



Distr.: General

29 April 2020

English only



**United Nations Environment  
Assembly of the United Nations  
Environment Programme**

---

**150th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives  
to the United Nations Environment Programme**

Nairobi, 30 April 2020

2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Online Meeting

**Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High-  
Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

*Fifth revised version.*

Following several iterations based on views expressed by member States in writing and at meetings of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as well as two silence procedures, and following the meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 24 April 2020, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives has proposed a final compromise text for the draft contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, as reflected in document attached to this cover note.

The change made in comparison to the previous version of the document is reflected as a deletion (marked by strikethrough) in paragraph d).

Following the decision of the Bureau CPR at its meeting on 24 April, a fifth revised version of the contribution document was submitted to member States for a 72-hour silence procedure. Two member States broke the silence procedure within this deadline, and the same text is now put forward for final consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its 150th meeting.

## **Contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: Responses to the questions raised by the President of the Economic and Social Council**

*This paper provides contributions of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), in response to the request made on 26 January 2020 by H.E. Ms Mona Juul, President of the Economic and Social Council and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to the UN in New York, to the President of the Environment Assembly and Minister for the Environment of Norway*

*The HLPF will take place from 7 to 16 July 2020, with a ministerial segment from 14 to 16 July 2020, under the theme “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.*

### **Summary of inputs**

2020 will be a crucial year for the environment and sustainable development. This is the year in which the international community need to match political will with science, ambition with action, action with momentum, and political will with science to deliver solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Accelerated and transformative actions are needed more than ever: January 2020 was the hottest month of January ever recorded, one million species may be pushed to extinction in the next few years and air pollution kills millions of people every year.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic that the world is currently facing, and its immediate aftermath, are likely to place additional strains on the environment. Despite a lack of visibility at this time, owing to the pandemic, the climate, biodiversity and chemicals crises have not disappeared. In light of increasing awareness about the links between ecosystem stability, the environment, and human health, including zoonotic diseases, the COVID-19 outbreak calls for the urgency to address threats to wildlife and ecosystems. Moreover, the world can ill-afford delays in key environmental-related decision-making and investment. To this end, the international community should consider the environmental dimensions as part of the global response to the pandemic.

The UN Environment Assembly advocates strong political will towards 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. The UN Environment Assembly also recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling and coherent policy frameworks, good governance and law enforcement at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, and effective means of implementation, including finance, capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies and developing partnerships in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Bearing in mind these elements, the United Nations Environment Assembly recommends that the 2020 HLPF:

- call for ambition in the 2020 environmental negotiations whose success will be crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda including the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the international sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. Despite a lack of visibility at this time, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the climate, biodiversity and chemicals crises have not disappeared. In fact, the COVID-19 outbreak calls for the urgent need to address threats to wildlife and ecosystems. Moreover, the world can ill-afford delays in key environmental-related decision-making and investment;
- stress that COVID-19 does not provide a “silver lining” for the environment but offers an opportunity for rebuilding the world better through green and sustainable recovery efforts, sound management of hazardous medical, and chemical waste and a clear commitment to “building back better”;
- recognize the role of regional level coordination as key to address transboundary issues and facilitate regionally coherent approaches;

- call all sectors of sustainable development to develop enabling economic policies and incentives to accelerate the transition to economies that protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, are low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive;
- call for strengthened action to protect, restore and sustainably use nature and promote ecosystem-based approaches to achieve the sustainable development goals in its three complementary dimensions (social, economic and environmental);
- call for strengthened action to reinforce the implementation of environmental rule law and good governance, including by ensuring sectoral laws take into account environmental obligations and good governance;
- promote integrated approaches to sustainable infrastructure to meet development needs while ensuring the preservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and addressing climate change both through mitigation and adaptation measures.
- Stress the importance of access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders as a key condition for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the promotion of integrated approaches.
- Acknowledge the request made to the UNEP Executive Director to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025 and ask other United Nations entities to contribute and support UNEP in the development of the strategy.

These measures will contribute to the delivery of the Decade of Action, including the ten points outlined in the political declaration adopted during the SDG Summit 2019.

