



# UN Environment Assembly 5.2

**Nature at the Heart of Sustainable Development:** A contribution to the High-Level Segment of the resumed session of the 5th UN Environment Assembly



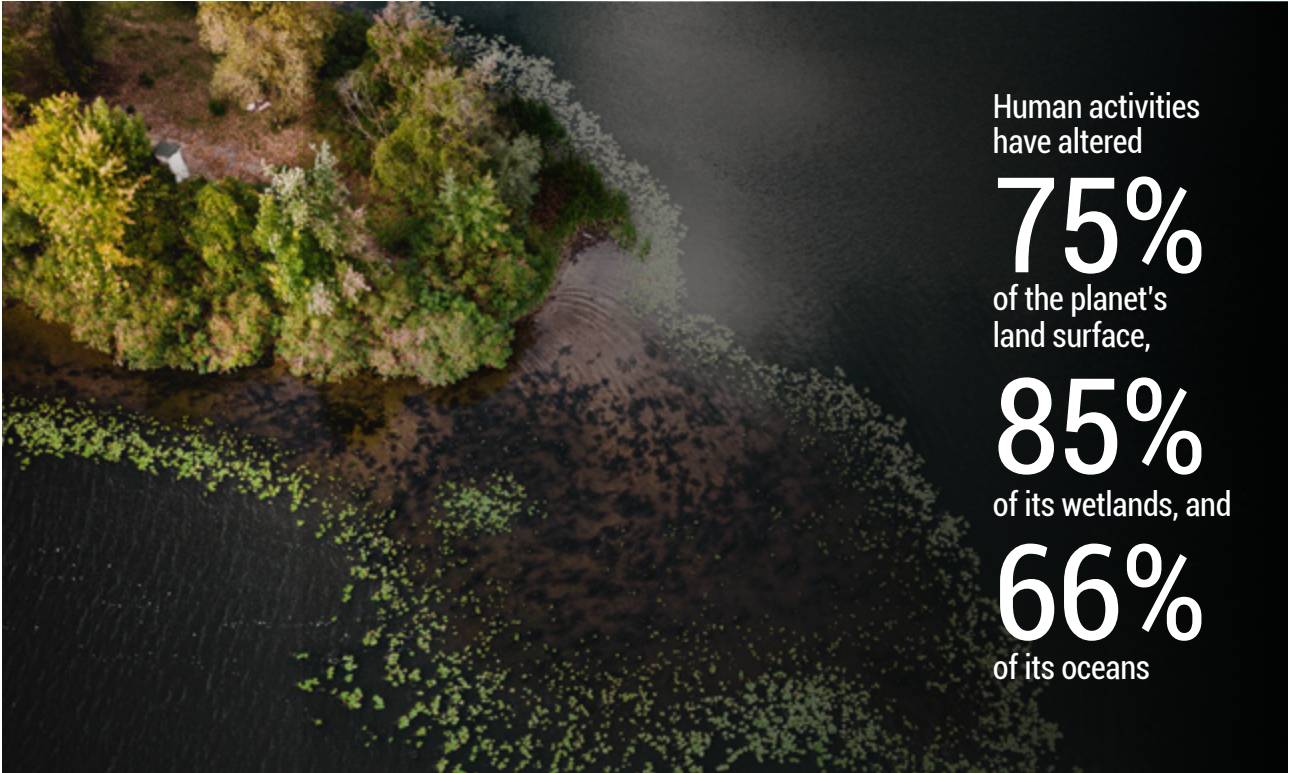


# Introduction

This note is designed to assist Member States and other high-level representatives from industry and civil society, in their preparations for the High-Level Segment planned for the resumed meeting of UNEA-5, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 28 February–2 March 2022 under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”.<sup>1</sup>

Ours is a connected planet. Health, food, economies, and the wellbeing of nearly 8 billion people and more than 8 million other species across diverse ecosystems, constitute a web of life that is inextricably interlinked. Nature is that web, yet human activities have altered 75 percent of the planet’s land surface, 85 percent of its wetlands, and 66 percent of its oceans<sup>1</sup> – and in doing so undermined the very foundations of our societies

<sup>1</sup> This note has been structured based on the four proposed action areas highlighted in the joint meeting of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held 9-10 June 2020.



