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*A common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the UN's policy and programme planning and delivery*

(Prepared by the UNEP, UNDP and HLCP Biodiversity Task Team)

*“By living in harmony with nature, we can avert the worst impacts of climate change and recharge biodiversity for the benefit of people and the planet.” UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UN Summit on Biodiversity, 2020.*

1. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) meeting on 14 May 2020 endorsed a stronger focus on nature across the whole UN system and tasked its High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) to develop a common approach to integrating biodiversity<sup>1</sup> and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the UN’s policy and programme planning and delivery. Through this common approach the UN system expresses a shared recognition of the urgency to act, and a commitment to mainstream biodiversity and nature-based solutions through collective action.
2. The interrelated consequences of environmental degradation, including biodiversity and habitat loss, climate change, air, land, and water pollution, illegal exploitation, increasing disaster risk and the rise of zoonotic diseases, demonstrate the need for a reimagining of the human relationship to nature as a symbiotic one<sup>2</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the extraordinary interconnectedness between human, animal and environmental health, and how this underpins the stability of social, economic and financial systems, global peace and stability. It provided the world with an opportunity to reflect on cooperation and the choices we need to make to tackle global systemic risks and challenges, and how our societies can be reshaped as part of the sustainable and resilient recovery from this crisis.



Figure 1: Impact areas and medium-term objectives of the common approach

<sup>1</sup> See Annex I for a Glossary of Terms

<sup>2</sup> See Annex II: It’s time to restore our relationship with nature

3. The UN common approach on biodiversity is structured around 3 impact areas and 15 medium-term objectives that contribute to the realization of the 2050 vision of living in harmony with nature<sup>3</sup> where biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people. It also proposes a set of outcomes that can be achieved by the UN system through increased collaboration, as well as an accountability framework for coherent and collective outputs on biodiversity.
4. As countries face the COVID-19 pandemic and act to recover, they are turning to the UN system for better coordinated and scaled solutions<sup>4</sup>. The UN needs to demonstrate concerted action, through its convening power and leveraging of expertise across the UN system, and the development of stronger, more coherent knowledge-based resources in support of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2050 vision of 'living in harmony with nature'.

## I. Overview

5. Through this common approach the UN system expresses a shared recognition of the urgency to act, and a commitment to mainstream biodiversity through better coordinated efforts that will connect and build on strategies and programmes of work of UN system entities and facilitate the implementation of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework in alignment with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement<sup>5</sup>. **Collective action on nature furthermore supports the implementation of the Secretary-General's vision on prevention<sup>6</sup>, and contributes to outcomes across the three pillars of the UN system: peace and security, human rights, and development.**
6. Given the scope of the task at hand, the common approach is structured to achieve impact over the next decade in three areas: (i) human rights, peaceful societies and planetary stability; (ii) a green and inclusive economic recovery; and (iii) strengthened institutions, accountability and justice. To accelerate transformational change in these three areas, it focuses on creating opportunities for collective action and joint delivery of initiatives at the global, regional and country levels, while pursuing alignment within the respective entities.
7. **The common approach provides a structure to organise collective action and joint delivery to mainstream biodiversity and nature-based solutions. It elaborates on 15 medium-term objectives or expected accomplishments that contribute to the realization of the 2050 vision. These are the longer-term transitions beyond the common approach's direct outcomes, and should be pursued in partnership with government, business and civil society. They set the overall strategic intent of the common approach, and each contribute to at least one of the impact areas, which are required to live in harmony with nature.**

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<sup>3</sup> Updated [zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework](#), August 2020.

<sup>4</sup> See Annex III for the context of the UN common approach on biodiversity and nature-based solutions

<sup>5</sup> See more information about the Paris Agreement at <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/the-paris-agreement/the-paris-agreement>

<sup>6</sup> See more at <https://www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/prevention.shtml>

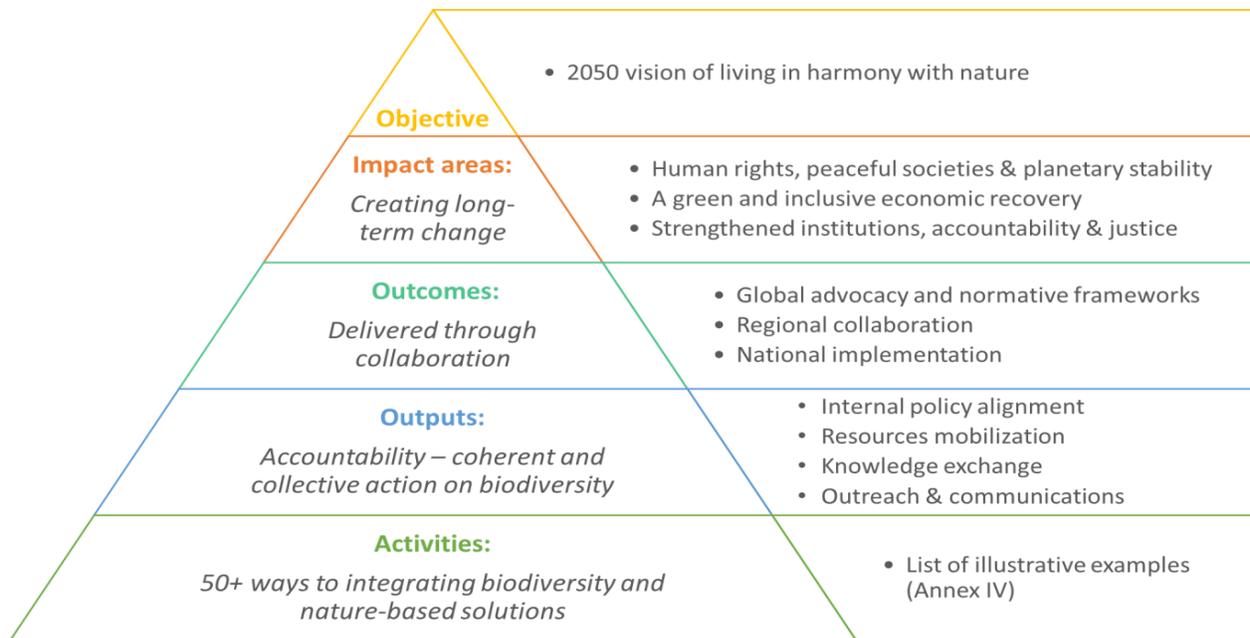


Figure 2: Structure of the common approach

## II. Impact Areas of the common approach – creating long-term change

*“Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It must be the top, top priority for everyone, everywhere. In this context, the recovery from the pandemic is an opportunity.” UN Secretary-General António Guterres, State of the Planet Address, Columbia University<sup>7</sup>*