### 1. Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

The findings of relevant global environmental assessments are clear: despite the availability of solutions to the common environmental challenges, the planet is increasingly polluted, affected by the adverse effects of climate change, quickly losing its biodiversity, and experiencing widespread environmental degradation.

The world is not on track to achieve the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and internationally agreed environmental goals by 2050 and environmental crisis are likely to make the achievement of most social and economic goals similarly unattainable.

Urgent action is therefore needed to reverse those trends and restore both environmental and human health and well-being to the planet<sup>1</sup>. The United Nations Environment Assembly has reaffirmed that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development, and recognised that innovative approaches and solutions are necessary to move our world closer to the vision set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The 6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Global Environment Outlook underscores that a healthy planet is a pre-requisite for healthy people and that is in turn the foundation for any healthy economy. Effective action in any of the sustainable development goals requires acknowledging and addressing the links among them – the close ties between climate change and human health, for instance, or the ways in which biodiversity loss and deterioration of ecosystem services exacerbate inequalities. To have a full implementation of Agenda 2030, we therefore need a strong and efficient environmental pillar.

The following key policies and measures can be identified to ensure “accelerated action and for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development:

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27652/GEO6SPM\\_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27652/GEO6SPM_EN.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

**a) Enabling and increasing coordination and mainstreaming:** The coordination between ministries, agencies and organizations for cross-sector and cross-SDG action, at the local, subnational, national and regional level as well as sharing and leveraging of national and regional research initiatives to address knowledge gaps, strengthening regional research networks and harmonization could be considered some of the critical gaps in implementing the 2030 Agenda. As underlined by the GSDR, decision makers need to act based on current knowledge and understanding of the linked human social-environmental systems at all levels. That knowledge also needs to be more widely available to all countries and actors, motivating innovative coalitions and partnerships for success. The full mainstreaming of integrated approaches such as integrated ocean management and Marine Spatial Planning, ecosystem-based approaches, “One Health” approach and encourage cross-sectoral communication and collaboration between ministries, member States, agencies as well as private and public sector and academia e.g. through inter-ministerial SDG coordination groups, as reflected in SDG 17.

Examples of integrated policies for achieving sustainability goals include:

- **Ecosystem-based approaches** involves actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, that address sustainable development challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing social, economic and biodiversity benefits. Delivering ecosystem-based approaches at scale can contribute to lifting a billion people out of poverty, creating 80 million jobs and adding an additional US\$2.3 trillion in productive growth to the global economy. At the same time, they can provide co-benefits by enhancing biodiversity and supporting vital biodiversity and ecosystem services including access to fresh water, and improved livelihoods and healthy diets from sustainable food systems, as well as boost and restore soil health and agricultural productivity, re-establish large and small scale natural water cycles, and contribute to addressing climate change both through mitigation and adaptation. They also offer innovative solutions in delivering climate resilient infrastructure.
- **Enabling economic policies and incentives** can play a major role in correcting misaligned prices and mobilizing resources to meet investment needs. By reflecting externalities in prices, generating revenues, creating fiscal space for sustainable investment and broader fiscal reform, fiscal policies can support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and countries’ commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. For example, in climate change, fiscal policies such as carbon pricing and fossil fuel subsidy reform can mobilize revenues for climate finance and provide a cost-effective approach to reducing GHG emissions. These revenues can be used for different purposes, for example supporting broader fiscal reform by reducing taxes on labour or capital, thus creating incentives for employment (SDG 8); supporting sustainable investments in sustainable energy, clean technologies and adaptation capacities (SDG 13); or supporting investments in other priority areas such as health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4).
- **Sustainable infrastructure** is central to ensuring ‘accelerated action and transformable pathways’ and achieving the 2030 Agenda. Diverse forms of infrastructure make up the basic physical and organizational structures essential for development: systems for energy, transport, buildings, food, water and sanitation, waste management, industrial facilities, and telecommunications, as well as ‘natural infrastructure’. Hence an average of US\$6.9 trillion of infrastructure investment is required per year until 2030 to achieve the SDGs. Developing countries should continue to be supported to develop sustainable, accessible and resilient quality infrastructure as the long lifespan of newly built assets means that today’s decisions will have long-lasting impacts on our planet and future generations. Developing and providing equal access by women or girls to infrastructure is also key to ensuring access to necessary economic resources and services, as well as the necessary transportation and telecommunications to meet the needs of those engaged in incomes generated by the environment. Integrated approach to sustainable infrastructures, by considering the interconnections among infrastructure systems, sectors, levels of governance, spatial scales, and the environmental, social, and economic aspects of sustainability across the entire life-cycle of infrastructure systems (i.e. early planning to decommissioning) can be a central vehicle for accelerated action in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

