

United Nations  
High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, July 2020  
Preparatory process

**Session: Protecting the planet and building resilience**

*Pursuing policies, investments and innovation to address disaster risk reduction and protect the planet from degradation*

**Introduction**

The 2030 Agenda is rooted in the idea that human development and wellbeing cannot be achieved without simultaneously safeguarding and investing in nature and managing disaster risk in a systemic manner—otherwise development gains will be short lived and unequally distributed. Biodiversity loss, land and forest degradation, climate change, and disasters are threatening progress toward sustainable development. Actions to advance economic and social development need to address these threats and build resilience including through nature-based solutions, sustainable consumption and production practices and accounting for the true value of nature.

The past decade—in particular the COVID-19 crisis—has revealed the systemic nature of risk and the cascading impact of disasters across all three dimensions of sustainable development. The natural environment is humanity's first line of defense against many hazards, and nature-based solutions must be scaled up to manage disaster risks, build resilience and leave no one behind. These issues are addressed directly in SDGs 12, 13, 14, and 15, but they are foundational to the entire 2030 Agenda, including poverty eradication, health, food security and inclusive economic growth and sustainable livelihoods. The current session will highlight opportunities and innovations that can build resilience and manage risk while securing livelihoods and safeguarding the planet.

**Guiding questions**

Please consider the 4 questions below and submit written responses totaling **2000 words or less**. (Though the average should be 500 words per question, it is fine to use more words on one question and fewer on another, to total 2000.) Please draw from your field of expertise and experience and be as concrete and tangible as possible. Please provide your responses in a Word document by **12 May** to [rambler@un.org](mailto:rambler@un.org).

**1. Systems transformation**

What are the fundamental systems transformations needed to halt nature degradation, reverse loss and manage risk, while eradicating poverty, ensuring food security for a growing population, securing livelihoods and promoting resilience?

In my view, the fundamental systems transformations are: companies, governments and society must work collaboratively, respecting their respective limitations; the financial market must direct its investments towards those aligned with the SDGs; society must press for feasible solutions; companies and governments must invest effectively in prevention and resilience; governments, companies and

NGOs must disseminate social responsibility and collective thinking; and countries must understand that issues of global impact require joint action.

## **2. *Specific actions to drive transformation***

Please describe 2-3 specific, promising actions at different levels that can drive these systems transformations. These actions could relate for instance to scaling up the use of nature-based solutions, sustainable consumption and production, or other approaches. How have these actions helped (or how *could* they help) break down siloes, support the systemic management of risk, and trigger positive changes in society? How can co-benefits between actions be maximized and the risk in trade-offs stemming from these actions (i.e. negative impacts on other aspects of the 2030 Agenda) managed?

1. Develop effective communication. Providing due publicity for reference cases, presenting the context, actions carried out, socio-economic results, among other factors, supporting the development of documents in the form of guides such as the UNDRR's Words into Action documents, and using different approaches and medias to dialogue with different audiences.

2. Create mechanisms for effective collaboration between governments, companies and society. These mechanisms must foster trust between the parties, have clear and objective communication, have the proper legal basis and be recognized by the parties involved.

3. Create prerequisites for commercial and financial transactions through multilateral agreements and national legislation.

## **3. *Means of implementation and the global partnership for development (SDG 17):***

Achieving the 2030 Agenda relies on a combination of means of implementation to catalyse action and engagement, harness synergies and reduce tradeoffs. Please discuss the means of implementation, including finance, partnerships, and capacity building, needed to make the necessary transformations. How can science, technology and innovation (STI), including social innovation and local and indigenous knowledge, be mobilized to advance these transformations?

I believe that these three means are fundamental to catalyze actions and engagement and harness synergies: establishment of public-private partnerships; guide financial investments towards compatibility with the SDGs; pressure from society / customers for companies and governments to act in order to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Science, technology and innovation (STI) make it possible to carry out technical and neutral research with validation between peers, to obtain reliable data, to develop platforms for data and knowledge sharing, and to rapidly mobilize the society (also increasing its impact).

#### **4. Covid-19 crisis**

What does the Covid-19 crisis reveal about the human-nature relationship and systemic risk creation? How can nature-based solutions contribute to a post-COVID-19 economic and social recovery that is more sustainable, equitable and resilient? What immediate and medium-term steps are needed to ensure that the post-COVID-19 economic and social recovery is sustainable, equitable and resilient. How can we redirect financial flows and direct recovery efforts to create better outcomes for people, prosperity and planet?

The Covid-19 crisis revealed the lack of preparation for resolving a global crisis, the lack of planned joint action and the lack of leadership by the governments of the main countries, preferably in the context of the UN. The countries, and their respective states, in most cases acted in isolation and depending on the interests and personal beliefs of their leaders about the pandemic, leading to an unnecessary aggravation of the human and economic consequences. With regard to human aspects, the crisis revealed in some regions a sense of social responsibility and collective that can be transformative if encouraged and maintained after the crisis.

Considering what we have seen so far during the pandemic and what could be the post-Covid-19 reality, there will be an opportunity for us to reflect and act on the following issues:

- joint action in prevention with a focus on global crises by countries within the UN;
- wide use of the UN concept of coherence;
- guide recovery actions by sustainability, equality, resilience and respect for the environment;
- social responsibility and collective thinking (maintaining in the regions where it was outcropped and encouraging outcropping in others);
- discussion of a universal minimum income;
- improving access to and quality of health systems.