### A. Human rights, peaceful societies and planetary stability

8. **#1: Human rights are protected and can be exercised, including the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment<sup>8</sup>.** The substantive elements of this right include a stable climate<sup>9</sup>; safe water and sanitation; clean air, soils and water; healthy, nutritious and sustainably produced food; healthy ecosystems and biodiversity; and participation, access to information and access to justice in environmental matters. The fulfilment of the rights of individuals and peoples in vulnerable situations is essential for designing fair and effective actions to use, conserve and restore nature. It includes protecting and promoting the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)<sup>10</sup> and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169)<sup>11</sup>, addressing gender differences in vulnerability and roles, and gender inequalities in resource access and rights and capacity for decision-making; and ensuring the rights of children, youth and future generations to enjoy a healthy natural world. Protecting environmental human rights defenders and activists contributes to fulfilling the right to a healthy environment. Under the UN

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-12-02/address-columbia-university-the-state-of-the-planet>

<sup>8</sup> Report of the Special Rapporteur David R. Boyd on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

<sup>9</sup> Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, see:

[https://unfccc.int/files/essential\\_background/background\\_publications\\_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf](https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> See [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C169](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C169)

Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, businesses also have a responsibility to respect human rights.

9. **#2: Persons, groups and people in vulnerable situations, particularly those who rely on natural resources for subsistence and cultural identity, and who are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation<sup>12</sup>, are prioritised<sup>13</sup>.** The areas projected to experience significant negative effects from global environmental change are often home to indigenous peoples, local communities and persons living in poverty. Indigenous peoples<sup>14</sup> for instance are already facing several socio-economic and environmental challenges, because of historical inequities and discrimination, and are nearly three times more likely to be in extreme poverty compared to their non-indigenous counterparts<sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup>. Weakened coping mechanisms and resilience link to conflict and migration (and vice versa) in the face of environmental change<sup>17</sup>.
10. **#3: A One Health approach<sup>18</sup> is implemented, and the interconnections among people, animals and ecosystems are recognized.** The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic reinforce the need for scaling up investments that focus on the root causes of zoonotic infectious disease emergence and spread, including wildlife trafficking and the introduction of illegally wild sourced species into legal value chains, while preventing possible future outbreaks<sup>19</sup>. To effectively manage major health risks that affect people and animals (livestock and wildlife), requires a systems perspective on the human-animal-ecosystem interface and to address disease dynamics in the broader context of systemic risk. These dynamics are impacted by consumption of and trade in species, natural resource management, and other socioeconomic and cultural factors such as agriculture, tourism and urban expansion. Sustainably urban and regional planning can lower the rates of interspecies conflict at the frontier of cities – and thus the transmission of zoonotic diseases – while reducing emissions, lowering air pollution levels and overall improving human health.
11. **#4: Nature is conserved and restored, while nature-based solutions for disaster risk reduction<sup>20</sup>, climate action<sup>21</sup> are accelerated.** Nature conservation and ecosystem restoration provide a range of direct benefits for communities, local authorities and the private sector, including creating jobs and reducing exposure by bolstering livelihoods options and reducing vulnerability. It is critical to ensure that these benefits can be realized by all, with fair and equitable access, as well as those benefits derived from genetic resources. Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) are rights holders and indispensable leaders and participants, providing knowledge and tools to promote proactive management, sustainable use,

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<sup>12</sup> IPBES, 2019. [Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#).

<sup>13</sup> Consistent with the universal values of the 2030 Agenda, principle two on [Leave No One Behind](#)

<sup>14</sup> See also [CEB Call to Action on Indigenous Peoples](#)

<sup>15</sup> Indigenous peoples might be forced to migrate away from their traditional lands due to environmental impacts, and may face a double discrimination in their host communities, as migrants and as indigenous people.

See also ILO, 2019. [Implementing the ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169: Towards an Inclusive, Sustainable and Just Future](#).

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/climate-change.html>

<sup>17</sup> UN, 2021. Security Council Press Release, [SC 14445](#), 23 February 2021.

<sup>18</sup> ILRI, UNEP, 2020. [Preventing the next pandemic - Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission](#).

<sup>19</sup> An integrated approach such as the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) is important to strengthen preparedness and capabilities that prevent the origin and spread of pandemics.

<sup>20</sup> See Ecosystem-Based Disaster Risk Reduction: Implementing Nature-based Solutions for Resilience United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction - Regional Office for Asia and Pacific, 2020: <https://www.undrr.org/publication/ecosystem-based-disaster-risk-reduction-implementing-nature-based-solutions-0>; [Words Into Action: Nature-Based Solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction \(2020\)](#) <https://www.preventionweb.net/publications/view/74082>

<sup>21</sup> Kapos, V., Wicander, S., Salvaterra, T., Dawkins, K., Hicks, C. 2019. [The Role of the Natural Environment in Adaptation, Background Paper for the Global Commission on Adaptation](#).

conservation and the restoration of natural ecosystem services and biodiversity. Integrating nature-based solutions as instruments of city planning and community resilience offer multiple co-benefits, including reduced spatial inequality and unequal exposure to extreme weather events and sea level rise among vulnerable local populations.

12. **#5: The links between biological and cultural diversity are recognized, and the protection of sites of international importance for biological and cultural diversity enhanced.** The diverse values of nature and the relationship between biological and human cultural diversity are better understood and reflected in policy and action, including those building solidarity and collective action between different stakeholder groups. Enhancing lifelong learning, education and skills on environmental issues and stewardship, is the best long-term route to transform how we interact with nature, while ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth.

#### B. **A green and inclusive economic recovery**

13. **#6: Public and private finance and investments, especially those mobilized to respond to the COVID-19 induced crisis, accelerate green, just and inclusive socioeconomic transitions, including from the informal to formal economy.** Public investment, including repurposing harmful subsidies, along with tax policies, regulations and incentives can increase private investment in green and blue economy strategies, creating decent jobs opportunities while strengthening planetary stability<sup>22</sup>. The UN can shape the discourse of how current financial flows – whether in the form of public expenditures such as subsidies, capital investments or line budgets, or in the form of private sector finance, such as private investment, banking, loans or insurance – can prevent or account for the negative impacts on nature, and at the same time increase the flow of finance for nature-positive investments<sup>23</sup>.
14. **#7: Sustainable consumption, including sustainable lifestyles and livelihoods<sup>24</sup>, is promoted, inequalities are eliminated and biodiversity loss halted.** Global consumption patterns, characterized by short-term interests, insufficient transparency of supply chains, and a lack of consumer awareness, are manifestations of the indirect drivers<sup>25</sup> of the continued loss of biodiversity and are unsustainable. Consumption patterns drive trade in materials and goods, through which environmental and health impacts from the consuming high-income countries are displaced to the middle-and low income countries. Yet, sustainable and legal trade can provide income opportunities and incentives for conservation. Per capita impacts caused by consumption in high-income countries are between three and six times larger than those of low-income countries<sup>26</sup>. To make consumption sustainable we need to close the loops of materials and reuse, redesign and recycle. Effective urban waste management can prevent ocean pollution (including plastic) and lower the level of organic matter in landfills, thus significantly reducing methane emissions.