- **Sustainable Finance and Business Practices:** Mobilizing financial resources for sustainable development is necessary to resolve environmental problems and ensure environmental protection, especially in developing countries. Sustainability-related considerations and SDGs are increasingly factored into investment decision-making and product development in a growing number of financial institutions including pension funds, banks and insurance companies. Related products, such as green bonds and other sustainability linked investment products and tools are growing at a rapid rate. However, the lack of common definitions, standards, and impact measurements, as well as the fact that reported sustainable investments do not necessarily represent investing in real assets but also in financial assets, mean that such numbers should be treated with care. There is a need to transform the financial system by addressing the barriers that constrain channeling finance towards sustainable development including by aligning global economic policies and financial systems with the 2030 Agenda, enhancing sustainable financing strategies and investments at regional and country levels and seizing the potential of financial innovations, new technologies and digitalization to provide equitable access to finance. Through the development of collective initiatives such as the Sustainable Banking Network (SBN) and the UNEP Finance initiative (UNEP FI), private and public finance institutions have worked to integrate environmental and social risks and opportunities into their business lines and approaches<sup>2</sup>.

**b) Sustainable Production and Consumption:** SDG12 on sustainable consumption and production is key to the attainment of other goals. Yet, it remains the SDG with the least data availability, least funding and appears to be awarded low priority from Member States in their voluntary national reviews and SDG prioritization process. Efforts towards implementing national and local plans for the achievement of the targets on sustainable consumption and production should therefore be upscaled at all levels. Sustainable consumption and production, including but not limited to resource efficiency and circular economy, can play a fundamental role in the implementation of the SDG by designing products, processes and services to optimize the use of resources, so that when something reaches the end of its useful life, they are re-used, repaired, or remanufactured for another use. Ultimately, it is founded on an economy which reuses resources and promotes resource efficiency (decoupling) that reduces wastage, pollution (detoxification), environmental degradation and carbon emissions (decarbonization). International support is needed to assist developing countries to achieve these goals. But all countries face challenges regarding sustainable consumption and production, demonstrating that the cooperation and collaboration from all is needed: consumers, urban communities, businesses, finance, government, local authorities, scientific and technological communities. In particular, the active support and participation of all stakeholders is needed, in particular those who extract and manage raw materials and natural resources; develop new materials; produce, design, manufacture, process and package goods, including food and services; sell products and services; make decisions regarding consumption and the discarding of products; manage waste and material recovery at the end of life; and consumers, in their patterns of consumption and disposal. This also includes the promotion of education for sustainable development and awareness raising and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities.

**c) Address the lack of environmental data:** Only 23% of the 93 environment-related SDG indicators are on track to meet the target if current trends continue. For 68%, there is not enough data to assess progress and for 9% there is not progress toward achieving the target. More than 30 per cent of the environment related SDGs indicators still do not have an agreed methodology. Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires an integrated approach that considers linkage across different environmental and non-environmental components, building upon disaggregated and localized data generation and incorporating traditional knowledge, science-based solutions and citizen science. Accurate information on the environment, including geospatial data, is crucial to build public awareness, help policy makers to

---

<sup>2</sup> As an example, at the Climate Action Summit, 130 banks signed up to the Principles of Responsible Banking, which UNEP created with leading banks. These banks, collectively holding 47 trillion US dollars in assets, are promising to align their businesses with the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. Institutional investors also promised to transition their portfolios – worth 2 trillion US dollars – to net-zero emissions by 2050, under the Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance.

make evidence-based decisions and develop and monitor integrated policies. Harmonized monitoring methodologies and indicators for data comparability, fragmented and at times duplicative reporting on the regional and global level are some of the crucial elements that should be improved and that will in turn increase the understanding and monitoring of effective performance of area-based management plans. Mapping existing national and regional data, sources, methodologies and responsible entities (e.g. national statistics offices, local and subnational authorities) and developing of overarching national inventories or accounting systems to access existing data and address gaps would contribute to the above. Civil society can also play an important role in gathering environmental data and information and should be supported in doing so.

