growth, or to complement or adjust growth systems.