<sup>22</sup> See 'Practical Lessons for Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic – Principles for Recovery', January 2021;

[https://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/publication/Covid19\\_Recovery/Practical%20Lessons%20for%20Recovery%20from%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic\\_Consultative%20Edition.pdf](https://www.recoveryplatform.org/assets/publication/Covid19_Recovery/Practical%20Lessons%20for%20Recovery%20from%20the%20COVID-19%20Pandemic_Consultative%20Edition.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> For example, although nature provides up to 38 per cent of our climate mitigation solution, nature-based climate solutions only receive 3 per cent of global climate finance. Global climate finance from the public and private sectors in [2017-18 hit US\\$579 billion](#), while global biodiversity finance currently averages [between US\\$78 – 91 billion a year](#).

<sup>24</sup> [One Planet Network Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Programme](#)

<sup>25</sup> Categorized as demographic and sociocultural, economic and technological, institutions and governance, and conflicts and epidemics in the [Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#).

<sup>26</sup> IRP (2019). [Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want](#). A report of the International Resource Panel.

15. **#8: Material-intensive socioeconomic production systems<sup>27</sup> are transformed to create better outcomes for people and nature, while meeting increased demand for resources and materials.** Governments, businesses, workers and consumers can encourage and influence markets' transition to sustainable production patterns by requesting improvements in how they source and regenerate, process, transport, trade and use natural resources, and how the resulting waste is minimized, recycled or disposed. These production systems are both predetermined by and create spatial patterns such transportation routes, infrastructure and urban areas. To reduce the extraction of new resources, circular economy approaches provide the tools for a system redesign, starting with planning for a long life of materials. Technical solutions exist, but requires cultural and behavioural changes to be applied at scale.
16. **#9: Sustainable and secure food systems are ensured through urgent action by all actors<sup>28</sup>.** Food systems are associated with many of the direct drivers of biodiversity loss, through land-use change, largescale monoculture of a handful of major food crops at the expense of large numbers of underutilized crops, overexploitation of fisheries, the impacts of excess nutrients, use of chemicals, food waste and loss, and the generation of greenhouse gases. The social and economic disruption caused by the pandemic has also affected the food system<sup>29</sup>. It highlighted that 3 billion people are directly dependent on agriculture, forests and fisheries for food, jobs and livelihoods. Diversity in production systems is important for resilience, for health, for nutrition, and for the associated biodiversity providing the ecosystems services that support agricultural production. There is an urgent need to mainstream biodiversity across food policies and practices at all levels and to develop long-term strategies addressing the sustainability challenges faced by actors across the systems.
17. **#10: Markets, economic and financial practices are fundamentally reformed and use metrics for governments, the private sector and society, to measure progress towards sustainable development, supported by strengthened regulations to conserve and restore natural capital<sup>30</sup>.** The anticipated post-2020 global biodiversity framework calls on governments to make the ecological foundation of our economies central to development and fiscal planning. The 2020 Human Development Report<sup>31</sup> argues that as people and planet enter an entirely new geological epoch, the Anthropocene or the Age of Humans, it is time for all countries to redesign their paths to progress by fully accounting for the dangerous pressures humans put on the planet, and working towards human activities generating net positive effect on nature.

### C. Strengthened institutions, accountability and justice

18. **#11: Institutional capacity is supported to plan and pursue integrated solutions to reverse biodiversity loss and accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.** Sectoral policies and measures often fail to account for indirect, distant and cumulative biodiversity impacts in a globalised world, which can have adverse effects, including the exacerbation of inequalities<sup>32</sup>. Institutional capacity and social dialogue is needed to pursue integrated solutions for complex issues such as food security, land and water use, health and migration. They require integrated and holistic policies and strategies on climate change, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity: for decent jobs, social resilience, sustainable economic development and trade,

<sup>27</sup> Food, land and ocean use; energy and extractives; infrastructure and the built environment. See WEF, 2020. [The future of nature and business](#).

<sup>28</sup> WEF, 2020. [The future of nature and business](#).

<sup>29</sup> Impact of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods, their health and our food systems. [Joint statement](#) by ILO, FAO, IFAD and WHO, 13 October 2020

<sup>30</sup> Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, 2020. [Independent Review on the Economics of Biodiversity](#). Interim Report.

<sup>31</sup> <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-report>

<sup>32</sup> IPBES, 2019. [Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#).

peace and conflict prevention. Many of the SDGs, even those that do not mention the environment explicitly, will only be met if there is substantial progress on environmental management, rule of law and governance<sup>33</sup>.

19. **#12: Safeguards on biodiversity and the integrity of all ecosystems are implemented, sectoral and national accountability is clarified, and monitoring and reporting against environmental obligations fulfilled.** National institutions are supported to operationalize strengthened systems within and across all productive and consumptive sectors (including agriculture, fisheries, forestry, mining, tourism, infrastructure and the built environment), with the aim to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity, create sustainable economic models, and reduce the risk of emerging zoonotic diseases.
20. **#13: Environmental rule of law<sup>34</sup> and procedural rights on access to information and justice are promoted, and meaningful participation in environmental decision-making is enabled.** Environmental rule of law is a cornerstone of human health and welfare, and serves to create an expectation of compliance with environmental law coordinated between government, private sector, and civil society. It ensures adherence to the standards, procedures, and approaches set forth in these laws to ensure a safe and stable climate, and a healthy environment, within and among countries.
21. **#14: Criminal justice and anti-corruption measures to environment-related crimes are strengthened as an essential part of the integrated solutions to protecting biodiversity.** Strengthening justice system measures can address a variety of trafficking and economic crimes, contribute to reversing negative trends in biodiversity loss, and mainstream preventive approaches to national and international biodiversity management. Justice and accountability measures can protect environmental human rights defenders from threats related to their efforts to preserve their lands and communities.
22. **#15: Advanced digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) are deployed to ensure open access to and equitable coverage of data and repositories.** Working in partnership with public and private actors, open access policies for biodiversity data are promoted, bringing innovation in monitoring environmental change and protecting biodiversity. This would provide data, information and tools for decision-makers and citizens while increasing accountability and transparency. International standards can be leveraged to ensure ICTs are deployed in a safe, sustainable and environmentally sound manner, without impacting biodiversity itself<sup>35</sup>. ICTs also support educational programmes and citizen-science activities on nature and sustainability, building capacity to analyse and interpret environmental data.