**d) Address the lack of adequate resources, enforcement, implementation & compliance of environmental law:** Ecosystem deterioration, natural resource deprivation, environmental catastrophes and internally displaced people not only reverse years of development gain, but also present an additional challenge to peace and security at all appropriate levels. Inclusive and effective environmental governance may be undermined by a range of international, regional and national factors. Weak governance in turn increases the risk of illicit exploitation of natural and wildlife resources and damage to the natural environment. The impact of this most severely affects the vulnerable countries and communities~~Core elements that hamper progress such as lack of the provision of new, additional and predictable public sector financial support to developing countries including by developed countries, additionally progress towards SDG 16 is hampered for example by pervasive corruption, unaccountable institutions, overlapping responsibilities, lack of coordination greatly impair inclusive and effective environmental governance, which in turn can instigate into illicit exploitation of resources and unaddressed pollution, with a stronger impact on the most vulnerable communities.~~ Since the adoption of the 1972 Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment, environmental laws and institutions, at all level, have expanded dramatically across the globe, helping to slow or reverse environmental degradation. This progress is accompanied, however, by a considerable implementation gap – in developed and developing countries alike – between the requirements of environmental laws and their implementation and enforcement. Too often their implementation and enforcement remain irregular, incomplete and ineffective as manifested in unfettered spikes in environmental crimes from illegal logging and poaching and trafficking of animals to illegal mining and dumping of toxic waste – which in some cases have become part of a larger global network of transnational organized crimes.<sup>3</sup> Rising environmental crimes stemming from weak rule of law and a lack of respect and enforcement of environmental laws increase the risk to environmental defenders, particularly in fragmented societies. On average, four environmental defenders are killed every week because of their work, and countless more receive threats, suffer violence, are unlawfully detained or are otherwise harassed. The understanding of, respect for, and enforcement of, environmental laws is key to addressing this implementation gap and need to be strengthened, in order to ensure protection of the environment and of people.

**e) Sound environmental actions as part of the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic: COVID-19 presents multiple negative environmental impacts.** With regards to sound management of waste, the Secretariat to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal has urged governments “to treat waste management, including of medical, household and other hazardous waste, as an urgent and<sup>4</sup> essential public service in order to minimize possible secondary impacts upon health and the environment”<sup>5</sup>. Human activity has altered virtually every corner of our planet, from land to ocean, and as one of the consequences has impacted human health. It is precisely because of the interconnected nature of all life on this planet, that an ambitious post-2020 biodiversity framework matters greatly. The roll-out of the Super Year for Nature has already

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2016, the monetary value of environmental crimes was estimated to be around 91-258 billion USD annually (up 26% from the 2014 estimate), with illegal trade in wildlife estimated at 7-23 billion USD per year. The value makes environmental crimes the fourth largest crime in the world after drug trafficking (344 billion USD), counterfeit crimes (288 billion USD) and human trafficking (157 billion USD).

<sup>4</sup> [A/73/188](#) “Human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment” – Note by the Secretary General

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.basel.int/Implementation/PublicAwareness/PressReleases/WastemanagementandCOVID19/tabid/837/Default.aspx>



been, and will likely continue to be, severely affected by COVID-19. In the post-crisis setting as governments approve stimulus packages to support job creation, poverty reduction, development and economic growth, there is the opportunity to “build back better”, to capture opportunities for leap-frogging to green investments, such as renewable energy, smart housing, green public procurement, public transport — all guided by the principles and standards of sustainable production and consumption, towards sustainable and resilient economies.

## 2. Contribution of the intergovernmental body to accelerated action and transformative pathways and realizing the decade of action and delivery for achieving the 2030 Agenda within its area of responsibility (including its cooperation with ECOSOC and other intergovernmental bodies)

The United Nations Environment Assembly contributes to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, through setting the global environmental agenda, providing overarching policy guidance and defining policy responses to address emerging environmental challenges, undertaking policy review, dialogue and exchange of experiences, and fostering partnerships for achieving environmental goals and resource mobilization<sup>6</sup>.

