

Leadership Dialogue: Strengthening Action for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Wednesday, 2 March 2022, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm (EAT)

Hybrid, Nairobi

(draft 28 January 2022)

I. Introduction

Introduction

In line with the approved [draft structure](#) of the resumed session of the Fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) to be held from 28 February to 2 March 2022, a 90-minute Leadership Dialogue will take place on the UNEA-5 theme of ‘Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals’, in a hybrid setting on Wednesday, 2 March 2022 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm EAT.

This Leadership Dialogue intends to bring together stakeholders from across governments, the scientific community, civil society, private sector, the UN system and other international organizations for an engaging discussion on how we can strengthen action for Nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To this end, the dialogue aims to both touch upon the preconditions for the success of such actions and to showcase examples of concrete initiatives that people, governments and organizations around the world are taking to heal our broken relationship with Nature, whilst contributing to the achievement of several SDGs.

Scope of the dialogue

In her report to UNEA-5, the Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, identified four key topics that form part of our global response to the intertwined planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution:

1. **Nature for human and ecosystems health** ☐ marine plastic litter/plastic pollution; zoonotic diseases
2. **Nature for jobs, poverty eradication and economic prosperity** ☐ Building back better from the pandemic by investing directly in nature
3. **Nature for climate** ☐ Action to match commitments regarding nature-based solutions and biodiversity

4. Nature for sustainable food systems Reducing agriculture's impact on nature: nourished people on a thriving planet.

UNEP's synthesis report on *Making Peace With Nature*^{[11](#)} further highlighted the role of “Ambitious and coordinated action by governments businesses and people around the world” to prevent and reverse the worst impacts of environmental decline. To improve our relationship with Nature we will need to transform social and economic systems, recognize and understand Nature's intrinsic value, and put that value at the heart of our decision-making. To achieve such transformational change at an appropriate scale, we need all hands on deck. All actors across government and society can and do play “individual, complementary and nested roles” to bring about cross-sectoral and economy-wide transformative change with immediate and long-term impact to protect and preserve nature, the very foundation of sustainable development.

“Transformation involves a fundamental change in the technological, economic and social organization of society, including worldviews, norms, values and governance.”

^{[11](#)} The first UNEP synthesis report entitled: “*Making Peace with Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies*” (2021).

The Leadership Dialogue will pick up on these themes, inviting participants to highlight the preconditions necessary for strengthening action for Nature to achieve the SDGs. Here the dialogue aims to broaden the conversation beyond the usual suspects, inviting participants to reflect on the role of **behavioral change, shifting social, economic and legal paradigms**, as key prerequisites for strengthening action for Nature. Moreover, participants will be invited to showcase concrete actions and initiatives they are taking, as a government, community, financial institution, business, international organization, or as an individual. These will include examples related, amongst others, to the four topics identified by the Executive Director of UNEP in her report to UNEA as potential areas of action.

II. Format and approach

The leadership dialogues will be held on 2nd March 2022, in Conference Room 1, from 11:30 to 13:00 Nairobi time with a total duration of 90 minutes.

The leadership dialogues will be held in hybrid format and will be interpreted in all six official UN languages, using the platform “Interacio”. Participants or their aides will be required to ensure connection to the platform prior to the Leadership Dialogue and to familiarize themselves with the platform in advance (by participating in one of the dedicated training sessions offered by the Secretariat).

The proposed conference room arrangements for those attending in person are illustrated in the image below:

Proposed approach





Proposed layout in Conference Room 1 for the High-Level Leadership Dialogues.

The first hemicycle will be occupied by the pre-registered Contributing Ministers (or HoD). In the front will be the Invited Guests and the Moderator.

III. Participation

The session is open to the participation of representatives of Member States, members of specialized agencies, United Nations entities and other intergovernmental organizations and regional economic integration organizations, as well as to representatives of accredited major groups and stakeholders' organizations.

The Leadership Dialogue will involve the participation of pre-registered Contributing Ministers, invited guests, moderators, and rapporteurs.

- a) **Pre-registered Contributing Ministers.** Ministers wishing to participate in the dialogues will be invited to send an email to the Secretariat of Governing Bodies indicating so, at their earliest convenience, but not later than 11 February 2022 (instructions will be sent to Member States before the end of January 2022). Considering the duration of the dialogue (90 minutes), it is envisaged the participation of up to 5 – 10 Contributing Ministers in the Q&A session. Contributing Ministers will be selected from those registered, according to the first come, first served principle, and taking into consideration a balanced gender and geographical representation. Although in-person participation is recommended, Contributing Ministers might join and participate virtually.