### III. Outcomes of the common approach – delivered through collaboration

23. Coherent action by UN system entities can drive solutions towards the impact areas of the common approach – human rights, peaceful societies and planetary stability; a green and inclusive economic recovery; and strengthened institutions, accountability and justice. Together with Member States, business and social partners, academia, and civil society<sup>36</sup>, the UN can build on existing initiatives with major groups and forge new collaborations to address broader sustainable development-related risks and opportunities by taking on board the connections between nature, society and the economy.
24. Annex IV provides a list of existing actions and potential opportunities for greater collaboration. It is an illustrative list of practical interventions that the UN can pursue jointly as part of the common approach on

<sup>33</sup> UNEP, 2019. [Environmental Rule of Law – First Global Report](#).

<sup>34</sup> UNEP, 2019. [Environmental Rule of Law – First Global Report](#).

<sup>35</sup> See the [international standards](#) developed by ITU-T Study Group 5 (SG5).

<sup>36</sup> See [Sustainable Development Goal 17](#) on Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

biodiversity. **These are some of the practical interventions that can be tailored to regional and national contexts to bring about this change. The sum of these actions can help deliver the following outcomes on the global, regional and national levels.**

#### **A. Global advocacy and normative frameworks**

25. **#1: UN system entities demonstrate leadership on biodiversity and promote strong commitments for nature.** In the run-up, adoption and subsequent implementation phase of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, UN system entities individually and collectively align with the strategic intent of the common approach on biodiversity and nature-based solutions. By harnessing the power of UN-convened coalitions<sup>37</sup> or multi-stakeholder advocacy platforms<sup>38</sup>, the UN system can advocate for whole-of society and whole-of-government approaches to take urgent action to avert, mitigate, and address climate and nature related-risks and promote nature-based solutions for sustainability.
26. **#2: The UN system delivers unified communications campaigns to mobilize demand for global action for nature.** Collective action can reach out to a wide variety of audiences and beneficiaries among governments, business and civil society to promote awareness about biodiversity and nature, and drive public demand to shift national and sectoral policies, as well as business and consumer practices. Global communication and mobilization initiatives – for example, the UN Decades of Action for SDGs, on Ecosystem Restoration, on Family Farming and on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development – can integrate climate action and biodiversity messaging to drive the social, economic and governance transformations outlined in section II of the common approach.
27. **#3: Through initiatives such as the SG’s Common Agenda, the UN system convenes dialogues on systemic challenges that can only be addressed through multilateral action.** These could include advancing norms and standards for international systems of environmental and financial accounting, and transparency for public and private sector performance and metrics for measuring human and planetary well-being. These actions could focus on creating critical mass in governance and market instruments that redirect unsustainable production and consumption subsidies in fossil fuels, as well as agriculture, fisheries and the food sector; towards procurement, investment, banking and insurance policies that help to transform the climate and nature-related footprint of business-as-usual practices.
28. **#4: The Secretary-General’s Call to Action on Human Rights<sup>39</sup> is implemented to support action on biodiversity.** The Call to Action demands UN system support to, inter alia, promote the human right to a healthy environment, ensure the protection of environmental human rights defenders, increase education, lifelong learning and capacity-building related to the environment, improve regulatory frameworks and economic policies for sustainable businesses, ensure the meaningful and informed participation of all stakeholders, including women, girls, and youth, in environmental decision-making, and support access to justice and effective remedies for environmental harms.
29. **#5: UN system entities collaborate with partners to provide data for insight, impact & integrity, and aligned to the SG’s Data Strategy<sup>40</sup>.** The ambition is to improve the integration of biodiversity analytics into the data infrastructure of the UN system, Multilateral Environmental Agreements and wider global digital ecosystems

<sup>37</sup> Such as the coalition for nature led by UNESCO with UNEP.

<sup>38</sup> Such as the Sharm El Sheikh to Kunming Action Agenda for Nature and People; the Ocean Action Portal; SDG Action Zone; NAZCA Climate portal, etc.

<sup>39</sup> See [https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The\\_Highest\\_Aspiration\\_A\\_Call\\_To\\_Action\\_For\\_Human\\_Right\\_English.pdf](https://www.un.org/sg/sites/www.un.org.sg/files/atoms/files/The_Highest_Aspiration_A_Call_To_Action_For_Human_Right_English.pdf)

<sup>40</sup> UN, 2020. Data Strategy of the Secretary General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere.

for the planet: ensuring key data, tools and other digital public goods to become more solution-driven and easily usable by key decision-makers. This will help amplify the use of biodiversity data for decision-making within UN policy and programme planning and delivery, as well as by a range of decision-makers in the public and private sectors.

## B. Regional collaboration

30. **#6: The UN regional mechanisms foster collaboration within and between regions to address biodiversity-related challenges that transcend borders.** Collective, issues-based actions and knowledge management platforms at the regional level can pool global knowledge and expertise that are relevant to the specific regional context, broker cross-sectoral and multi-country/multi-regional solutions and enable progress on nexus issues that cannot be addressed on a country-by-country basis.
31. **#7: Member States are supported to position regional and national priorities in biodiversity-related multilateral negotiations and processes.** The UN Regional Collaborative Platforms, Issue-based coalitions and other regional mechanisms and fora, especially the Regional Fora for Sustainable Development and Regional Fora of Ministers – of Environment and other sectors – all provide opportunities to discuss action on biodiversity loss. These mechanisms and fora can serve as a platform for the design, follow-up and monitoring of regional plans, priorities and the implementation of global agreements. The regional level is a vital bridge to the global level and national levels respectively, and provides a platform to engage on the management of the global environmental commons, its linkages to transboundary or multi-country challenges, regional human rights mechanisms and relevant regional law<sup>41</sup>.
32. **#8: Regional development banks are engaged to integrate biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions in economic models, and design incentives and policies for investment in ecological and social sustainability.** Scenario analysis and futures/foresight thinking and approaches could be used to engage clients, and explore alternative pathways for e.g. infrastructure development, taking into consideration climate change scenarios, disaster risk considerations, social impacts, environmental degradation and the restoration of ecological infrastructure for adaptation. Financial institutions could develop blended public-private approaches that share the costs and benefits of investing in sustainable infrastructure.

## C. National implementation<sup>42</sup>

33. **#9: UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams support Member States to implement MEA decisions<sup>43</sup>, through the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and the COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plans<sup>44</sup>.** A mainstreaming approach is needed that promotes a shift away from minimizing the harm of activities that deplete biodiversity, towards proactive support of green economy decent jobs and ecosystem resilience<sup>45</sup>, reducing disaster risks, including related to pandemics. The decisions of the Conferences of the Parties to the biodiversity-related conventions and Members of other biodiversity-related agreements require: robust systems for planning<sup>46</sup>; convening multi-stakeholder processes and brokering

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<sup>41</sup> For example, the Escazu Agreement and the Aarhus Convention.

<sup>42</sup> Including advocacy, coordination, policy and programming support at national level, in line with the three Impact Areas of the common approach.

<sup>43</sup> Including relevant UN global goals and targets, such as the Global Forest Goals of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests.

<sup>44</sup> This includes recommendations from the UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies, the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, and the UN Universal Periodic Review.

