



## **NATURE'S FUTURE, OUR FUTURE - THE WORLD SPEAKS**

***Antonio Guterres, Director General United Nations***

*"Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century, it must be the top, top priority for everyone, everywhere."*

***Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund***

*"The best memorial we can build for those who lost their lives in the pandemic is that greener, smarter, fairer world."*

***Robert Watson, Chair Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), 2019***

*"The world needs to recognise that loss of biodiversity and human-induced climate change are not only environmental issues, but development, economic, social, security, equity, and moral issues as well. The future of humanity depends on action now."*

***United Nations Decade of Restoration***

*"There has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems than now. Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet - and its people. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems on every continent and in every ocean. It can help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction. It will only succeed if everyone plays a part."*

***HRH The Prince of Wales***

*"The current pandemic has brought unimaginable devastation to people's lives and livelihoods and national economies. At the same time, the green recovery offers an unprecedented opportunity to rethink and reset the ways in which we live and do business. I have long believed we need a shift in our economic model that places nature and the world's transition to net-zero at the heart of how we operate, prioritizing the pursuit of sustainable inclusive growth in the decades to come."*

## FOREWORD

**Dr Kathy MacKinnon**

**Chair, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)**

*This compilation of quotes and extracts aims to capture a critical moment – an unprecedented call for a global transformation of human society and economies to one which recognises that to live sustainably on this finite earth we must treat its natural systems as the fabric which sustains all life.*

*The direction of attaining genuine sustainability is not new, it is embedded in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and many other charters. However accelerating climate change related disasters, the unprecedented global pandemic, the rapid decline of the ecosystems and species of the earth, have all had huge impacts on human society and wellbeing. From this deep concern has arisen a dramatic consensus that the future of humanity must be one which responds vigorously to climate change threats and understands and embeds its fundamental reliance of a healthy planet.*

*This clear message has come from a broad sector, from many of the world's major institutions, political leaders, academics and religious thinkers, as well as outstanding people, of all ages, from civil society. In a dark time for the world it provides hope of a more rational future based on science, respect for all life and humanity to all. The following is just a sample of thousands of statements and efforts around the world.*

*For this consensus on the need for fundamental change to gain momentum and become a reality you are asked to amplify all or some of these statements by republishing to networks, sending to colleagues and influencers, distributing to students, sending to politicians or attaching to other communications, use social media or any other means of communication. Change will only happen when the voice is clearly heard - all of us can assist in that process.*

**Perhaps extract from the intro to our Special issue of parks could be inserted here.**

## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

### United Nations

#### Antonio Guterres, Director General

"The State of the Planet" address Columbia University:  
December 2020

*"Let's be clear: human activities are at the root of our descent towards chaos. But that means human action can help solve it. Making peace with nature is the defining task of the 21st century. It must be the top, top priority for everyone, everywhere. In this context, the recovery from the pandemic is an opportunity. We can see rays of hope in the form of a vaccine. But there is no vaccine for the planet. Nature needs a bailout. In overcoming the pandemic, we can also avert climate cataclysm and restore our planet. This is an epic policy test. But ultimately this is a moral test."*

*"But we must remember: there can be no separating climate action from the larger planetary picture. Everything is interlinked – the global commons and global well-being. That means we must act more broadly, more holistically, across many fronts, to secure the health of our planet on which all life depends. Nature feeds us, clothes us, quenches our thirst, generates our oxygen, shapes our culture and our faiths and forges our very identity. 2020 was supposed to have been a "super year" for nature but the pandemic has had other plans for us. Now we must use 2021 to address our planetary emergency."*

*..."we must act more broadly, more holistically, across many fronts, to secure the health of our planet on which all life depends. Nature feeds us, clothes us, quenches our thirst, generates our oxygen, shapes our culture and our faiths and forges our very identity."*

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

### Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

#### Angel Gurría, Secretary-General, OECD & Pedro Sanchez, President, Spanish Government

OECD Opinion December 2020 -

*The third priority is to support a transformative recovery and develop a new narrative on economic growth. National recovery and resilience plans constitute unique opportunities not just to jump-start our economies, but also to undertake bold and transformative action to make them more equal, cohesive and environmentally sound, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The COVID-19 crisis has increased inequalities, while climate change, biodiversity loss and other environmental emergencies loom large. Analysis by the OECD shows that ambitious climate action to decarbonise our economies can be a source of growth, incomes and jobs. The COP26 in Glasgow and the UN Biodiversity Conference, both to be held in 2021, will be tests for our collective determination. Our single, most important intergenerational responsibility is to protect the planet. This new narrative*

*also requires fostering an economic and productivity growth model based on fair wages, decent working conditions and enhanced social dialogue.*

*Over the last decade, the OECD has been a leading voice in promoting an approach to economic growth that combines inclusiveness and environmental sustainability. Building on solid evidence and data, we need to work together to develop this narrative further, measuring outcomes beyond GDP, and developing a consensus around a new economic framework that reconciles people, prosperity and the planet.*