The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly took place in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019 under the theme “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”. 173 Member States were represented, as well as a significant number of bodies, entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, secretariats of various environmental conventions, international and regional organizations, civil society, major groups, academia, and the business and scientific communities.

The UN Environment Assembly adopted twenty-three resolutions<sup>7</sup> calling for accelerated action and transformative pathways on key areas, such as: innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production, marine litter and microplastics, food loss and waste, sustainable mobility, addressing single-use plastic product pollution, promoting gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance, the poverty-environment nexus, an implementation plan to address pollution, sustainable nitrogen management, etc. UNEA also adopted the fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V<sup>8</sup>). UNEA resolutions provide guidance to the implementation of UNEP’s programme of work. Ministers of environment also committed to undertake actions to restore and protect marine and coastal ecosystems, noting that the United Nations Environment Programme’s Marine and Coastal Strategy<sup>9</sup> can contribute to their collective efforts in this area.

The UN Environment Assembly further adopted a Ministerial Declaration<sup>10</sup> entitled “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”, through which Member States expressed their determination “to ambitiously scale up efforts to overcome common environmental challenges”, including health-related challenges, in a balanced and integrated manner through identifying and developing innovative solutions by fostering sustainable and efficient resource management; promoting the use and sharing of environmental data; and engaging civil society, citizens, indigenous peoples and local communities, local and subnational authorities, the private sector, academia and all other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

---

<sup>6</sup> [http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11180/K1607143\\_UNEPEA2\\_RES5E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/11180/K1607143_UNEPEA2_RES5E.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>7</sup> <https://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/proceedings-report-ministerial-declaration-resolutions-anddecisions>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/factsheet/delivering-people-and-planet-fifth-montevideo-programme-development-and>

<sup>9</sup> <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31182/k1900315e.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>

<sup>10</sup> <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28463/K1901029.pdf?sequence=6&isAllowed=y>

The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly<sup>11</sup> (UNEA-5) will take place in February 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. Under the leadership of its President and the Bureau<sup>12</sup>, UNEA-5 will aim to connect and consolidate environmental actions within the context of sustainable development and give significant impetus to more effective implementation, as well as mobilize, motivate and energize member States and stakeholders to share and implement successful approaches, including ecosystem-based approaches, that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

### 3. Selected recommendations for accelerating progress and moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action, for possible use in drafting the HLPF declaration.

Moving on transformative pathways for realizing the decade of action will require actions at all level. The following recommendations will contribute to the ten areas of accelerated action identified in the Political Declaration adopted at the SDG Summit in September 2019.

2020 provides the chance for a more joined-up response where the post-2020 frameworks for biodiversity as well as chemicals and waste will be negotiated and adopted, while nations will strengthen their nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. All these efforts work towards linked goals, under the wider umbrella of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, at the same time. The HLPF should call for ambition in these decisive negotiations which success will be crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. More precisely, the HLPF should emphasize the importance of biodiversity as an enabler and a solution for many of the SDG targets and how it is important that the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which fits into the wider umbrella of the Agenda 2030, strengthens this character of biodiversity. The HLPF should also focus on strategic approaches through which multiple SDGs could be addressed effectively. The HLPF should also call for the creation of an improved enabling framework beyond 2020 for the sound management of chemicals and waste in implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which enhance coherence and complementarity of multilateral policies and actions by all relevant international organizations in this area

The HLPF should recognize the role of regional level coordination as key to address environmental challenges, including through transboundary cooperation and facilitate regionally coherent approaches e.g. by establishing collaborative frameworks or enhancing existing frameworks (e.g. the Regional Seas Programme) as appropriate. Building on existing regional mechanisms and frameworks can address SDG interlinkages and accelerate implementation.