- b) **Invited guests.** The dialogue will include the participation of about 5 invited guests (Including an online demonstration), whose role is to provide inspirational and enlightening perspectives on the topics for each dialogue. Invited guests will be selected and invited by the Secretariat taking into consideration their expertise, public engagement, and trajectory, as well as regional and gender balance. Current tentative list of participants (in no particular order at this moment):
1. Mayor of Amsterdam
 2. Minister of Finance, Colombia
 3. Ibrahim Al Hussein: CEO Acumen Fund
 4. Sustainability advisor for the Al Mawarid Bank of Morocco
 5. Online demonstration from ARIES (Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability)
 6. Youth: Either UNEP environment champion (Kenyan, Brazilian or Ecuadorian)
 7. Adriana Erthal Abdenur – Brazilian environmental Activist
- c) **Moderators.** The dialogue will be facilitated by an experienced facilitator with knowledge on the specific topic of the dialogue. Current considerations for the moderator is to select either *Sunita Narain* or *Wu Changhua*. The Moderator will play a key role in facilitating a dynamic and engaging exchange of views among participants.
- d) **Rapporteurs.** The dialogue will have a representative from Member States serving as rapporteur for the dialogue. Rapporteurs will capture key messages from the interventions, exchange of views, and conclusions, that will serve as inputs for the summary of the special session on UNEA-5 that will be prepared by the Chair.

IV. Structure of the Leadership Dialogues

- Proposed format and Programme

30 min before start	Participants connect online, test their connection	
10 min before start	Final system set up in the room	
5 min	Opening <i>Moderator:</i> Sunita Narain or Wu Changhua	Introduction
5 min	ARIES Demonstration Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability	Impulse
30 min	Action for Nature to Achieve the SDGs – A conversation	

	1. <i>Mayor of Amsterdam</i> 2. <i>Minister of Finance, Colombia</i> 3. <i>Ibrahim Al Hussein: CEO Acumen Fund</i> 4. <i>Sustainability advisor for the Al Mawarid Bank of Morocco</i> 5. <i>Online demonstration from ARIES (Artificial Intelligence for Environment & Sustainability)</i> 6. <i>Youth: Either UNEP environment champion (Kenyan, Brazilian or Ecuadorian)</i> 7. <i>Adriana Erthal Abdenur – Brazilian environmental Activist</i>	Inputs and perspectives from panelists (approx. 4 min each)
30 min	Broadening the circle Comments and questions A chance for ministers to speak	Discussion with audience
5 min	Accumen statement Ibrahim Al Hussein: CEO Acumen Fund	Take-home message
5 min	Closing remarks Moderator	Brief Closing remarks

V. Dialogue Topics

Guiding questions

- What do you see as prerequisites for strengthening action for Nature to achieve the SDGs?
- How can we achieve the behavioural changes required among producers, consumers, and citizens in general?
- What kind of support, policies or instruments are helpful to shift the social, economic and legal paradigms that are harmful to nature and jeopardize achieving the SDGs?
- *Social paradigms/behavioural change*: role of education / privilege / sufficiency / consumer activism / lessons from social movements for climate & for nature?
- *Legal paradigms*: How can we use law to reconceptualize our relationship with nature? Are there/should there be rights of nature? (den Outer, Burger) Ecocide () / Environmental Constitutionalism / Earth System law (Kotze) The post-2020 global biodiversity framework is being negotiated – can it make a difference?
- *Economic paradigms*: ... metrics / divestment / de-growth / sustainable consumption & production patterns / nature-positive finance / eliminating harmful subsidies

- What concrete actions are you/is your organization taking for Nature to address plastic pollution/ combat climate change/ reduce poverty / make agriculture sustainable, etc?

Intended outcome of Leadership Dialogue

While ensuring the Leadership Dialogue contributes to the objectives of UNEA, the event is intended to inspire governments, companies, communities and individuals to take ambitious and transformative action for Nature. The event would contribute to enhancing a broader understanding among policy makers and the public about the role that behavioural change, and shifting social, economic and legal paradigms can play in unlocking transformative action. Moreover, given the broad range of interventions from diverse stakeholders, it is hoped that the dialogue will signal to participants worldwide that they are part of the solution, and empower them to take bold action to fix our broken relationship with Nature.

VI. Biographies

Wu Changhua: <https://www.weforum.org/people/changhua-wu>

Sunita Narain: <https://www.cseindia.org/sunita-narain-221>

Adriana Erthal Abdenur - <https://www.climate-security-expert-network.org/experts/latin-america-caribbean#AdrianaAbdenur>

VII. References