*We are living in extraordinary times. The challenges ahead are too significant for any one country to tackle them alone. Only through collective action will we be able to address them and “build back better” towards more resilient, more inclusive and greener economies and societies. With a long-term vision, a strong ambition and an enlightened sense of mission, as we celebrate the OECD’s 60th Anniversary, let us draw inspiration from its history and its accomplishments, to deliver better policies for better lives for the generations to come.”*  
<https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/a-multilateral-agenda-for-a-strong-resilient-green-and-inclusive-recovery-from-covid-19-opinion-article-by-pedro-sanchez-and-angel-qurria.htm>

## **World Economic Forum (WEF)**

### **Akanksha Khatri, Head of the Nature Action Agenda**

#### **Future of Nature and Business Report**

**July 2020**

*The global COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented job losses and economic uncertainty. As governments and businesses look to stimulate growth, a new study from the World Economic Forum found that ‘nature-positive’ solutions can create 395 million jobs by 2030.*

*The [Future of Nature and Business Report](#) provides blueprints for businesses to tap into a \$10.1 trillion business opportunity, focusing on industry actions that are nature-positive, meaning that they add value to nature.*

*The report states there is “no future for business as usual.” It finds that while fighting climate change is essential, it is “not enough,” and “a fundamental transformation” is needed across the socioeconomic systems of: food, land, and ocean use; infrastructure and the built environment; and extractives and energy. <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/wef-report-makes-case-for-nature-positive-economy/>*

*“We can address the looming bio-diversity crisis and reset the economy in a way that creates and protects millions of jobs,” said Akanksha Khatri, Head of the Nature Action Agenda, World Economic Forum. “Public calls are getting louder for businesses and government to do better. We can protect our food supplies, make better use of our infrastructure and tap into new energy sources by transitioning to nature-positive solutions.”*

<https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/07/395-million-new-jobs-by-2030-if-businesses-prioritize-nature-says-world-economic-forum/>

## World Health Organisation (WHO)

June 2020

*“On the occasion of World Environment Day, WHO calls for a healthy and green recovery from COVID-19 that places the protection and restoration of nature central.*

*A recently launched WHO Manifesto calls for decisive action to address the root causes of the COVID-19 pandemic by reducing social inequalities and ecosystem degradation, and transforming the way we relate to the environment in which we live.”*

<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/world-environment-day-2020>

WHO recently published a set of [Prescriptions for a healthy, green recovery from COVID-19](#), of which the first prescription is to “Protect and preserve the source of human health: Nature”.

An [open letter to the G20 leaders](#) from over 40 million health professionals also urged for a healthy recovery from COVID-19 where nature is thriving. A healthy recovery, the letter states, needs to double down on pollution, climate change and deforestation, in order to prevent “unleashing new health threats upon vulnerable populations”.

## United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

**Achim Steiner, Administrator**

**Launch of the 2020 Human Development Report**

**December 2020**

*“Scientists call this emerging era, the Anthropocene – or the age of humans. And in it, as the 2020 Human Development Report (HDR) sets out, humanity is waging a war against itself. Consider this: the total mass of the things humans have made - like buildings, roads and bottle tops — now exceeds the total mass of all living things on the planet, from tiny bacteria to giant whales, according to new research.*

*Today, humans literally have the power to alter the atmosphere and the biosphere in which we live. The power to destroy, and the power to repair. No species has ever had that kind of power before. With it, we humans have achieved incredible things, but we have also taken the Earth and all the people on it to the brink.”*

*This year, constrained by mostly pre-pandemic data, we decided to try something new. We added countries’ consumption and carbon footprints to the Human Development Index (HDI). The result is a less rosy but clearer analysis of human progress.*

*Plotting out the data on a graph reveals a profound insight: there are countries that leave a minimal imprint on the planet. There are countries with prosperous populations. But not one nation in the world sits in both camps. In the graphs used to illustrate this data in the report we have, quite literally, an ‘empty box’. Filling this empty box is the next frontier for human development.*

*This may sound daunting. But the way forward is not rocket science. It comes down to the incentives, social norms, and nature-based solutions that will reset how people and planet interact. And the choices leaders make today as they build forward better from COVID-19 will be fundamental.*

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/news-centre/speeches/2020/rbec-launch-of-the-2020-human-development-report.html>

## **European Central Bank**

### **Christine Lagarde, President with Sir David Attenborough, natural historian**

**International Monetary Fund Podcasts May 2019**

*In nature, everything is connected. This is equally true of a healthy environment and a healthy economy. We cannot hope to sustain life without taking care of nature. And we need healthy economies to lift people out of poverty and achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.*

*In our current model these goals sometimes seem to collide, and our economic pursuits encroach too closely on nature. But nature—a stable climate, reliable freshwater, forests, and other natural resources—is what makes industry possible. It is not one or the other. We cannot have long-term human development without a steady climate and a*  
*The bottom line is that when we damage the natural world, we damage ourselves. The impact of our growing economic footprint threatens our own future directly. By some estimates, more than 50 percent of the world’s population is now urbanized, increasing the likelihood of people losing touch with nature.*