Setting the word on a transformative pathway for realizing the Decade of Action, will also require prioritizing policies that can have multiplier effects and allow progress in not one but several SDGs, if not all. The following transformative policies should be highlighted by the HLPF:

- **Environmental rule of law and good governance:** The HLPF should call for strengthened action to reinforce the implementation of environmental rule law and good governance, ***including by ensuring sectoral priorities and laws take into account environmental obligations and good governance.*** The importance of community-based approaches should also be especially be highlighted by the HLPF as they are frequently written off as ineffective. Building robust opportunities for indigenous peoples and local communities to be heard and to exercise their rights at all levels is critical in promoting effective wildlife conservation strategies and ensuring environmental rule of law.
- **Accelerate the transition to economies that are low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive:** This transition entails decoupling of economic activity from unsustainable resource use and negative

---

<sup>11</sup> <https://environmentassembly.unenvironment.org/unea5>

<sup>12</sup> <https://environmentassembly.unenvironment.org/unea-5-presidency-and-bureau>



environmental impacts while improving human well-being. The HLPF should call all sectors of sustainable development to develop enabling economic policies and incentives to accelerate the transition to economies that protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, are low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

- **Stress the importance of nature/biodiversity as an essential requirement and key enabler for sustainable development:** The WEF's Nature Risk Rising Report says that about US\$ 44 trillion dollars, over half the world's GDP, depends on nature and its services. 2021 will launch the UN Decade on ecosystem restoration with the aim of supporting and scaling up efforts to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide and raise awareness of the importance of successful ecosystem restoration. The HLPF should call for strengthened action to protect and restore nature and promote ecosystem-based approaches to achieve the sustainable development goals in its three dimensions (social, economic and environmental).
- **Promote sustainable infrastructure to meet development needs while ensuring the preservation of biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change:** the HLPF should call for the development and communication of internationally recognized good practice guidance on sustainable infrastructure, promote capacity building and the sharing of related knowledge, including education knowledge and technology and digitalization and to increase financial support and technical cooperation between the development partners in applying sustainable approaches to infrastructure development, focusing on integration across all of the 17 SDGs.
- **Access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders, as set out in the principle 10 of the Rio Declaration:** Significant effort has been made to ensure that citizens, civil society, local and subnational governments and the private sector are consulted but further efforts are needed. Women's participation and role in natural resources decision-making processes, with women as agents of change at all levels, need to be recognized and enhanced. The HLPF should stress the importance of ensuring the access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders for the implementation of the 2030 agenda and promotion of integrated approaches and take note of recent successful negotiations in that regard such as the adoption of the Escazu Agreement on the "Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in the Latin and American Countries". The HLPF should also highlight the importance of cooperation and the exchange of knowledge and successful practices to ensure the access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders.
- **Strengthen environmental monitoring systems and technologies, and the development of environmental data management capacities.** The world needs openly accessible data, information, analysis, knowledge and science to better inform and guide what needs to be done to achieve sustainability across all environmental dimensions. Achieving the 2030 Agenda requires an integrated approach that considers linkage across different environmental and nonenvironmental components, building upon disaggregated data generation and incorporating traditional knowledge, science-based solutions and citizen science. The Fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly asked the UNEP Executive Director to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025. The HLPF could acknowledge this work and ask other United Nations entities to contribute and support UNEP in the development of the strategy.

#### **Annex: Resolutions and decisions adopted by the Fourth session of the United Nations Environment (March 2019, Nairobi)**

##### **Ministerial Declaration**

UNEP/EA.4/HLS.1 Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session: Towards a pollution-free planet

##### **Resolution Title**

4/1 Innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production

- 4/2 Promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste
- 4/3 Sustainable mobility
- 4/4 Addressing environmental challenges through sustainable business practices
- 4/5 Sustainable infrastructure
- 4/6 Marine plastic litter and microplastics
- 4/7 Environmentally sound management of waste
- 4/8 Sound management of chemicals and waste
- 4/9 Addressing single-use plastic products pollution
- 4/10 Innovations on biodiversity and land degradation
- 4/11 Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities
- 4/12 Sustainable management for global health of mangroves
- 4/13 Sustainable coral reefs management
- 4/14 Sustainable nitrogen management
- 4/15 Innovations in rangelands and pastoralism
- 4/16 Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands
- 4/17 Promoting gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance
- 4/18 Poverty–environment nexus
- 4/19 Mineral resource governance
- 4/20 Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo V): delivering for people and the planet
- 4/21 Implementation plan “Towards a pollution-free planet”
- 4/22 Implementation and follow-up of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions
- 4/23 Keeping the world environment under review: enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science–policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook

**Decision Title**

- 4/1 Programme of work and budget for 2020–2021
- 4/2 Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
- 4/3 Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions