

JUNE 2020

The Act #ForNature Global Online Forum took place on 7-10 June 2020. This forum brought together citizens, government and non-governmental organizations, businesses and scientific institutions from around the globe to engage in a series of open and inclusive discussions across a diverse range of topics from healthy ecosystems and marine plastics to global food systems, youth and more. This forum was built on the momentum created by World Environment Day on 5 June—a day that recognizes global change requires a global community; inspires positive change; and calls for collective, worldwide environmental action. The forum paved way for a successful United Nations Environment Assembly-5, by building a compelling case for transformational change for nature and people in the context of the post COVID-19 world.



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Nature for Jobs and Economic Prosperity for All

June 8th
13.00 - 15.00
CEST

Global online Townhall 2
Adapt to Thrive: transformational change for nature and business

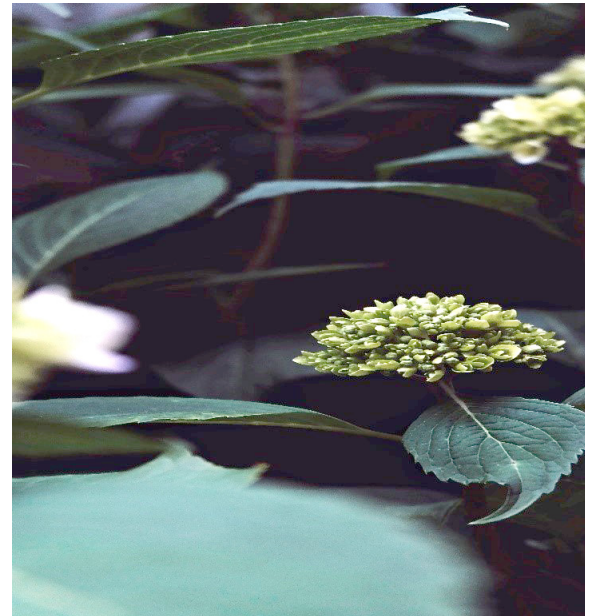


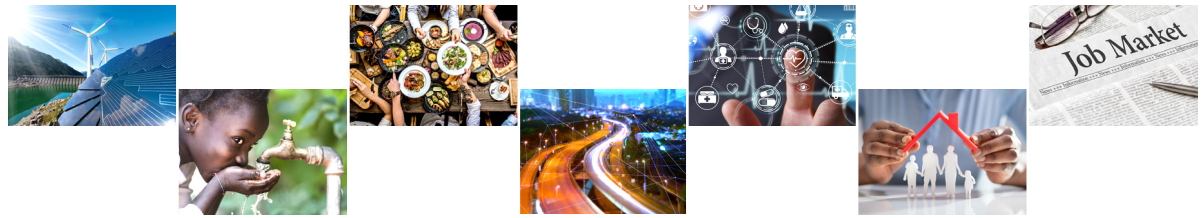
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The Adapt to Thrive: Transformational change for Nature and Business townhall held on Monday 8 June 2020 was amongst the sessions presented during this forum and the recording can be found [here](#). The townhall featured a panel including [Global Environment Outlook for Business](#) authors, policymakers and stakeholders; and presented the GEO for Business Brief entitled “Adapt to Thrive: What Transformational Change Means for Business” and discussed how nature plays a role in this transformation. It considered the fragility of humanity, our ecosystems and explored the opportunity for a transformational change, toward a nature-positive economy that will benefit people and the planet despite the backdrop of the COVID-19 crisis. The townhall suggested ways that Member States could discuss the actions that governments could take to support business transformation, introduced the [Global Environment Outlook for Business process](#) and highlighted the findings of the [Sixth Global Environment Outlook](#). The soon to be published [Global Environment Outlook for Business](#) brief on what transformational change means for business touches on the transformations that require exploration, experimentation, innovation, strategic choices, and investment and implies a leading role for entrepreneurship and business. The report indicates that business needs to be driven by science-based decision making, a long-term perspective on business in society and the need to create value without trading off one form of value for another.

The townhall panel explored how the COVID-19 crisis not only makes the fragility of humanity and our ecosystems more visible but it also increased the urgency for a Nature Positive Economy in which energy, resources, food, water, transportation, healthcare, shelter and jobs are provided in a way that is good for nature, people and planet. The transformation towards a Nature Positive Economy has already started, to some extent. The new technologies and entrepreneurial drive have brought solar power, bio-based materials and electric mobility to maturity. The future is likely to include businesses that have many small economic units deeply connected to local markets, resources, value chains and stakeholders. Contrary to this backdrop is a shift in policy thinking towards transformative longer-term targets that mobilize support for structural market changes and create an enabling environment for society and business together to start imagining building a better world on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are already growing examples of long-term policies and frameworks that have put human health, wellbeing, resilience and the environment first. The European Union (EU) is pushing for transformative change and adopting ambitious goals in the EU Green Deal, that sets out how the EU economy will become sustainable and climate neutral by 2050. Costa Rica has shifted to renewables, reforested the country and increased GDP by 200 per cent in the last 15 years. This shows what kind of change is possible with a clear plan and concerted effort.

The outcomes of the Townhall included:

- The scale and depth of COVID-19’s impacts are unprecedented; these will allow us to take stock and rethink how nature and humanity interact. It is the moment to enact a transformative change and move to a Nature Positive Economy, in which energy, resources, food, water, transportation, healthcare, shelter and opportunity are provided in a way that is good for nature, supports jobs and health and provides basic needs for all.
- Businesses are realizing that being closer to nature will be valuable for them, therefore, they will be engaging with transformative processes. However, the partnership with governments and other actors will be fundamental to achieve the real change.
- There is a clear need for transformation to a circular economy and a change in the economic systems.
- The first brief of GEO for Business will present an approach that can guide businesses on how to adapt to thrive.
- Due to COVID-19, we face a choice: rebuild our economy in the same old way or find ways to build a positive future that is nature positive. If we want to achieve the goal to build a better future, the strategies of businesses need to fundamentally align with a nature positive mission: fully renewable, zero emissions and creating positive value for nature and society.



Key messages to the UN Environment Assembly:

- We need to have jobs as a pillar in the post-COVID-19 recovery. If we do not put people at the heart of the environment, we will fail.
- COVID-19 has resulted in stimulus packages for post-pandemic economic recovery but we need to finance a socially fair and sustainable transformation.
- Business can be an enabler for transformative change, but governments need to engage business with a collaborative approach to create an enabling environment for change to happen.
- Governments should work in collaboration with business to provide an effective strategy for transformation, which would include short-term achievements but also a long-term plan to reach a Nature Positive Economy and go beyond the business-as-usual goals of GDP growth.
- It is remarkable that there is so much progressive thinking now in both government and business. This gives us a footprint for change.
- Nature is everyone’s business. UNEA needs to stimulate collaboration between policymakers, business, and different stakeholders to move towards a Nature Positive Economy.
- New metrics for sustainable business are needed to quantify the change and direct the investments. Policies, investors, and financial markets must start rewarding companies that shift from short-term, financial-only metrics to those that measure the quality and the sustainability of business growth.



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