*With the projected rise in ocean levels and increase in the average temperature of the planet, large swaths of land, even whole countries, will become uninhabitable, triggering mass climate-induced migration. Never has it been more important to understand how the natural world works and what we must do to preserve it.*

<https://www.imf.org/en/News/Podcasts/All-Podcasts/2019/05/02/nature-is-our-capital>

## **Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)**

### **Qu Dongyu, Director General**

**Extracts World Environment Day Speech June 2020**

*“The 2020 World Environment Day theme is “Time for nature” and it focuses on biodiversity. Biodiversity provides essential infrastructure to support all life on earth and it is also a key base of the ecosystem. More importantly, it is a base, genetic base for food diversity. It is an excellent opportunity to rethink the relationship among humans, animals, and the environment. The recent events, from the locust infestations across East Africa, to the fall army worm, and now the global disease pandemic, demonstrates the interdependency of humans, animals and the environment.”*

*FAO launched its flagship report on the State of World Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture. This report highlights the need to protect our natural resources including biodiversity and the need to conserve and use genetic resources to increase productivity.*

*We know that we can produce enough food to feed the world and protect the environment at the same time. Eradicating hunger is essential.*

*The FAO adopted its Strategy on Mainstreaming Biodiversity across agriculture sectors, a strategy that automatically aims at reducing the negative impact of agriculture practices on biodiversity, to promote sustainable agriculture practices and to conserve, enhance, preserve and restore biodiversity as a whole.*

<http://www.fao.org/director-general/speeches/detail/fr/c/1288134/>

**Ursula von der Leyen**  
**European Commission, President**  
May 2020

*“The recovery plan turns the immense challenge we face into an opportunity, not only by supporting the recovery but also by investing in our future: the European Green Deal and digitalization will boost jobs and growth, the resilience of our societies and the health of our environment. This is Europe's moment. Our willingness to act must live up to the challenges we are all facing. With Next Generation EU we are providing an ambitious answer.”*

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_940](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940)

**World Resources Institute**  
**Charles Barber, Senior Biodiversity Advisor,**  
Report Chair, COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Nature-Based Solutions for People, Planet & Prosperity October 2020

*CEOs from 22 leading conservation and sustainable development organizations, including the World Resources Institute, have come together in unparalleled consensus to urge policymakers to integrate nature into COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. The group preleased a set of recommendations for policymakers, COVID-19 Response and Recovery: Nature-Based Solutions for People, Planet and Prosperity.*

*“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the world that the destruction of our natural environment has a profound impact on human wellbeing – these issues are interconnected.*

*Our community of experts agrees that taking a nature-based approach is absolutely essential for nature and is often the most effective way of tackling the corresponding public health and economic crises.*

*“The Nature-Based recommendations for policymakers provide a concise and practical roadmap for governments and other stakeholders to confront the intertwined challenges of COVID-19, biodiversity loss, climate change and sustainable development.”*

<https://www.wri.org/news/2020/10/statement-covid-19-response-and-recovery-nature-based-solutions-people-planet-prosperity>

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**  
**Audrey Azoulay, Director-General,**  
Launching Strategic Direction for UNESCO  
December 2020

*If we are to build sustainable societies, the environment must be preserved through the promotion of science, technology, and natural heritage. Respondents to the World in 2030 survey named climate change and biodiversity loss the greatest challenge to peaceful societies this decade – and also called for the relationship between humans and nature to be rethought... the second great challenge of our time lies in the imperative need for humanity to find a sustainable way of interacting with nature.*

*“Through our new strategy, we must respond to this challenge, mobilizing knowledge, but also education and culture, and disseminating information, to achieve a decisive change in humanity's relationship with its environment.”*

*One way of achieving this – one with growing global consensus – will be to protect 30% of the planet for nature. UNESCO's networks of biosphere reserves, geoparks and natural World Heritage sights, says Azoulay, are tried and tested tools to this end. Recently, 25 new sites have been designated as biosphere reserves. Other important UNESCO projects that help improve the relationship between humans and nature include a new agreement with Italy to establish a network of international experts for nature preservation, and the UN Decade of Ocean Science, for which UNESCO has a leading role.*

<https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-director-general-audrey-azoulay-charts-new-strategic-direction>

## **Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)**

**Statement**

**April 2020**

*“In the midst of our [global response to COVID-19](#), the world is in need of an economic transformation, one that promotes both the sustainable wellbeing of individuals as well as the environment in tandem. We have arrived at a turning point. The challenges we face now, together, are tremendous. But in the face of current adversity, and the near halt of our global economy, we have a collective opportunity to join together for a brighter, more sustainable future. The decisions that policymakers, businesses and individuals choose now will determine if we prosper and accelerate a more sustainable world, or not.”*

