

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?

I believe that all the fundamental transformations of the system must be linked to processes that allow us to advance in terms of development and collective well-being in line with a more rational management of natural resources from the point of view of their conservation for future generations (Azevedo Da Silva, 2019). In reality, everything should be aimed at a process of productive transformation with equity, which can be analyzed and developed through

mechanisms of action between environmental concern and the objectives of sustainable development; this has always been considered at the microeconomic level, however, at present there is no doubt that environmental concern is legitimate and more than justified, both in developed and developing societies, thus, ecological-environmental problems have different expressions in each other.

In these transformative processes, it must be taken into account that the relationship of man with nature begins at the level of the individual, passes through the community, the district, the region, the country, the ecological zones of common interest to various countries, the continent and the world. Local phenomena are not clearly separable from national or world phenomena, since there are reciprocal influences between all of them. Hence, we must address the internal effort to incorporate the environmental variable in the development process and the international effort to solve common problems through cooperation. (CEPAL, 2018). In incorporating environmental concern into the development process, a systemic effort is required, which also encompasses the conduct of economic policy, the management of natural resources, technological innovation, the participation of broad strata of the population, education, institution building, investment and research.

In this context, environmental pollution constitutes a cyclical process that involves all environments: air, water and soil, and from any perspective, living beings, both emitters and receivers of pollutants. The amount of pollutants that we contribute is compromising the environmental quality of our planet every day, and the vast majority of them are of anthropogenic origin. (Dominguez, 2015).

Hence, combating land degradation and restoring degraded lands is an urgent priority to protect biological diversity and ecosystem services vital to all life on earth and to ensure human well-being, appropriate measures to prevent reducing and reversing land degradation can increase food and water security and contribute substantially to climate change mitigation and adaptation, can also prevent conflict and migration. (IPBES, 2018). Likewise, it is necessary to incorporate the approach of Risk Management Based on the Ecosystem, in such a way that it addresses not only the increase in the resilience of communities at risk, but also the adaptation to climate change and the improvement of the conditions of the natural environment. (UNDRR, 2015).

## **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?

In this context, I want to refer to two climate action initiatives, the first of which was promoted in coordination with the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences -FLACSO, within the framework of the Action LAC- Latin American Climate Action Project, initiative related to: Strengthening resilience, vulnerability reduction and adaptation to climate change in urban and periurban areas, Puerto Pizarro Bay, Tumbes - Peru.

The second, a project initiated within the framework of the National Service of Protected Natural Areas - SERNANP Peru, carried out in the Tumbesian Region and referring to: Management Strategy in Climate Change: Cerros de Amotape National Park, Tumbes National Reserve.

Both initiatives are based on the operational framework of SbN Nature-based Solutions, on sustainable management and the use of nature to face social challenges (IUCN, 2016), the first, based on the ecosystem restoration approach : Ecosystem-Based Disaster Risk Reduction; and the second based on the ecosystem protection approach: Conservation approach based on areas that include the management of protected areas.

### **Strengthening resilience, reducing vulnerabilities and adapting to climate change in urban and peri-urban areas, Bahía Puerto Pizarro, Tumbes - Peru**

Puerto Pizarro Bay is located in the Puyango Tumbes Binational Transboundary Basin, near the equator, intertropical convergence zone, altitude 4 masl; the greater risks, torrential rains that cause flooding, undermining and landslides, presence of storm surges, anomalous waves, threat of tsunamis; climate change means greater recurrence of the El Niño-FEN phenomenon event; On the shores of the Bay, a large number of anthropic activities are generated. The mangrove area has been occupied by shrimp companies, with the consequent cutting of mangrove trees. In this context, linked to disaster risk reduction-DRR, the risk scenario was determined, conditioning factors and triggers of hazards and threats; likewise, vulnerable and degraded mangrove areas were identified, and their restoration was planned. To do so, it was coordinated with the Municipality of Puerto Pizarro, the Board of Trustees of Puerto Pizarro, the Regional Production Directorate, key local actors, the National Institute of Civil Defense - INDECI; In addition, the strengthening of resilience was generated both in schools, community sectors, and workshops on DRR at the Faculty of Fisheries Engineering and Marine Sciences, achieving a successful preventive phase highlighting knowledge of the mangrove system (RAMSAR), and its importance in DRR (Garcia & Alcocer, 2018).

### **Management Strategy in Climate Change: Cerros de Amotape National Park, Tumbes National Reserve**

The Northwest Peru Biosphere Reserve - RBNO, located along the Cordillera de los Amotapes, in Tumbes and Piura (Peru), RBNO, constitutes the area of greatest exposure to the effects of the El Niño Phenomenon, a recurring natural phenomenon that influences the climate and causes fall and dispersal of species, presence of invasive species; To this must be added anthropogenic effects such as illegal and indiscriminate logging, use of agrochemicals for agriculture, use of botox for fishing.

An important strategy, to counteract the effects of climate change, is to promote adequate protection of biodiversity and sustainable management of natural resources in protected areas, considering risk factors. It was determined that adaptive management strategies must be

carried out long before the impacts of climate change occur; Likewise, environmental education is an important tool to raise awareness in the areas surrounding the buffer zones and in the general public (Garcia & Alcocer, 2017).