<sup>45</sup> See <https://ipbes.net/guide-production-assessments> for more information.

<sup>46</sup> Guidance and tools similar to the [UN Common Approach to Resilience](#) could be developed to support UN Country Teams.

cross-sectoral and multi-institutional cooperation and partnerships; creating policy instruments and legislation; and developing capacities for monitoring and reporting systems<sup>47</sup>.

34. **#10: UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams support the inclusion of biodiversity and nature-based solutions in Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF).** UN entities can support country access to resources to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the nature-dependent elements of the SDGs, including through existing multilateral mechanisms<sup>48</sup> and joint programmes. Mobilizing public and private, domestic and international resources can create blended finance options to mitigate the negative distribution effects in the early years of a longer-term transformation of the economy<sup>49</sup>.
35. **#11: UN Country Teams promote environmental and intergenerational justice as an integral part of the UN's advocacy on human rights, rule of law and governance.** Cross-sectoral approaches are needed that support dialogue among resource-related ministries, gender and human rights institutions, with the criminal justice system, anti-corruption authorities and fiscal authorities. Cooperation across disciplines highlights that all have a role to play and requires coherent policies, tools and capacity to respond to the biodiversity and climate agendas. Recognition and protection of the individual and collective rights to lands, resources, knowledge, and territories of those most affected by environmental harms can have positive effects for both people and planet.<sup>50</sup>
36. **#12: UN Country Teams facilitate inclusive multi-stakeholder partnerships and promote networking to resolve development conflicts, nexus issues and landscape/seascape level challenges in a transparent and equitable manner.** There is an urgent need to better protect the individual and collective rights of all persons, groups and peoples in ways that allow them to more equitably benefit from nature and ecosystem services and sustainable economies. UN Country Teams should take measures to empower and protect people, particularly environmental human rights defenders, to meaningfully participate in development matters and access justice for environmental harms without fear of reprisal. Effective approaches are needed to recognise stewardship, address the role of criminal organizations and corruption, harmonize policies across sectors and coordinate action across jurisdictions, and thus account for ecological and social differences across landscapes.

#### IV. Accountability – coherent and collective action on biodiversity

37. The common approach and actions for nature will be implemented by the collaborative efforts of relevant United Nations entities at the global, regional and national level, taking into consideration the strengths and mandate of each entity based on the impact areas, together with relevant inter-agency mechanisms and partnerships, including those that are operationally oriented or mandated. Coherent and collective action,

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<sup>47</sup> For example, the LNOB section of the UNSDCF would identify the groups and ecosystems most vulnerable to the loss of biodiversity, the economic transformation section would include impact and dependency analysis of economic sectors and ecosystem services; the human rights section would look at environmental rights and environmental human rights. defenders; ecosystem state and trends might feature in the risk analysis, transboundary analysis or cross pillar analysis sections; green and sustainable financing options might be included in SDG financing analysis section.

<sup>48</sup> Existing mechanisms include the Global Mechanism (GM) established under Article 21 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to assist countries in the mobilization of financial resources to implement the Convention and address desertification, land degradation and drought. Moreover, the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) carries out its forest financing activities through the Global Forest Financing Facilitation Network (GFFFN).

<sup>49</sup> IRP, 2019. [Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want](#).

<sup>50</sup> IPCC Special Report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems, [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2020/07/03\\_Technical-Summary-TS\\_V2.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/sites/4/2020/07/03_Technical-Summary-TS_V2.pdf)

grounded in the principles of the UN Charter, will have a strong foundation in evidence and knowledge, providing an effective science–policy–practice continuum to UN programming on biodiversity at all levels.

#### A. Internal policy alignment and coherence

38. **#1: The UN system can prove its commitment to biodiversity and nature-based solutions through its corporate behaviour.** The UN 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy Phase I “Environmental Sustainability in the area of management” commits UN entities to a set of corporate environmental objectives including the mainstreaming and disclosure of performance on biodiversity-related measures for its facilities and operational portfolio. Following the mitigation hierarchy, UN entities need to assess the potential impact of their corporate choices on biodiversity and offset unavoidable and complex adverse impacts. Where possible and with reasonable resources, this should be complemented by on-site and off-site ecological enhancement, including through seeking nature-based solutions to improve the overall organization’s footprint.
39. Taking advantage from existing and relevant interagency networks, UN entities could jointly develop targeted biodiversity guidance for specific management functions, training and capacity building, as well as a best practices exchange system. In the context of the reforms, and with the goal to show leadership of the UN on the ground, UN Resident Coordinators can promote biodiversity and other environmental considerations are integrated in the Business Operations Strategy (BOS) and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) to support the work of Country Teams.
40. **#2: The UN system needs to lead by example in its policy, programme planning and implementation.** In implementing the common approach on biodiversity and nature-based solutions, UN entities can build on the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards in UN Programming and on the UN 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy Phase II, which is currently under development and will expand environmental and social sustainability requirements to UN programme planning and implementation.

#### B. Align current resources and mobilize additional joint financing

41. **#3: UN entities can review their current programming and resources to ensure that operations integrate biodiversity and nature-based solutions, prevent or account for negative impacts, and do not exacerbate and accelerate biodiversity loss.** UN entities can also help to drive biodiversity-friendly investment and avoid silo approaches by redirecting their financial flows towards more environment- and people-friendly outcomes.
42. **#4: Collaborative efforts can support the creation and capitalization of new pooled funding mechanisms for joint programming needed to restore our relationship to biodiversity and ecosystem services at scale.** For instance, a multi-partner trust fund could be created and/or new windows could be embedded in existing funds. This would highlight biodiversity’s underpinning value for sustainable development and harness the potential of UN collective action. The appropriate standards aligned with the UN Model Approach to Environmental and Social Safeguards shall apply to all funding.

#### C. Exchange knowledge needed to identify, prioritize, scale up and accelerate action

43. **#5: Working together, UN system data, knowledge and expertise can be leveraged at all levels** to provide capacity building in support of the implementation of Member States’ obligations and commitments, post-pandemic recovery plans and the biodiversity-dependent elements of the SDGs. For example, a series of thematic webinars and training seminars could be supported by the UN Environment Management Group and other entities to raise awareness on biodiversity linkages to the key areas of work of the UN development system.

44. **#6: Knowledge-sharing via the UN regional mechanisms, notably Regional Collaborative Platforms, Regional Issue-based coalitions and Regional Peer Support Groups** can strengthen intra-regional advocacy, engagement and technical work on issues such as environmental degradation, climate resilience and migration. Increased collaboration at, and among, the UN regional mechanisms can increase visibility of biodiversity and nature-based solutions for the Resident Coordinator Offices and UN Country Teams, while also drawing on and informing global level UN collaboration.
45. **#7: Greater engagement with and visibility of biodiversity in existing global coordination mechanisms**, such as UN-Water, UN-Oceans, UN-Energy, UN-Nutrition, EMG, and the Collaborative Partnerships on Forests and on Wildlife, as well as specialized data platforms such as integrated biodiversity assessment tools<sup>51</sup>, the UN Biodiversity Lab, the SEEA Ecosystem Accounting<sup>52</sup>, the SDG6 Global Acceleration Framework, and the Climate Adaptation Knowledge Hub<sup>53</sup>, among others, can support interdisciplinary knowledge development and information exchange to identify and document best practices and accelerate cross-sectoral and cross-country solutions.

#### D. Coordinate outreach and communications efforts

46. **#8: UN entities can contribute to and use coherent narratives during the UN Decades of Action for SDGs, on Ecosystem Restoration, on Family Farming and on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.** Common narratives can articulate the science-policy-practice linkages to inspire nature-positive actions. Joint advocacy should inform post-COVID recovery agendas, provide evidence how biodiversity underpins the delivery of the SDGs, and focus material and non-material benefits from action to the economy and trade. Combined efforts are needed to engage institutions from the public, private and civil society sectors beyond the environment and conservation sectors.
47. **#9: UN entities can coordinate efforts to capitalize on the political leadership, key outcomes and messages of the UNGA Summit on Biodiversity<sup>54</sup> held in September 2020.** Outputs could include broadening political support for the climate action and biodiversity agendas across the constituencies of UN entities, securing the ambitious policies and targets, and creating momentum and capacity for implementation. The UN system can convene high-level dialogues on the nexus of biodiversity, climate change and justice system agendas to develop inclusive and multi- governance approaches.

## V. Reporting

48. It is recognized that UN System entities have reporting obligations individually on the implementation of the SDGs and, where relevant, their contribution to the anticipated post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. These measures of support and progress are also collated and reported on collectively, as well as on other UN system-wide strategies and action plans.
49. Providing the evidence of the implementation of the common approach on biodiversity and nature-based solutions can draw on existing reporting, and include a limited number of measurable targets and the associated indicators, while helping UN entities to accomplish their strategies, programmes of work and

<sup>51</sup> For example, [IBAT](#) and [B-INTACT](#)

<sup>52</sup> See <https://seea.un.org/ecosystem-accounting>

<sup>53</sup> See: <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NWPStaging/Pages/Home.aspx>

<sup>54</sup> See <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2020-09-30/secretary-generals-remarks-united-nations-biodiversity-summit-delivered>

corporate environmental sustainability. To this end, existing UN system reporting mechanisms should increasingly take into consideration biodiversity-related targets and indicators.

50. In accordance with the 2020 QCPR resolution, the UN development system must report to the ECOSOC Operational Activities segment on the implementation of the common approach on biodiversity, among others, in the framework of the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 75/233. Tracking the UN system support to deliver on the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda can be done through the UN INFO<sup>55</sup> system at country level and the Regional Collaborative Platforms at regional level.
51. To monitor the progress achieved in creating coherent and collective actions on biodiversity and nature-based solutions in the UN system, it is proposed that the UN Environment Management Group (EMG) identifies a limited number of measurable targets and related indicators based on existing reporting mechanisms and compiles a mid-term and final report on the implementation of the common approach at the global level. This information will contribute to the Secretary-General report on the implementation of resolution 75/233.
52. Taking advantage of existing and relevant interagency networks (UNSDG common premises task team, HLCM procurement network, and others) UN entities could jointly develop targeted biodiversity guidance for specific management functions, training and capacity building, a best practices exchange system, and a common set of reporting indicators to track progress against the objectives of this CEB common approach and the UN system 2020-2030 strategy for environmental sustainability management.
53. Reporting on the integration of biodiversity in corporate management could be launched as part of the UN Greening the Blue<sup>56</sup> reporting exercise that highlights UN progress against its corporate environmental sustainability requirements. Through the Sustainable United Nations (SUN) Facility, UN entities could develop a common set of reporting indicators to track progress against the joint objectives of the common approach on biodiversity and 2020-2030 Sustainability Strategy.

## VI. Timeline

54. The common approach on biodiversity is aligned with the UN decades and the intended timeline of the global biodiversity framework with launch and implementation foreseen for 2021-2030. 2021 milestones include adoption by CEB, development of indicators, as well as the public launch of the common approach at the CBD COP15 and other relevant international fora. A mid-point review is proposed for 2024.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://uninfo.org/en/login>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.greeningtheblue.org/>