<https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/statements/statement-partnership-action-green-economy-choices-we-make-now-will>

## **United Nations Congress on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

**September 2020**

*At the first-ever [global summit dedicated to biodiversity](#) held virtually on 30 September, various leaders said the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for countries to put bold and ambitious environmental action at the heart of their post-coronavirus economic recovery strategies.*

*One of the tools at countries' disposal is BioTrade – the collection, production, transformation and commercialization of goods and services derived from biodiversity under BioTrade Principles and Criteria, a set of guidelines that emphasize environmental, social and economic sustainability.*

*“Linking trade, biodiversity and sustainable development is a compulsory pathway towards more resilience at community, private sector and, ultimately, national levels in post-COVID-19 recovery efforts,” said UNCTAD economic affairs officer Lorena Jaramillo.*

<https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/ditc-ted-1410202-3scc-CallAction-2.pdf>



## **We Mean Business Coalition**

**May 2020**

*Companies with a combined market capitalization of over US\$ 2.4 trillion and representing over 5 million employees [signed a statement](#) urging governments around the world to align their COVID-19 economic aid and recovery efforts with the latest climate science. They reaffirmed their own science-based commitments to achieving zero carbon economy and call on governments to match their ambition*

*Ignacio Galán, Chairman & CEO, Iberdrola, said: “The world must be united to tackle the current health crisis. And, as we emerge from this crisis, we must focus economic recovery on activities aligned with key priorities, such as the fight against climate change, and reactivating economic activity and employment quickly and sustainably. Companies like ours remain committed to investing billions in clean energy, creating jobs and long-term economic and environmental benefits. Pursuing environmental sustainability will be essential for long-term economic recovery.”*

*The business voices are convened by the Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) and its Business Ambition for 1.5°C campaign partners, the UN Global Compact and the We Mean Business coalition.*

<https://sciencebasedtargets.org/news/over-150-global-corporations-urge-world-leaders-for-net-zero-recovery-from-covid-19>

## **UN Human Rights Council**

**Report: Right to a healthy environment: good practices**

**Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment**

**December 2019**

*“In the present report, the Special Rapporteur highlights good practices in the recognition and implementation of the human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The term “good practice” is defined broadly to include laws, policies, jurisprudence, strategies, programmes, projects and other measures that contribute to reducing adverse impacts on the environment, improving environmental quality and fulfilling human rights. The good practices address both the procedural and substantive elements of the right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The procedural elements are access to information, public participation, and access to justice and effective remedies. The substantive elements include clean air, a safe climate, access to safe water and adequate sanitation, healthy and sustainably produced food, non-toxic environments in which to live, work, study and play, and healthy biodiversity and ecosystems.”*

## INTERNATIONAL LEADERS

### Angela Merkel

One Planet Summit January 2021

*“Natural habitats are being destroyed every day. We risk losing around a quarter of most plant and animal species. These drastic losses have a grave impact on life and quality of life, including for us humans. And so we must step up our efforts to protect biodiversity and natural habitats – not some time or other, but now, and not somehow or other, but monumentally. If we do not, the consequences will soon be irreversible.”*

*“We humans can only truly flourish on a healthy planet with a rich and healthy tapestry of animals and plants. This is the core of the One Health approach. We have worked with France to launch the One Health High-Level Expert Panel. This panel aims to facilitate cooperation between the WHO, the FAO, the World Organisation for Animal Health and the UN Environment Programme.”*

<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/opening-statement-by-federal-chancellor-dr-angela-merkel-at-the-one-planet-summit-for-biodiversity-1836134>

### United Nations Summit on Biodiversity

#### Leaders Pledge for Nature

September 2020

*Political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, representing 82 countries from all regions and the European Union, committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. By doing so, these leaders are sending a united signal to step up global ambition and encourage others to match their collective ambition for nature, climate and people with the scale of the crisis at hand.*

*“We are in a state of planetary emergency: the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and climate change - driven in large part by unsustainable production and consumption - require urgent and immediate global action. Science clearly shows that biodiversity loss, land and ocean degradation, pollution, resource depletion and climate change are accelerating at an unprecedented rate. This acceleration is causing irreversible harm to our life support systems and aggravating poverty and inequalities as well as hunger and malnutrition. Unless halted and reversed with immediate effect, it will cause significant damage to global economic, social and political resilience and stability and will render achieving the Sustainable Development Goals impossible. Biodiversity loss is both accelerated by climate change and at the same time exacerbates it, by debilitating nature’s ability to sequester or store carbon and to adapt to climate change impacts. Ecosystem degradation, human encroachment in ecosystems, loss of natural habitats and biodiversity and the illegal wildlife trade can also increase the risk of emergence and spread of infectious diseases. COVID-19 shows that these diseases have dramatic impacts not only on loss of life and health but across all spheres of society.”*

