16 December 2021

5th meeting of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5)

"Nature-based Solutions for supporting sustainable development"

Draft EU+MS resolution proposal, supported by Costa Rica, Colombia, Pakistan

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

a) *Underlining* the importance of strengthening actions for nature for achieving the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, as well as the ultimate objectives of the Rio Conventions, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and for addressing the planetary emergency and welcoming the Leaders' Pledge for Nature: United to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development.

b) Reco*gnizing* the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, as well as the interdependencies between biodiversity loss, climate change and human wellbeing, including health, and the interlinkages with pollution and the need to address these issues in a holistic and integrated manner in national and local policy and planning decisions, as well as within the Regional Seas framework and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM), including in the context of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

c) *Stressing* the urgency of tackling multiple sustainable development-related challenges, especially biodiversity loss, terrestrial and marine ecosystems' degradation, climate change and its related disasters and impacts, deforestation, forest degradation and fragmentation, pollution and the emergence of new zoonotic diseases, as well as increasing poverty, injustice and instability of our economic systems.

d) *Emphasizing* that a key area for cooperation and for strengthening actions for nature is the implementation of nature-based solutions, which simultaneously deliver multiple benefits such as, but not limited to halting and reversing biodiversity loss, promoting sustainable use of ecosystems and climate change adaptation, mitigation and resilience, as well as for water security and management, sustainable land management, coastal and marine protection and resource management, human wellbeing, food security, sustainable food systems, improving risk management for resilience-building, preventing, reducing and managing impacts from natural disasters, both in rural and urban contexts.

e) *Stressing* the importance of the post-2020 global framework for biodiversity to achieve sustainable development, fully aware of the necessity of resilient ecosystems for securing and enhancing biodiversity, mitigating, adapting to and building resilience towards climate change and its impacts, and human wellbeing, including health, and *stressing* the need to scale up and use nature-based solutions.

f) *Recognizing* the cost-efficient and effective nature of nature-based solutions to provide solutions to the interlinked global crises of climate change and biodiversity loss, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards.

g) *Supporting* the need for stepping up the implementation of nature-based solutions as a vital component for jointly achieving the objectives of UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, UNCCD,

CBD and UNDRR, supported by the outcomes of the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26), and addressing multiple connected crises of climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss and pollution, and related health impacts, which are urgent and shared challenges for the international community.

h) *Reaffirming* the need for having green and resilient COVID-19 recovery plans that support sustainable management of the environment and nature.

1. *Agrees* that nature-based solutions are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, which address societal challenges effectively and adaptively, simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem resilience and biodiversity benefits. They are designed to address major societal challenges, such as biodiversity loss, climate change, land degradation, food security, disaster risks, urban development, water security, as well as social and economic development, human health and a large range of ecosystem services, while applying social and environmental safeguards, building on existing relevant safeguards, including those under the Rio Conventions.

2. *Recognises* that specific ecosystem-based approaches can be considered under the wider umbrella concept of nature-based solutions and *agrees* that nature-based solutions do not replace the necessity for urgent action on decarbonisation, reduction of emissions, and adaptation and resilience to climate change and its impacts, but are needed alongside and in support of these efforts.

3. *Underlines* the need for enhancing the understanding and stepping up the implementation of nature-based solutions, on land as well as at sea.

4. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNEP, building on existing work, initiatives and platforms by collaborating closely with relevant organizations and institutions,
(i) to map best practices and lessons learned of nature-based solutions at local, national, regional, global levels and share innovative solutions, including green and blue infrastructures, that are scalable, replicable and adaptable to a variety of urban or rural environments;
(ii) to address the role of gender equality and empowerment of women, youth and indigenous and local communities, in processes to identify, design, implement and monitor nature-based solutions, as well as local application of the nature-based solutions;
(iii) to provide guidance to Member States on possibilities to integrate nature-based solutions into sectoral policies at all levels, including with regards to urban and rural development and planning;
(iv) to raise awareness of nature-based solutions by including innovative methods and building capacities for effective implementation;
(v) to provide further evidence on the economic case for the scaling up of nature-based solutions;
(vi) to develop recommendations for Member States for accelerating nature-based solutions' implementation, mainstreaming and interdisciplinary collaboration, building on already existing guidelines and UN resolutions and best practices, taking into account the cross-cutting nature of nature-based solutions;
(vii) to develop further a global knowledge platform for sharing nature-based solutions' innovation and best practices that builds on existing nature-based solutions platforms[1],