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Photo: Unsplash/Ivan Bandura

and economies. Based on the current NDC commitments of Member States, the world is on a pathway to 2.7 degrees of heating. With the endorsement of the recent Glasgow Climate Pact, the world strengthened its resolve to pursue efforts to limit temperature increase to 1.5 degrees – recognizing, therefore, that humanity’s impact and dependency on nature gives us the best chance of not just surviving – but thriving – on this delicate and beautiful planet.

The Rio Declaration<sup>ii</sup> and associated 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>iii</sup> seek to end poverty, conserve biodiversity, combat climate change and improve livelihoods for everyone, everywhere. These objectives, encapsulated in 17 Sustainable Development Goals<sup>iv</sup> (SDGs) are unlikely to be met unless transformational changes occur in the way we use, value and interact with nature.

Noting that the Kunming Declaration<sup>v</sup> will be formally submitted to UNEA 5.2, in addition, UNEP welcomes the many biodiversity and nature related commitments and pledges that have been made by Member States, civil society organizations, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth, and the private sector, including the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration<sup>2</sup> and the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature, bringing together over 90 Member States to raise ambition on restoring nature with the aim of reversing the loss of biodiversity by 2030. Such commitments are critical for driving momentum and raising the bar on ambition for nature – but will not be sufficient until they turn into investment and action.

<sup>2</sup> The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, co-led by UNEP and FAO, has the aim to ‘prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide’.

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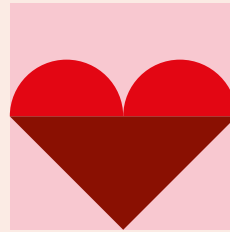
This Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly<sup>vi</sup> provides the opportunity to bridge, build on and catalyze impact in relation to multilateral environmental efforts including on biodiversity<sup>vii</sup> climate<sup>viii</sup> and food systems<sup>ix</sup> and pollution<sup>x,xi,xii</sup> for both people and planet and also marks the start of a period of reflection and celebration for the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP. In preparation for the high-level segment that will take place at UNEA, Member States and other high-level representatives from industry and civil society might wish to consider the following:

- **The world will be watching to see what progress is made on marine litter and plastics:** UNEA 5.2 presents an opportunity to take decisive action by establishing an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to close the gaps in existing instruments and tackle plastic pollution, including marine plastic litter, with circular solutions across the lifecycle of plastic products from source to sea. Success on this agenda will likely be a key headline emerging from UNEA 5.2.
- **Delivering on previous commitments:** There are unique windows of opportunity to pass critical thresholds for change resulting in real and rapid progress to address the triple threats of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. A strong set of resolutions, commitments and pledges are already in place. Advancing sustainable consumption and production, ecosystem restoration, mineral resource governance, sustainable infrastructure, nitrogen, and gender equality are just a few examples of the hard-won resolutions adopted at UNEA 4. Now is the time for this ambition to be urgently converted into policies, legislation and investments to realise these commitments which together can deliver new opportunities for a greener economy.
- **Ensuring a green and inclusive recovery where younger generations have a say and play an active role:** The global response to the pandemic has exposed the issues of global vaccine inequity, but it has also shown that humanity is also capable of rapid behavioural change, cooperation in the face of threats to its common future and rapid innovation, funding and action. This same approach of acting with boldness, courage, and accountability needs to be reflected in the world's COVID-19 recovery plans in a way to preserve nature, the very foundation for sustainable development. COVID-19 has deprived many young people of their imagined futures and put their lives on hold. Due consideration needs to be given to the impact of policy choices on the wellbeing of the next generation. In this regard, the Secretary-General's report *Our Common Agenda* is a golden thread that should be woven across this UNEA.

The success of UNEA-5.2, in catalyzing action, depends on collective leadership, creativity, determination and willingness to deliver on the commitments already taken. A successful UNEA is bound to generate ripple effects across established cooperative frameworks such as multilateral environmental agreements and efforts. The following topics intrinsically generate dividends across the three planetary crises and can guide the discussions at this meeting.



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# 1. Nature for Human and Ecosystems Health

## 1.1 Action on marine plastic litter and plastic pollution can transform our throw-away culture to stimulate innovative, circular solutions across the life cycle of plastic products from source to sea

The plastic pollution scourge is pervasive – from rivers, forests and mountains to the remote Arctic and the hadal depths. It poses risks to the economy, health, wildlife, ecosystems services and climate stability.