<https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/>

**Justin Trudeau**  
**Prime Minister, Canada**  
**World Environment Day June 2020**

*“Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are vital to our health and continued prosperity. This year, as we practice physical distancing and spend more time than usual in our homes to keep our families and communities safe during COVID-19, we are reminded of how important nature is to our well-being and everyday lives. As we look toward restarting our economy, we need to continue investing in the protection of our natural surroundings and the fight against climate change—because if you do not have a plan for the environment, you cannot have a plan for the economy. I encourage Canadians to do their part in creating a more equitable and sustainable world, and to take action to protect our environment. To take care of ourselves, we must take care of nature.*

*“Together, we can build a world that is cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable – today and for future generations.”*

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2020/06/05/statement-prime-minister-world-environment-day>

**Boris Johnson**  
**Prime Minister, United Kingdom**  
**On announcing Covid Green Recovery Plan November 2020**

*“We will use science to rout the virus, and we must use the same extraordinary powers of invention to repair the economic damage from Covid-19, and to build back better. Now is the time to plan for a green recovery with high-skilled jobs that give people the satisfaction of knowing they are helping to make the country cleaner, greener and more beautiful.”*

*“Green and growth can go hand-in-hand. So let us meet the most enduring threat to our planet with one of the most innovative and ambitious programmes of job-creation we have known.”*

<https://www.ft.com/content/6c112691-fa2f-491a-85b2-b03fc2e38a30>

**Volkan Bozkir (Turkey),**  
**President, UN General Assembly**  
**Opening the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity**  
**30 September 2020**

*“Humanity’s existence on Earth depends entirely on its ability to protect the natural world around it. Yet every year, 13 million hectares of forest are lost, while 1 million species are at risk of extinction. Meanwhile, species of vertebrates have declined by 68 per cent in the past 50 years. “Clearly, we must heed the lessons we have learned and respect the world in which we live,” he said, describing COVID-19 as an opportunity to do just that through a post-pandemic green recovery that emphasizes the protection of biodiversity can lead to a more sustainable and resilient world.”*

## **Xi Jinping**

### **President, China**

**United Nations (UN) Summit on Biodiversity.**

**September 2020**

*“The loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the ecosystem pose a major risk to human survival and development. COVID-19 reminds us of the interdependence between man and Nature. It falls to all of us to act together and urgently to advance protection and development in parallel, so that we can turn Earth into a beautiful homeland for all creatures to live in harmony.”*

*“At present, there exists an acceleration of the global extinction of species. The loss of biodiversity and the degradation of the ecosystem pose a major risk to human survival and development. COVID-19 reminds us of the interdependence between man and Nature. It falls to all of us to act together and urgently to advance protection and development in parallel, so that we can turn Earth into a beautiful homeland for all creatures to live in harmony.”*

*“The industrial civilization, while creating vast material wealth, has caused ecological crises as manifested in biodiversity loss and environmental damage. A sound ecosystem is essential for the prosperity of civilization. We need to take up our lofty responsibility for the entire human civilization, and we need to respect Nature, follow its laws and protect it.”*

<https://news.cqtn.com/news/2020-09-30/Full-text-Xi-Jinping-s-speech-at-UN-summit-on-biodiversity-Udo37GZoqE/index.html>

## **Ban Ki-Moon**

### **Former UN Secretary General**

**Quoted in BCG article How Government Can Fuel a Green Recovery**

**September 2020**

*“World leaders are committing unprecedented funds to recovery packages. Their choices will shape our economies and societies for decades, and determine whether we breathe clean air, create a sustainable low-carbon future and possibly even survive as a species.”*

<https://www.bcg.com/en-au/publications/2020/how-governments-can-fuel-green-recovery>

## **H.E. Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment of South Africa & President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

**Extracts 8th special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment**

**December 2020**

*“Whilst this Pandemic is having a profound negative impact on sustainable development and our efforts to combat environmental degradation and eradicate poverty, it also presents opportunities to set our recovery on a path of transformative sustainable development. Many governments and regions are prioritizing a green recovery as part of their stimulus packages to address the crisis.”*

*“Within this context, the African Green Stimulus Programme aims to mobilise additional financial and technical resources to upscale and enhance the implementation of the portfolio of programmes within the 12 Key Priority areas, whilst identifying areas requiring new interventions to support Africa’s Green Recovery.”*

*“Now more than ever, it is imperative to work together as Africa and take collective and resolute action to deal with the socio-economic and environmental fallout from this crisis, for the benefit of the Continent. There is indeed a compelling case for the environment and rich natural resources of the African Continent, if utilised in a sustainable manner, to contribute significantly to the Continent’s recovery from the impacts of the Pandemic.”*

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/opening-remarks-he-barbara-creecy-minister-environment-forestry-and-fisheries-south-africa>

## **Pacific High Ambition Coalition**

*The COVID-19 pandemic has also created an unprecedented moment for countries to reset their economies with climate-conscious **recovery policies** – and the HAC has once again heeded a call for ambitious action. At a June 2020 HAC virtual ministerial meeting, leaders endorsed the UN Secretary General’s six actions for a climate-related recovery and called for states to operationalize these principles, and catalyze a green and just recovery.*

