

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

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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.

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?

1.1 A Global Green Deal to Restore our Planet. Based on integrated management of human wellbeing and nature, using scientific evidence and traditional knowledge. The human–animal–environment interface is closely interconnected and COVID-19 has made it even more evident. The United Nations has a unique opportunity under the framework of the SDGs and Paris Climate Agreement, to design and implement courageous large scale transformational collective ecosystemic solutions, engaging governments, policy makers, corporations, academia, civil society and local communities across all sectors. The core of this deal should be an ambitious global restoration program, supported by binding policies, legislation, technical assistance, capacity development and financing. Giving some land back to nature -- and sustainably manage all agricultural and forest lands-- can go a long way in addressing the twin crises of climate change and the collapse of biodiversity. Education systems from elementary to university levels should actively integrate these concepts into curricula, to ensure students obtain general knowledge, personal awareness, skills training and behavioral change to a higher level of consciousness.

1.2 Ethical Consumerism and Sustainable Food Production. Use social networks to empower consumers in ways that influence their engagement with responsible brands. Support certification and other innovative ways of claiming that products are respectful of nature and human rights. Sustainable food consumption and production require courageous policies for decoupling economic growth from nature degradation, technological improvements, and strategies to change the behavior, lifestyle and diets of consumers. National-level interventions should include a range of incentives (tax policies, benefit-sharing, payment for ecosystem services, carbon markets, etc.), disincentives (moratoria, fees) and enabling measures (governance, enforcement, policies and land-use planning, secure tenure rights). Local-level interventions need to be suited to local conditions, including local participation, considered

within the context of national policies and global priorities, and plans to ensure the right incentives, enabling conditions and policy levers are in place.

1.3 Collective Nature Restoration Initiatives. The magnitude of the challenge requires effective collaboration in integrated landscape management initiatives that effectively link global and national priorities with massive local action. Collaboration should harness the capacities and assets of the multiple players for fundamental changes at the scale and speed needed, transforming production systems at farm and landscape levels, building resilience, equality and transparency into supply chains, and awakening consumers. Restoring agricultural landscapes through effective social and institutional processes that empower local communities, are the most critical interventions, backed by science-based policies and technologies. Governments should further develop policies that secure tenure rights and equal benefit sharing for the poor and vulnerable, including indigenous people, landless farmers, rural women and youth. These policies should facilitate access to markets and better prices for sustainable production, by accessing the formal economy, payment for ecosystem services, credit and other sources of financing, including blended finance. Implement massive nature-based solutions that offer the options to building resilience, reduce risk and secure livelihoods.

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?

The most important promising actions are around sustainable land management, especially agriculture, forests and watersheds. An ambitious global restoration initiative can be achieved through collective impact approaches, with the UN playing the role of backbone organization, making sure investments reach the local levels. The health of people is intrinsically linked to the health of the ecosystems, and this pandemic has shown how effective policies can be implemented by courageous leaders. Countries must have the financial and technical resources – and the political will -- to enforce key laws and regulations to tackle pervasive problems such as illegal deforestation and wildlife traffic. Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality is needed to build multiple lines of defense. The three key sustainable land management actions are:

2.1 A Paradigm Shift to Sustainable Agriculture. Food and farming systems generate negative outcomes on multiple fronts. At the same time, agriculture plays a crucial role to national and rural economies. We must cause a paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems, designing and implementing policies and incentives from the public and private sector, as well as consumers, that favor agroecological and agroforestry approaches. These include commitments to sustainable value chains and zero deforestation, improved livelihoods and human rights, food security and resilient supply chains. Also included: carbon credits for farmers, ecosystems and habitat protection, protecting beneficial insects including pollinators, controlling wildlife trade, rebuilding biodiversity from the soil up by conserving natural resources. Policymakers should also reduce subsidies for agriculture in Europe and the USA and redirect them to sustainable

agriculture practices, better manage flood water and watersheds and prevent landslides. This is a fundamentally different model of food production based on diversifying farms and farming landscapes, replacing chemical inputs, optimizing biodiversity and stimulating interactions between different species all part of holistic strategies to build long-term fertility, healthy agro-ecosystems and secure livelihoods.

2.2 Sustainable Management and Conservation of All Forests. Humanity depend on vital forest ecosystem services, including 1.6 billion people who depend on forests for subsistence, livelihoods, food, employment and income generation Clear commitments and mandates from the highest policy level is needed to stop deforestation and forest degradation. This should be backed by effective monitoring systems and incentives to accelerate forest-based solutions uptake. Governments should foster improved intersectoral cooperation and commitments to zero deforestation agricultural value chains and ambitious reforestation programs that comply with sustainability frameworks.

2.3 Sustainable Water Resources Management. Water scarcity affects more than 40% of the global population and water-related disasters account for 70% of all deaths related to natural disasters. All governments should commit to protecting and managing all watersheds, including collaboration with neighboring countries to implement it in transborder watersheds. To be effective, water resources management must effectively promote sustainable agriculture and sustainable forest management, including tree planting and reforestation engaging local communities, indigenous peoples and farmers. Stakeholders should invest in institutional strengthening, information management, and nature-based infrastructure development. Institutional tools such as legal and regulatory frameworks, water pricing, payment for ecosystem services and incentives are needed to better allocate, regulate, and conserve water resources. Information systems are needed for resource monitoring, decision making under uncertainty, systems analyses, and hydro-meteorological forecast and warning. Investments in innovative technologies for enhancing productivity, conserving and protecting resources, recycling storm water and wastewater, and developing non-conventional water sources should be explored in addition to seeking opportunities for enhanced water storage, including aquifer recharge and recovery. Ensuring the rapid dissemination and appropriate adaptation or application of these advances will be a key to strengthening global water security.