In effect, according to what was investigated, in the Climate Change Management Strategy initiative: Cerros Amotape National Park, Tumbes National Reserve - RNT, we can understand that this is the reason why protected areas and environmental law should be part of our global strategy to reduce or prevent future episodes of disease. By understanding the consequences of human activities leading to the spread of zoonotic diseases, we will be able to ensure that we carefully rebuild, and clearly communicate, effective long-term remedies to actors ranging from decision makers to local communities (IUCN, 2020).

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?

For this purpose, alliances between the government, the private sector and civil society are necessary, which are built on the basis of principles and values, a shared vision and common objectives that prioritize people and the planet, and are necessary at the global, regional, national and local levels.

Urgent action is needed to mobilize, reorient, and leverage trillions of dollars of private resources to generate transformation to achieve sustainable development goals. Long-term investments, for example foreign direct investment, are needed in key sectors, particularly in developing countries. These sectors include sustainable energy, infrastructure and transport, and information and communication technologies. The public sector should establish a clear orientation in this regard. Compliance review and monitoring frameworks, regulations and incentive structures that facilitate such investments need to be reformulated in order to attract investment and strengthen sustainable development. National oversight mechanisms should also be strengthened, in particular higher audit institutions and the oversight function of the legislature. There is also a need to strengthen the mobilization of domestic resources, including through the provision of international support to developing countries, in order to improve national capacity to collect tax and other revenues.

In the context of science, technology and innovation (ITS), it is essential to improve regional and international North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation, and to increase the exchange of knowledge under mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination between existing mechanisms, particularly at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism. Likewise, to promote the development of environmentally sound technologies and their transfer,

dissemination and diffusion to developing countries under favorable conditions, including under concessional and preferential conditions, by mutual agreement (UNDP, 2018).

In line with the universality of the SDGs, various countries have committed to aligning their policies towards a sustainable world in which people "live well within the limits of our planet". However, the 2030 agenda poses considerable challenges, since it is necessary to align the objectives with adequate responses to the pressures that global mega-trends continuously exert on the economy, the environment and the quality of social life at the global and regional level.

For this, Science, Technology and Innovation constitute a fundamental tool to implement the new Agenda, since it will allow improving efficiency both from an economic and environmental point of view, developing new and better sustainable ways to satisfy the needs of Humanity, and empower people to lead their own future. In particular, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the 2030 Agenda already stresses that Science and Technology strategies must be integral elements of national sustainable development strategies, to help reinforce the exchange of knowledge and collaboration.

Science, Technology and Innovation can therefore be a contributor to achieving the different sectoral SDGs, while responding to the pressures of global mega-trends. But for this it is necessary that ITS policies are improved and aligned with the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda, developing ITS policies for the SDGs, in this sense a technological facilitation mechanism has been created consisting of three instruments:

- United Nations Interagency Task Team on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
- Collaborative Multistakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs
- Online Platform for Technology Knowledge and Information Sharing (OPTKIS)

Based on multidisciplinary collaborations, this mechanism is conceived to serve all countries in the increase of solutions-oriented cooperation and capacity building of ITS for Sustainable Development.

#### **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 advancement of the coronavirus (COVID-19) has shed light on the deficiencies in the health systems worldwide and on how crucial it is to take rapid measures to protect the population, in fact, we are currently not facing a health crisis, human and ecological, a crisis that inspires reflection and poses difficult questions; Beyond human tragedy, much attention has focused on humanity's relationship with the natural world and the impact of our activities (UNDP, 2018). With the economic catastrophe resulting from the sudden and drastic interruption of our activities, many have observed that, beyond the human tragedy, our footprint on the planet has

temporarily become lighter. This is undoubtedly a sign that we are capable of doing things differently, but viewing this as a positive result would be a serious mistake. Our thoughts go out to all vulnerable populations, especially those suffering the ravages of environmental degradation, many of them with limited access to adequate medical care for financial or geographic reasons (IUCN, 2020).

We must face a sanitary-human and ecological crisis, in effect, the coronavirus pandemic is exposing weaknesses in the market society and hyperindividualism; in fact, we are a biological-cultural unit as humanity, and we can only get out of the crisis we are experiencing by ceasing to compete to collaborate, correcting our mistakes in mutual respect, operating in common projects.

Human beings are the only living beings who can act consciously to avoid the disaster on the biosphere that these ecological distortions will bring to the future of our biological-cultural social coexistence. The important thing will be to talk and reflect, choosing among all human beings, that is, among all people, the options to preserve harmony and well-being among ourselves and with the biosphere.

As for the steps to ensure economic recovery, we must rebuild, but let's smarter rebuild - transformative change is needed - let's work together, now, to make sure we follow a proactive, sustainable path. IUCN will continue to collaborate with women and men from all communities to build and implement safe and equitable solutions (IUCN, 2016).

SbNs have great potential to meet current and future challenges to recovery from the adverse effects of COVID 19, they also offer significant opportunities to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Alliance for Sustainable Development (SDG 17). . In addition, we must analyze how we can reduce our footprint in the natural world by continuing to use the tools we are currently using. We can set goals to fly and travel less, and report our progress transparently.

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