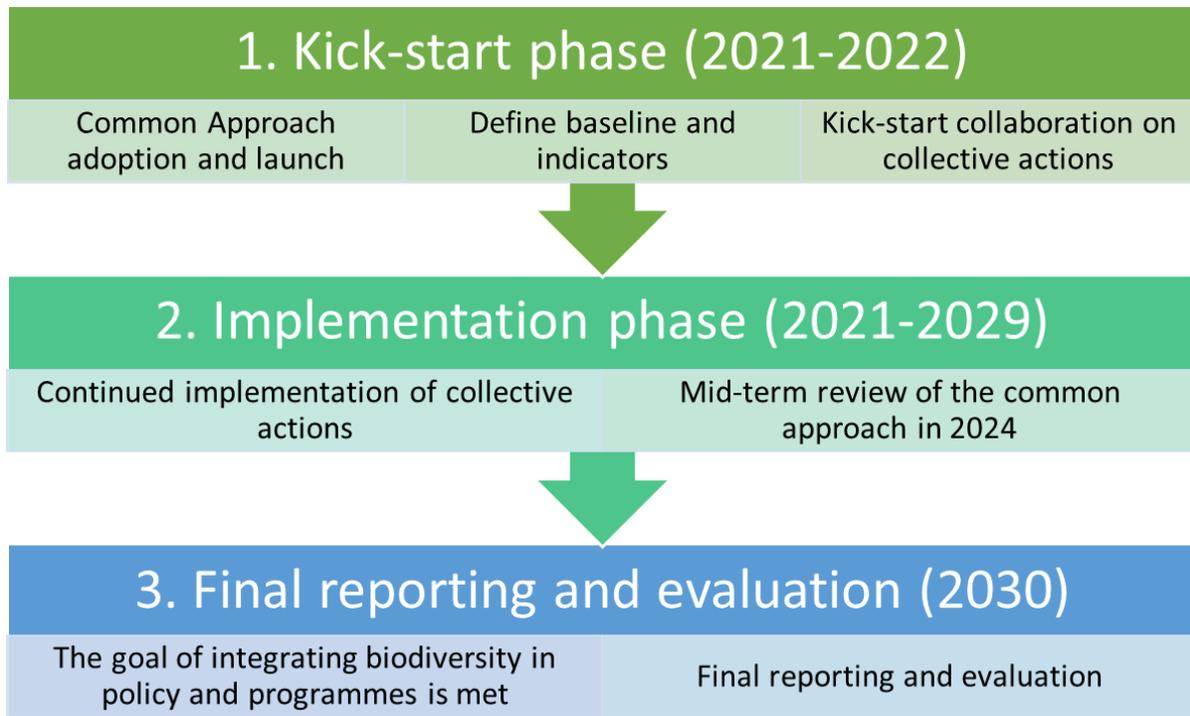


Figure 3: Proposed timeline for the common approach

## VII. Conclusion

55. The UN system has an extraordinary reach to engage national governments and stakeholders and enormous potential to orchestrate collective action with impact for people, planet and prosperity. Through more strategic collaboration, it can draw on the expertise of individual funds, programmes and agencies, and leverage the collective efforts of the UN system to provide further impetus to the UN COVID-19 response. While shifting away from activities that deplete biodiversity, toward those supporting ecosystem resilience and providing opportunities for nature positive development pathways, the UN system could also help to bring awareness of the system risks involved with nature loss and promote measures to reduce the risks of future pandemics.
56. The common approach will enable UN system entities to align their efforts on the multitude of practical activities that contribute to sustainably using, restoring and safeguarding biodiversity, and which are required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. By doing so, it will ensure an integrated policy advice and more coherent support to Member States in their efforts to implement the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

## Annex I

### Glossary

- **Biodiversity**

Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. (Convention on Biological Diversity, Art. 2)

- **Circular economy**

Circular economy is defined as ‘an economy closing the loop between different life cycles through design and corporate actions/practices that enable recycling and reuse in order to use raw materials, goods and waste in a more efficient way. The circular economy concept distinguishes between technical and biological cycles, the circular economy is a continuous, positive development cycle. It preserves and enhances natural capital, optimises resource yields, and minimizes system risks by managing finite stocks and renewable flows, while reducing waste streams’, – Recommendation ITU-T L.1023

- **Nature**

Nature, as defined in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) conceptual framework, refers to the natural world, with an emphasis on biodiversity. Within the context of science, it includes categories such as biodiversity, ecosystems, ecosystem functioning, evolution, the biosphere, humankind’s shared evolutionary heritage, and biocultural diversity. Within the context of other knowledge systems, it includes categories such as Mother Earth and systems of life. Nature contributes to societies through the provision of contributions to people.

For more information see IPBES, 2019. [Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#). Published by the United Nations.

- **Natural capital**

Natural capital is another term for the stock of renewable and non-renewable natural resources on earth (e.g., plants, animals, air, water, soils, minerals) that combine to yield a flow of benefits or “services” to people. These flows can be ecosystem services or abiotic services, which provide value to business and to society. Ecosystem services are the benefits to people from ecosystems, such as timber, fiber, pollination, water regulation, climate regulation, recreation, mental health, and others. Abiotic services are benefits to people that do not depend on ecological processes but arise from fundamental geological processes and include the supply of minerals, metals, and oil and gas, as well as geothermal heat, wind, tides, and the annual seasons. Biodiversity is critical to the health and stability of natural capital as it provides resilience to shocks like floods

and droughts, and it supports fundamental processes such as the carbon and water cycles as well as soil formation. Therefore, biodiversity is both a part of natural capital and also underpins ecosystem services.

Source: [https://capitalscoalition.org/capitals-approach/natural-capital-protocol/?fwp\\_filter\\_tabs=training\\_material](https://capitalscoalition.org/capitals-approach/natural-capital-protocol/?fwp_filter_tabs=training_material)

- **Nature-based solutions**

There is no internationally agreed definition of nature-based solutions. The following definition developed by the IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions is used here: “actions to protect, sustainably manage and restore natural or modified ecosystems that address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being and biodiversity benefits”. Source:

<https://www.iucn.org/theme/nature-based-solutions/resources/iucn-global-standard-nbs>

- **One Health**

'One Health' is an approach to designing and implementing programmes, policies, legislation and research in which multiple sectors communicate and work together to achieve better public health outcomes. Many of the same microbes infect animals and humans, as they share the ecosystems they live in. Efforts by just one sector cannot prevent or eliminate the problem. The areas of work in which a One Health approach is particularly relevant include food safety, the control of zoonosis (diseases that can spread between animals and humans, such as flu, rabies and Rift Valley Fever), and combatting antibiotic resistance (when bacteria change after being exposed to antibiotics and become more difficult to treat). Source:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/one-health>

- **Biodiversity and Pandemics**

The recent report of the Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics convened by IPBES, in its Executive Summary, noted that “Pandemics have their origins in diverse microbes carried by animal reservoirs, but their emergence is entirely driven by human activities. The underlying causes of pandemics are the same global environmental changes that drive biodiversity loss and climate change. These include land use change, agricultural expansion and intensification, and wildlife trade and consumption. These drivers of change bring wildlife, livestock, and people into closer contact, allowing animal microbes to move into people and lead to infections, sometimes outbreaks, and more rarely into true pandemics that spread through road networks, urban centres and global travel, and trade routes. The recent exponential rise in consumption and trade, driven by demand in developed countries and emerging economies, as well as by demographic pressure, has led to a series of emerging diseases that originate mainly in biodiverse developing countries, driven by global consumption patterns.” Source: <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>

## Annex II

### It is time to restore our relationship with nature

1. Biodiversity underpins our lives and well-being. It provides multiple essential benefits for all people, including food security, clean water, prevention and cure of diseases, resilience in the face of climate change and changing societal demands, and protection from extreme events and disasters. It ensures sustainable livelihoods and supports 1.2 billion jobs directly and many more indirectly<sup>57</sup>, with half of the world's global economy being moderately to highly dependent on functioning ecosystems<sup>58</sup>. It is also intrinsically linked with cultural diversity and our spiritual, physical and psychological well-being.
2. From a scientific standpoint, the fifth edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook<sup>59</sup> released in September 2020, confirmed that countries have failed to meet the 2011-2020 Strategic Plan for Biodiversity, including its 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets, suggesting the lack of progress toward sustainability. It indicated that global ambition to address the three pillars of sustainable development is limited by siloed approaches, where the value of biodiversity and ecosystem services are largely unaccounted and disconnected from socio-economic priorities<sup>60</sup>. Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation jeopardize the effective enjoyment of human rights and progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. We are facing a complex crisis related to biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution. Biodiversity is in alarming decline around the world, with 1 million species at risk of extinction, 2 billion hectares of land degraded, two-thirds of the ocean adversely affected by human disturbance<sup>61</sup> and an estimated 420 million hectares of forests lost worldwide through deforestation since 1990<sup>62</sup>. Human activities associated with unsustainable patterns of consumption and production are responsible for GHG emissions, pollution and biodiversity loss. The latest global scientific assessment identify land- and sea- use change, caused particularly by agricultural expansion and rapid urbanization, as the key drivers of biodiversity loss, together with direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution, and invasive alien species<sup>63</sup>.
4. Environmental degradation affects individuals and groups in a differentiated way<sup>64</sup> and typically places a disproportionate burden on women and girls, with more severe impacts felt by those in marginalized and vulnerable populations or locations. Unequal exposure occurs not only between, but also within countries, and at more granular scales such as among neighbourhoods in urban areas. Climate change and natural disasters can exacerbate threats that force people to flee within their country or across international borders.