[1] [1] UNEP has a nature-based solutions contribution platform (https://www.unenvironment.org/nbs-contributions-platform)

and *requests* the Executive Director to submit a report on the findings for the consideration of the Members States by [UNEA-6];

5. *Calls upon* the Member States and the Executive Director of UNEP, in collaboration with other relevant UN agencies, to support the uptake of relevant knowledge and methods of indigenous peoples and local communities that have proved effective in maintaining a balance between conserving and sustainably using biodiversity and human wellbeing, with free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples and local communities;

6. *Invites* Member States to invest in education, communication and awareness raising, research and development, and enhance regional cooperation for leveraging innovation in nature-based solutions, particularly with regard to multi-scalar planning for functional green and blue infrastructure, including replacing grey infrastructures with green and blue ones and integrating urban and rural planning and infrastructure management;

7. *Invites* the Executive Director of UNEP to support Member States in accessing sustainable financing for nature-based solutions and propose criteria for supporting sustainable investments in nature-based solutions, and *calls upon* the Executive Director of UNEP to map possible economic and financial instruments (subsidies, grants, investment schemes) to promote widespread implementation of nature-based solutions, including in collaboration with financial mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Adaptation Fund (AF), as well as with the private and the finance sector, and s*tresses* the importance of mobilising and increasing the quality, accessibility, and quantity of financial resources from all sources, including public and private, to deliver benefits to nature such as through nature-based solutions.

8. *Recognizes* the Glasgow Leaders' Declaration on Forests and Land Use and the corresponding Global Forest Finance Pledge for supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation and enhancing collaboration to halt and reverse biodiversity loss and land degradation by 2030, including by addressing the systemic drivers of forest loss, and enabling the conservation, sustainable management and use, and restoration of forests in ODA eligible countries through, *inter alia*, funding for results-based payments and technical and financial cooperation for capacity building that support and strengthen:
i) Forest and land governance and clarifying land tenure and forest rights for Indigenous Peoples and local communities;
ii) Deforestation-free and sustainable agricultural supply chains including systems for transparency, traceability and integrity, the development and effective implementation of sustainability standards – building on already existing international agreements and certification schemes - and increasing the availability of finance for smallholders and community forestry, to improve livelihoods, support a transition to long-term forest investments and sustainable practices;
iii) Deforestation-free and sustainable financial markets and leveraging significant private investment in sustainable forest management, forest protection and sustainable deforestation free agriculture;
iv) Large-scale landscape restoration and forest conservation; and
v) Actions to reduce forest crime and forest fires;
all of which are critical for protecting people and livelihoods, preserving critical ecosystems, and halting and reversing biodiversity loss.

9. *Stresses* the importance of improving the monitoring of nature-based solutions , including applying cost-effectiveness and other relevant assessments that fully capture environmental, societal and economic benefits, in synergies with existing environmental and climate change monitoring systems, and invites UNEP, all relevant UN agencies, scientific institutions and Member States to enhance coordination on this matter by cooperating on innovative social, technological and digital solutions, including using data and spatial analysis in an integrated manner.

10. *Calls for* the development of green, inclusive, sustainable and resilient post-COVID-19 societies, taking into account the necessity to prevent further increase in risks and conflicts connected to climate change, direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, urbanisation, overconsumption and overexploitation of natural resources and the need for integrated and sustainable ocean and land management that promotes resource efficiency, biodiversity and resilient ecosystems, by including use of nature-based solutions.