## **His Excellency Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali**

### **President of Guyana**

**Statement on behalf of The Group of 77 and China at the virtual UN Summit on Biodiversity September, 2020**

*“This Summit should galvanise the necessary political will for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in line with the 2030 Agenda and energise stakeholders for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity under the theme “Ecological civilization: building a shared future for all life on Earth.”*

*Relaying the concerns of the G77, President Ali stated that “our development challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact will continue to be felt well into the future. The pandemic is also jarring reminder of the important relationship between people and nature. There must be urgent and significant actions to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt biodiversity loss, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species. The international community must strengthen efforts to counter these trends and protect the ecosystems, on both land and water. Speaking in his national capacity”.*

*President Ali reminded of the important ecosystem services provided by Guyana’s forest and Guyana’s commitment to low carbon development. Since 1929, Guyana has used protected areas as models for sustainable livelihoods and living in harmony with nature.*

<https://www.g77.org/statement/getstatement.php?id=200930>

## **Svenja Schulze**

### **Federal Environment Minister Germany**

**June 2020**

*Edited version - “I am committed to an ambitious strategy for the international conservation of biodiversity in line with the One Health approach to protect nature and our health.*

*The IPBES Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services shows that the global loss of biodiversity is dramatic. Natural habitats are being altered and destroyed. People are encroaching on these habitats, and biodiversity is declining drastically in many regions of the world.*

*The current situation in particular shows that these kinds of crises can only be contained or prevented through international coordination together with global partners. This can be achieved through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, for example, in the context of major campaigns such as the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration. Or by establishing binding international laws. The 15th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity next year represents an opportunity.*

*The international community can show that it has learned from the coronavirus pandemic. It can adopt a new global biodiversity strategy that includes the necessary measures for the global conservation of biodiversity, which will also reduce the risk of future pandemics. The focus is reconciling economic activities with nature conservation, preserving ecosystems and protecting habitats.”*

<https://www.bmu.de/en/speech/speech-by-svenja-schulze-on-biodiversity-and-pandemic/>

## **Pacific Islands Nations**

### **Conference Major Statement November 2020**

*The 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Protected Areas and Conservation was held online in November 2020. As part of the high-level segment of the Conference Ministers and heads of organisations of the Pacific Island Roundtable (PIRT) endorsed the **Vemoore Declaration** committing to urgent action for nature conservation. This Declaration aligns to the Conference Action Tracks and also essentially endorses the new Framework for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands region.*

*“We, representatives of the governments of Pacific Island countries and territories, our partner countries, and the Heads of Organisations of members of the Pacific Islands Round Table for Nature Conservation, gathered for the High-Level Session of the 10th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas, declare that the global biodiversity crisis is urgent, and that transformative action must not be delayed. This crisis is an existential threat to our Pacific Ocean, our Pacific Islands, and to ourselves as Pacific peoples. We join world leaders that met at the UN Summit on Biodiversity 2020 and recognised the current planetary emergency of interdependent crises of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and climate change that requires urgent and immediate global action. We note with grave concern that none of the global 2011-2020 Aichi Biodiversity Targets have been fully met. The Blue Pacific collectively calls for all countries to adopt a strong deal for nature and people, to reverse or halt the loss of our natural ecosystems and put nature on a path to recovery by 2030. The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the dependency of all our societies on healthy and resilient natural ecosystems. Our necessary social and economic recovery from the pandemic is a regional and global opportunity to transform our collective relationship with the natural world, and to build back better. We recognize the potential of our Pacific Islands to lead the world in ecological stewardship, drawing on our rich indigenous heritage and the close relationship of our communities with the land, sea and sky*

<https://www.sprep.org/publications/vemoore-declaration-commitments-to-nature-conservation-action-in-the-pacific-islands-region-2021-20251>

## C40 Mayors' Statement for a Green and Just Recovery

July 2020

*“Around the world, C40 Cities connects 97 of the world’s greatest cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe.”*

*“In July we released the C40 Mayors’ Agenda for a Green and Just Recovery defining our vision, putting forward concrete policies and initiatives and calling for action by all governments and institutions to support our efforts. In less than four months, we have made crucial progress, showing what can be achieved when we act quickly, unlock funds and shift to a new green and just paradigm. Since then, we have taken bold action in our cities, including: the launch of the first city-led Green New Deal in Asia, funding programs supporting green start-ups and entrepreneurs, additional investments worth millions of dollars in zero emissions mobility, more liveable and affordable housing and resilient infrastructure. We are developing new programs to create thousands of new green jobs, upskill and train workers and have passed temporary protections for gig and essential workers. We have created dozens of kilometers of new, permanent walking and cycling lanes and have accelerated planting new trees and increasing greening in our cities. In addition, 12 cities with 36 million residents are calling on city and pension funds with over US\$295 billion in total assets to divest from fossil fuels. As mayors and representatives of many of the world’s leading cities representing over 700 million people and 25% GDP worldwide, we know we cannot achieve ambitious climate change goals alone. Therefore, we are committed to working with every citizen, company, government agency and international institution to deliver real outcomes. Our collective prize will be returning to a safer and healthier climate, achieving a more equitable economy, and recovering faster from the pandemic.*

[https://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/other\\_uploads/images/2684\\_C40\\_GREEN\\_RECOVERY\\_STATEMENT.original.pdf?1603819872](https://c40-production-images.s3.amazonaws.com/other_uploads/images/2684_C40_GREEN_RECOVERY_STATEMENT.original.pdf?1603819872)

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## INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL INSTITUTIONS

### International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

Extracts IUCN Statement on Covid 19 April 2020

*A crisis, especially one of this intensity, inspires reflection and evokes difficult questions. Beyond the human tragedy, much attention has turned towards humanity's relationship with the natural world and the impact of our activities. With an economic catastrophe resulting from the sudden and drastic halt of activity, many have observed that, beyond the human tragedy, our footprint on the planet has temporarily become lighter.*

*No doubt, this is a sign that we are capable of doing things differently, but to look on this as a positive outcome would be a grave mistake. The cost has been and will be enormous in terms of lost jobs, hardship and suffering. Furthermore, it is clear that the COVID-19 outbreak is also bringing new threats to indigenous peoples and rural communities, as well as exacerbated violence, in particular against women and girls as quarantine conditions make unsafe homes even more dangerous.*

*We can rebuild, but let us rebuild smarter. As a community we have been speaking of the need for transformational change – let us work together now to ensure we follow a thoughtful sustainable path. IUCN will continue to engage with women and men across communities to build and implement safe and gender-equitable solutions.*

*To draw a lesson from this ongoing tragedy, we should all vow to revisit the way we work. We must look at how we can reduce our footprint on the natural world by continuing to use the tools we are using now.*

<https://www.iucn.org/news/secretariat/202004/iucn-statement-covid-19-pandemic>

### Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

#### Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Director of the CBD

Speaking to the launch UN's Global Biodiversity Outlook report September 2020

*“As nature degrades new opportunities emerge for the spread to humans and animals of devastating diseases like this year's coronavirus. The window of time available is short, but the pandemic has also demonstrated that transformative changes are possible when they must be made.”*

*“Earth's living systems as a whole are being compromised, and the more humanity exploits nature in unsustainable ways and undermines its contributions to people, the more we undermine our own well-being, security and prosperity.”*

*The report amplifies the UN's support for [nature-based solutions](#), hailed as one of the most effective ways of combatting climate change. Alongside a rapid phase-out of fossil fuel use, they can provide positive benefits for biodiversity and other sustainability goals.*

*And, in relation to health concerns, and the spread of diseases from animals to humans, the report calls for a “One Health” transition, in which agriculture, the urban environment and wildlife are managed in a way that promotes healthy ecosystems and healthy people.*

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/09/1072292>



## **United Nations Environment Program (UNEP)**

**UNEP and FAO briefing of UN Member Countries on the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration  
December 2020**

*“There has never been a more urgent need to restore damaged ecosystems than now due to the rising impacts of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a monumental task and everyone has a role to play. Ecosystems support all life on Earth, and their restoration can create jobs, build up resilience, and address climate change and biodiversity loss, all at the same time.*

*“Now, more than ever and over the next ten years, every action counts. The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has proclaimed the [UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration](#) following a proposal for action by over 70 countries from around the world. The Decade runs from 2021 through 2030, coinciding with the deadline for the Sustainable Development Goals and with the timeline scientists have identified as the last chance to prevent catastrophic climate change.”*

<https://www.decadeonrestoration.org/stories/un-environment-and-fao-brief-member-states-new-york-upcoming-un-decade-ecosystem>

## **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)**

**Extracts from Media Release IPBES Workshop on Biodiversity and Pandemics  
October 2020**

*“The same human activities that drive climate change and biodiversity loss also drive pandemic risk through their impacts on our environment. Changes in the way we use land; the expansion and intensification of agriculture; and unsustainable trade, production and consumption disrupt nature and increase contact between wildlife, livestock, pathogens and people. This is the path to pandemics.” Pandemic risk can be significantly lowered by reducing the human activities that drive the loss of biodiversity, by greater conservation of protected areas, and through measures that reduce unsustainable exploitation of high biodiversity regions. This will reduce wildlife-livestock-human contact and help prevent the spillover of new diseases, says the report.*

<https://ipbes.net/sites/default/files/2020-12/IPBES%20Pandemics%20Report%20Media%20Release.pdf>

## **On release of The IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services May 2020**

*“The overwhelming evidence of the IPBES Global Assessment, from a wide range of different fields of knowledge, presents an ominous picture,” said IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson. “The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”*

*“Despite progress to conserve nature and implement policies, the Report also finds that global goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors.”*