Four successive UNEA resolutions<sup>xiii</sup> have been agreed by governments on marine litter and plastic pollution. UNEA-4 provided a critical focus on marine plastic litter but also on the broader issue of plastic pollution, triggering a dramatic shift in the global conversation on this issue in the two years since. UNEA 5.2 presents an opportunity to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC)

to close the gaps in existing instruments and tackle plastic pollution, including marine plastic litter, with circular solutions across the lifecycle of plastic products from source to sea.

The aim should be for systemic change, for solutions applied throughout the entire plastic value chain, for the rethinking of how plastics are produced, used and disposed of with the double-dividend of not just delivering on a greener planet, but new employment opportunities. It requires ambitious, bold, and measurable action by governments, civil society, and the private sector at all levels.



**A CALL TO ACTION:**

Process, funding and multilateral coordination set in motion to successfully implement UNEA resolutions agreed and in place since 2014.



**THE OPPORTUNITY IN ACTION:**

The global plastic market in 2020 has been estimated at around \$US 580 billion while the monetary value of losses of marine natural capital is estimated to be as high as \$US 2.5 trillion per year. Further, greenhouse gas emissions from the production, recycling and incineration of plastics could account for 19 per cent of the Paris Agreement's total allowable emissions in 2040<sup>xiv</sup>. Action on this front is a prudent investment in nature and climate, as well as a socio-economic opportunity.<sup>xv</sup>



**GUIDING QUESTION:**

What combination of incentive and control mechanisms are needed to reduce marine litter at source and achieve greater circularity across the life cycle of plastics?

## 1.2 Investing in nature can limit the impact and emergence of zoonotic diseases and other health hazards.

The health of humans, animals and the planet are intertwined. Our approach should be the same: weaving the expertise of each sector into a united effort.

The emergence of zoonotic diseases is driven by unsustainable human activities including: an increasingly intensive and industrialized food system; constant encroachment on natural habitat; and the illegal and over-consumption of wildlife. All of this is exacerbated by climate change – which is contributing to the spread of pathogens. At the same time, significantly less has been invested in bringing together the aspects of human and animal health, with environmental health.

The interdependence of human, animal, plant and ecosystem health was recognized by UNEA-3 in its resolution 3/4 on environment and health, particularly

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in sections III on biodiversity and IV on antimicrobial resistance<sup>xvi</sup>. One Health is also part of the proposed Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work, under the sections related to nature and chemical and pollution actions. Enhanced, proactive and sound conservation practices, and sustainable use of ecosystems and their biodiversity can contribute to prevention of accelerated pathogen pathways while also addressing other health issues linked to pollution, unhealthy diets and food insecurity. Additional investment in science, to better understand health risks in a holistic manner, including establishing scientific baselines and modelling and testing of potential prevention measures, is also important. The urgent adoption of a One-Health approach to collaborate across human, animal and environmental health expertise and policy is essential to address root causes.

To be successful, more inclusive, equitable and participatory spaces need to be created – recognizing the varied knowledge, innovations, practices, institutions and values of scientists, government, industry and indigenous peoples. Increased investment is needed to address the consumption challenges that are driving up health risks, specifically tied to a global overreliance on antimicrobials that are polluting the air, water and soil and contributing to over 700,000 deaths annually<sup>xvii</sup>. Shifting the way societies produce, consume and manage waste in livestock and food systems will also reduce health risks, address inequalities and secure a sustainable future on this planet.



#### A CALL TO ACTION:

Deliver One-Health policies, institutions and practices that improve human, animal and ecosystem health outcomes and reduce pandemic risks in 20 high-risk regions.



#### THE OPPORTUNITY IN ACTION:

Before the current pandemic, the World Bank and the UN Environment Programme estimated that an annual investment of 1.9-3.4 billion USD in strengthened One Health systems would yield an annual global public benefit of over 30 billion USD annually. The projected cumulative losses from the COVID-19 pandemic during 2020 and 2021 has been estimated at nearly \$8.5 trillion<sup>xviii</sup>, with projected losses at 22 trillion USD<sup>xix</sup>. There is clearly a strong and compelling economic incentive to invest in One Health.



#### GUIDING QUESTION:

How can multi-ministerial, multi-disciplinary collaboration be incentivized to achieve improved impacts for human, animal and environment health?



## 2. Nature for Jobs, Poverty Eradication and Economic Prosperity

### 2.1 Building back better from the pandemic by investing directly in Nature.

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_13490](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_13490)