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<sup>57</sup> ILO 2018, World Economic and Social Outlook 2018: [Greening with Jobs](#)

<sup>58</sup> WEF, 2020. [Nature Risk Rising – Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy](#).

<sup>59</sup> Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020). [Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, Summary for Policy-Makers](#).

<sup>60</sup> Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (2020). [Global Biodiversity Outlook 5, Summary for Policy-Makers](#).

<sup>61</sup> IPBES, 2019. [Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#).

<sup>62</sup> FAO, 2020. [Global Forest Resources Assessment](#)

<sup>63</sup> IPBES, 2019. [Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#).

<sup>64</sup> See also ILO's Persons with disabilities in a just transition to a low-carbon economy and Gender, labour and a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all

The interplay between climate, conflict, hunger, poverty and persecution creates increasingly complex emergencies. For example, food insecurity may become a major driver of conflicts and displacement<sup>65</sup>.

5. The realization of human rights, including the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, support for sustainable development and protection of the environment go together. Efforts to reduce poverty, increase resilience and reduce displacement should leave no one behind, including those located in semi-arid and arid lands, Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Landlocked developing countries (LLDC). It is anticipated that failing to act now on long-term environmental risks will increase societal inequality and fragmentation and bring about dramatic consequences.
6. It is not too late to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity and ecosystems. During the UN Summit on Biodiversity in 2020, global leaders reiterated their commitments to develop an ambitious *post-2020 global biodiversity framework* to be adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in 2021. Bold leadership and urgent actions across the whole of government and society, together with an inclusive and networked multi-governance approach. Such action can address the direct and underlying causes of biodiversity loss and the degradation of ecosystems, while shifting the course towards a nature positive future.
7. Our economic recovery path must lead to a transformation of society's relationship with nature. The protection and sustainable use of biodiversity must be integrated in policies that will guide post-pandemic economic and development recovery and building forward plans. The tools, instruments and knowledge are at hand, but will require clear and commensurate investments in nature. This means shifting investments and practices in all sectors to reflect and account for their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and ecosystem services and prioritizing systemic transitions that work with and not against nature, and leave no one behind. An investment in the health of our planet is an essential investment in our own future.
8. The social consequences of the losses described above could be turned into opportunities to create decent jobs that enhance ecological integrity, economic prosperity and social wellbeing. The required economic transformation must include changing societal perceptions towards valuing and conserving biodiversity through public outreach and education, as societies cannot transform if what and how we learn remains the same. In the world of work, through which most people continue their learning and make their contribution to society, skills for a greener future remain a priority. This ranges from accelerating the transformation of the energy and other extractive sectors, to creating resilience through natural resource management and ecosystem restoration.
9. The coming decade provides *our last chance* to take the measures needed to ensure a healthy and prosperous future for people, planet and prosperity<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> UNHCR, 2020. [Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2019](#).

<sup>66</sup> Key messages from the UN Biodiversity Summit on 30 September 2020.

## Annex III

### Context of the UN common approach on biodiversity and nature-based solutions

1. In March 2020, the Secretary-General called on the UN system to mainstream and integrate biodiversity in key areas, engage in cross-agency collaboration and enhance UN communications and advocacy<sup>67</sup>. The UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) subsequently endorsed a stronger focus on nature across the UN system and tasked its High-level Committee on Programmes (HLCP) to develop a common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions<sup>68</sup> for sustainable development into the UN's policy and programme planning and delivery<sup>69</sup>.
2. The UN system supports Parties to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), such as the biodiversity-related conventions<sup>70</sup> and agreements, as well as other relevant multilateral frameworks and the UN goals and targets, which provide a critical component of international cooperation and governance. The widespread adoption, funding and implementation of these multilateral frameworks provide a pathway to address global challenges, and promote fairness, human rights protection, navigating common obstacles, and compensating for unequal burdens, responsibilities and capabilities.
3. The UN Decade of Action to deliver the SDGs, as well as the UN Decades on Ecosystem Restoration, on Family Farming, on Action on Nutrition, on Ocean Science-, and on Action on Water for Sustainable Development, will engage the global community to accelerate the delivery of agreed international goals and achieve progress towards inclusive sustainable development. The UN Decades provide opportunities across the UN system for coordinated planning, implementation and monitoring; joint advocacy; scaling up financing and innovative sources of funding; generation and exchange of knowledge and resources; as well as inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues, partnerships and networks.
4. Furthermore, in the context of the reform of the UN Development System, the General Assembly, through its resolution 75/233 on the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system<sup>71</sup>, called upon the entities of the UN Development System (UNDS) to continue to provide evidence-based and integrated policy advice and programmatic support to help countries in the implementation of, follow-up to and reporting on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Emphasis was placed on mainstreaming the SDGs into national plans, including by promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development and environmental protection, and ending poverty in all its forms and dimensions.
5. The General Assembly also called upon the entities of the UNDS to: adopt and mainstream a more climate- and environment-responsive approach into their programmes and strategic plans, where appropriate, as well

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<sup>67</sup> Executive Committee decision 2020/21 of 25 March 2020

<sup>68</sup> There is no internationally agreed definition of nature-based solutions. The definition developed by [IUCN Global Standard for Nature-based Solutions](#) is used here.

<sup>69</sup> CEB meeting on 14 May 2020

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/brc/>

<sup>71</sup> United Nations, Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2020. *Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system*. [A/RES/75/233](#)

as in cooperation frameworks; advance the development of a system-wide approach, implement measures and report regularly to their respective governing bodies, through existing reporting and mandates, on their efforts to reduce their climate and environmental footprint; ensure consistency of their operations and programmes with low emissions and climate-resilient development pathways; stressing the urgency of climate action and contribute to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and; fulfil their pledges made at the 2019 Climate Action Summit and follow-up on the 2020 UN Summit on Biodiversity.

6. In addition, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure full and effective implementation of the UN System Strategic Approach on Climate Change Action as well as of the UN System-Wide framework of Strategies on the Environment, and of their future revisions, and continue working towards the development of a common approach to integrating biodiversity and ecosystem-based approaches for sustainable development into the UN's policy and programme planning and delivery, with a view to its swift and effective implementation across the UN system in accordance with national development policies, plans, priorities and needs.

## **Annex IV**

### **50+ ways to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions – a UN system commitment to collective action for people and planet**

Please see **CEB/2021/HLCP41/CRP.2 (Annex IV)** - Annex IV: 50+ ways to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions – a UN system commitment to collective action for people and planet.