## Inger Anderson

### United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)

Foreword to CBD Global Outlook Report 2020

*“Now, we must accelerate and scale-up collaboration for nature-positive outcomes – conserving, restoring and using biodiversity fairly and sustainably. If we do not, biodiversity will continue to buckle under the weight of land- and sea-use change, overexploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive alien species. This will further damage human health, economies and societies – with particularly detrimental effects on indigenous peoples and local communities.*

*“We know what needs to be done, what works and how we can achieve good results. If we build on what has already been achieved, and place biodiversity at the heart of all our policies and decisions – including in COVID-19 recovery packages – we can ensure a better future for our societies and the planet.”*

*Global outlook <https://www.cbd.int/qbo/qbo5/publication/qbo-5-en.pdf>*

## WWF-International

### Marco Lambertini, Director-General

January 2020

*“The initiatives and funding announced at the One Planet Summit provide critical momentum on nature ahead of major global environmental agreements to be made later this year and, crucially, start the process of turning commitments into action. However, a step change in both ambition and urgency is still needed if we are to secure a sustainable future for both people and the planet.*

*“Science tells us that our broken relationship with nature is increasing our vulnerability to pandemics, threatening our economies, and undermining our efforts to tackle the climate crisis. Never has the need for urgent action been clearer, but world leaders are yet to demonstrate that they have grasped the scale of the crisis at hand. We urge them to take the necessary steps to deliver a transformative biodiversity agreement in Kunming that secures a [nature-positive](#) world this decade while supporting climate action.”*

*<https://tinyurl.com/yxqn44h4>*

## Conservation International

### Herbert Lust, Vice President, Managing Director for Europe

Statement on The 11th Petersburg Climate Dialogue Commitments

April 2020

*“We know public and economic health are linked to the health of our planet. Not only will balanced ecosystems help prevent the future spread of disease, they will help prevent other global crises like climate change. Thus, it is urgent that we rethink our relationship with nature and invest in smart solutions as we navigate an uncertain economic future and recover from the current pandemic.*

*“It is very positive to see biodiversity prioritized alongside climate change at the top of the global agenda during the Petersberg conference. It is important to acknowledge the challenges we face in advancing these priorities in what we hoped would be a ‘super year for nature.’ A green recovery will not always be easy but challenging does not mean impossible. Together, we can chart a course that keeps nature at the forefront of the global economic recovery.*

<https://www.conservation.org/press-releases/2020/04/30/conservation-international-statement-on-the-11th-petersberg-climate-dialogue-commitments>

## **Wildlife Conservation 20 (WC20),**

**Recommendations to Global Leaders at the G20 Summit in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

**November 2020**

*Political and financial commitments to avert environmental crises that negatively impact people and our planet have yet to be translated into effective action. Government sectors need to be coordinated and engage wider society to ensure effective implementation of strategies that promote a realignment of our relationship with nature. There is an urgent need for partnerships and unified policy and strategy among institutions dealing in ecology and wildlife conservation, zoonotic diseases, animal and human health, food safety, trade, finance and relevant regulatory and enforcement agencies.*

<https://tinyurl.com/y3d73p7a>

## **The Nature Conservancy**

*“One of the many things we’ve learned from the global shock of COVID-19 is just how intertwined humanity is with nature. A wildlife-borne pathogen has infected more than 70 million people, disrupted global supply chains, spotlighted inequities and exposed new vulnerabilities in our financial systems: the costs of our broken relationship with nature are startlingly clear.*

*As we set our collective vision toward global recovery in 2021, recognizing and making decisions based on nature’s value will be essential for building a better world. Whether it’s for our physical health or our fiscal health, it’s clear that we need nature now.”*

*Recent analyses suggest that the cost of preventing further pandemics over the next decade by protecting wildlife and ecosystems would equate to just two per cent of the estimated financial damage caused thus far by COVID-19. The profits – legal and illegal – that are generated from the commercial trade in wildlife are negligible in comparison to the tens of trillions of dollars of economic devastation that we are now witnessing, and are even more negligible when limited to wildlife trade and markets for human consumption.*

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/nature-mainstream-global-recovery-2021/>

## **WWF Living Planet Report**

*“At a time when the world is reeling from the deepest global disruption and health crisis of a lifetime, this year’s Living Planet Report provides unequivocal and alarming evidence that nature is unravelling and that our planet is flashing red warning signs of vital natural systems*

*failure. The Living Planet Report 2020 clearly outlines how humanity's increasing destruction of nature is having catastrophic impacts not only on wildlife populations but also on human health and all aspects of our lives."*

*"It is time we answer nature's SOS. Not just to secure the future of tigers, rhinos, whales, bees, trees and all the amazing diversity of life we love and have the moral duty to coexist with, but because ignoring it also puts the health, well-being and prosperity, indeed the future, of nearly 8 billion people at stake".*

<https://www.zsl.org/sites/default/files/LPR%202020%20Full%20report.pdf>