



World Animal Net Comments on the Revised Draft Contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

World Animal Net welcomes the revised draft of the contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the opportunity to submit further comments.

World Animal Net was one of the few stakeholders to provide comments on the draft contribution, and these are available [here](#). We are restricting these new comments to major aspects which we consider meet the perspectives outlined in the CPR Sub-Committee meeting of 17th March 2020. We note that there are also some textual/editing changes needed, but we presume that these will be dealt with in the final draft.

Firstly, we are pleased to note the following amendments which considerably strengthen the text:

- Recognition of the urgency of the crisis and the specific mention of the impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and the stress on the need for “accelerated and transformative action”.
- Stress on the need to match political will with science.
- The inclusion of the One Health concept, which uses science and practical experiences as a base, and supports coordinated action across many government ministries, including environmental, agricultural and human health ministries.

However, as regards the last point, we would prefer the use of the term “One Health/One Welfare” because the One Health approach has been developed to include coordinated aspects of welfare/well-being in addition. This [website](#) explains the many links to human welfare to environmental well-being.

We also prefer the use of the term “ecosystem-based approaches” to “nature-based solutions”, as the latter does not yet have an agreed international definition, and is open to misinterpretation and misuse.

We welcomed the suggestion at the CPR meeting that the contribution could be strengthened with key messages from relevant environmental flagship reports. We believe that as the current draft contribution rightly calls for political will to match science, the language of the document should lead by example in capturing the need for urgency on the state of the environment indicated in a variety of UN reports including the Global Environment Outlook, the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Climate Change and Land report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change (IPCC). As these contain key higher-level messages in common, it may be possible to provide a combined overview, along the lines of:

“A number of UN flagship reports on the environment, including the Global Environment Outlook, the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Climate Change and Land report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have pointed to the fact that if we continue with current trends and practices, we will lose the struggle against irreversible environmental decline and degradation. The rate of global change in nature during the past 50 years is unprecedented in human history, with the great majority of indicators of ecosystems and biodiversity showing rapid decline. Nature is essential for human existence and good quality of life. Most of nature’s contributions to people are not fully replaceable, and some are irreplaceable. Urgent action at an unprecedented scale is necessary to arrest and reverse this situation. This needs to include transformative action and changes in human lifestyles and productive activities.”

We wondered whether the ordering of the initial sections could be more logical, and similar points clustered (and this reflected in the summary as well) for example:

- An initial opener along the lines that: 2020 will be a crucial year for the environment and sustainable development. The international community will have to grasp all available opportunities to deliver solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. This is the year in which the international community needs to match political will with science, commitments with resources, ambition with action, and action with momentum. This is the year in which when we must ensure that we back nature as the imperative for many of the challenges facing humanity.
- Then the state of urgency, including key observations from flagship reports.
- Aspects from UNEAs
- Ministers of Environment scaling up efforts.
- Then draw out the underlying problem of unsustainable consumption and production, coupled with a rapidly growing human population. Before going on to other aspects and more detailed suggestions.

As was stated in the CPR meeting, Sustainable Consumption and Production is the linking issue across UNEAs, so needs to be central. We suggest that this should be drawn out as a stand-alone before the list of integrated approaches which need scaling up – for example:

“Sustainable Consumption and Production has been a major issue across UN Environment Assemblies. We recognize the centrality of this SDG to minimizing resource use and environmental degradation - through doing more and better with less, increasing resource efficiency and promoting sustainable (and more equitable) lifestyles.”

“The HLPF should call all sectors of sustainable development to tackle the need for societal and behavioral change to bring about sustainable lifestyles; including education and awareness, and the development of enabling economic policies and incentives to accelerate the transition to economies that are resource efficient, low emission and low pollution, and socially inclusive.”

The following sentence is very convoluted, and appears to try to accommodate a number of perspectives, some of which have been given in comments and at the CPR meeting.

“The UN Environment Assembly therefore advocates strong political will the implementation of internationally agreed environmental commitments and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, to ensure the full integration of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, bearing in mind that it is a people centered agenda and acknowledging that a healthy planet is an essential requirement and key enabler for sustainable development including through integrated approaches in which economic, social and environmental objectives are addressed in a balanced manner.”

Our suggestion is that this is shortened and re-worded along the following lines:

“The UN Environment Assembly therefore advocates strong political will to ensure the implementation of internationally agreed environmental commitments and the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, with the full integration of the environmental dimension at the heart of sustainable development. We acknowledge that this is a people-centered agenda, and stress that a healthy planet is an essential requirement and key enabler for sustainable development in all its dimensions.”