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 catalyze 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?

3.1 Agenda 2030 as the overarching global roadmap. This is key for policy coherence and coordinated action across governments. Policy nexus closely related to SDGs such as ecosystem services and livelihoods, land management and the green economy, and, food and forest production and rights, justice, equality and inclusion, should guide priority setting.

3.2 Ecosystemic approaches. This is key to ensure natural resources are managed effectively to balance multiple objectives pertaining production, social outcomes and environmental concerns. Local and national governments should develop locally appropriate policies and

governance structures to support action in the field, incorporating local needs and effective participation, and enforcing regulations, with proactive engagement from the private sector and blended finance from national and local funds, ODA and impact investors.

3.3 An Enhanced Bonn Challenge (BC+). BC is a promising existing global initiative that needs to engage many more partners in the coordination and implementation of activities, including global and local networks of civil society organizations, to make it a truly collective impact global initiative (BC+) and achieve the target of restoring 350 million hectares of degraded and deforested lands by 2030. BC+ could be an effective and practical means of realizing many existing international commitments, including CBD Aichi Target 15, UNFCCC REDD+, and the Rio+20 land degradation neutrality goal. It could be an implementation vehicle for national priorities such as water and food security and rural development, while contributing to the achievement of international climate change, biodiversity and land degradation commitments. This will require strengthening the current BC governance to make it more participatory and transparent, and a global network with a diversified representation from all sorts of stakeholders, avoiding domination by a few.

3.4 Global Landscapes Forum (GLF). GLF as the world's largest knowledge-led platform on sustainable land use and global outreach and networking capacities, could monitor and evaluate progress and serve as a vehicle for communicating impact and sharing experiences and learning. Through its collaborative multi-stakeholder platforms, Digital Broadcasting Center, Knowledge Hub, GLFx, platform and outreach activities – is generating global dialogue, learning and partnerships, and efficient financing at scale. The innovations and improved practices emerging from global and local programs are shared with the GLF Community, a broad stakeholder group, consisting of scientists, practitioners, global media, indigenous peoples and local communities, youth and women's groups, activists, and business and finance leaders. The knowledge-led Forum convenes diverse stakeholders to share knowledge and best practice to produce collaborative contributions to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It has established a thriving, global community of action centered and serves as a core partner to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, the Global Environment Facility funded Food Systems, Land Use, and Restoration Impact Programme. GLFx is an inclusive grassroots movement that bridges local voices to global agendas and brings the spirit of GLF to local communities. It fosters regular gatherings towards the acceleration of restoration activities within their degraded ecosystems. These multi-stakeholder dialogues gather key actors, including private sector, NGOs, and government, for solution-oriented discussions to catalyze restoration action. GLFx will build on existing restoration initiatives, unite youth, indigenous, rural, and women's groups, and be underpinned by technical support provided by its Charter Members.

3.5 Monitoring, evaluation and communication. Foster transparency in the delivery of public and private sustainability commitments and develop proper incentives. Policymakers, investors and consumers could support monitoring mechanisms and flexibly meet social and environmental targets by choosing from multiple practices. The impacts should be communicated to consumers and society. Policymakers, corporations, civil society and institutions would set targets on social and environmental indicators and incentivize their achievement by providing producers with

credit or tax breaks or by reallocating agricultural subsidies. The assessment tools would provide multiple mitigation and productivity enhancement options to producers, ideally developing knowledge platforms that consolidate the vast amounts of research and knowledge conducted around the world, while sharing producer best practices. Impacts should be communicated up the supply chain and through to consumers. Communication could occur through a combination of environmental labels, taxes or subsidies designed to reflect environmental costs in product prices, and broader education on the true cost of food, timber, water and other products.

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?

- 4.1 Human and nature interconnectedness.** COVID-19 has revealed how interconnected humans and nature are, and that human health is intrinsically linked to the planet's health. The "butterfly effect" has happened with an invisible organism that is causing a historical disruption; let's avoid the boiling frog phenomenon
- 4.2 Never let a crisis go to waste.** We have an unprecedented opportunity to change the dangerous trajectory humanity is on into a safer one and be more confident about achieving the SDGs. It is a wake-up call for reinventing policies, production systems, consumer behavior, and very important, the way we value and relate with nature and become more compassionate with fellow humans and the animals and plants with whom we inhabit this planet.
- 4.3 Courageous leaders.** This will demand courage to make the changes needed and avoid more suffering and build back better. COVID-19 has shown that we are capable of making significant decisions and changes in just a few weeks and to focus our attention on what is really essential and valuable. We have implemented changes at planetary scale like never before in human history. We have proven that collective behavior can lead to impact at planetary scale, and this is needed to address the global challenges.
- 4.4 We can do it together.** We have the power to design the future we want. The world has enough financial resources to fight the most important war humanity has ever faced: pandemics, floods, droughts, fires, and the pile-on effects of the climate crisis – with potentially millions of casualties. One example is the global military expenditure that is been increasing since 2015 and estimated to have been \$1917 billion in 2019. To design and implement the global new deal, we already have the technology, the human capital and the financial resources. The key element is courageous and visionary leadership to make it a reality.