



CSO ACTION FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE

CO CONVENERS

AWF, Bhumi Project, Conservation International, IUCN, Natural Justice, The Africa Platform, World YMCA, WEF, WWF

NATURE IS IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY

Nature provides us with the food we eat, the air we breathe and the water we drink. We depend on it to grow our crops, to source our medicines, to house us and to clothe us. For many, it is also the basis for cultural identity and of priceless spiritual value. However, today we are facing an alarming loss of nature, and we may be the last generation that can do anything about this.

According to the Living Planet Report, the Global wildlife populations have declined on average by 60 per cent in the past 40 years, largely due to threats and pressures linked to human activity. IPBES¹ – the independent global scientific body on biodiversity of more than 130 Governments – in its current report on the state of life on Earth paints an alarming picture of species extinctions, wildlife population declines, habitat loss and depletion of ecosystem services – adding to the existing wealth of evidence that we are losing nature at a dramatic and unsustainable rate. The report also makes clear the cause of this destruction is us.

We are cutting down our forests, overfishing our seas, polluting our rivers, degrading our soils and changing our climate. This poses an urgent threat to all life on Earth – including ourselves. Nature loss poses current and an existential crisis that requires a proportionate response.

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND NATURE:

The loss of nature also has direct implications for indigenous peoples and local communities that depend heavily on nature. More importantly, the way of life and the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities are undermined as a result of nature loss. Nature loss further exposes these communities to the vulnerabilities of natural disasters and climate change.

The health of nature has direct implications also for human prosperity. Nature's ecosystem provides \$125 trillion USD a year in services for the global economy, such as drinkable water, food, fresh air, heat absorption, productive soil, and forests & oceans that soak up carbon dioxide (CO₂).

The continued loss of nature also impacts the security of future generations. The young and future generations, who would have had no part to play in the loss of nature, will bear the full brunt of the actions of past and current generations. Young people are in their rights to demand accountability for responsible and sustainable natural resource management by their leaders. .

Were the natural world to have a voice, the dire state of nature will not go unheralded. Beyond the services nature provides humanity, nature has a right to exist. The continued and unabated extinction of species is morally worrying and spiritually disturbing. The imbalance created by the unabated extinction of species is unjust and demands to be made right.

The paradigm of unabated growth as economic development amidst inequity and increased population demands has created a level of production and consumption pattern that is no longer sustainable. Societal demands on nature are outstripping nature's ability to recover and regenerate. Hence how we meet the world's growing food and energy demands is going to be critical to protecting and restoring nature.

The world's economic, social and environmental challenges are an intertwined existential crisis. It is undeniable that the world's future and prosperity will be defined by how well we manage our natural resources.

A POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD

There is still time to protect what is left and to start restoring nature. But to do that, we must radically change the way we live, including how we perceive economic growth and development. We must change the way we use energy to power our societies, grow our food, and manage our waste. We must embrace the concept of a circular economy, being mindful of our collective footprint. We must change our relationship with nature, acknowledging nature's right to exist alongside humankind. We must embrace the positive relationship with nature as a spiritual connector and rejuvenator. This is an immense task but many of the solutions are already at hand.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:

1. **Call for a Nature emergency** requiring immediate and proportionate action to protect and restore nature.
2. Agree on **ambitious and transformative targets** to protect, restore and sustainably manage the world's land and sea by 2030 and 2050 and adopt clear policies that:
 - a. *safeguard our planet's remaining natural spaces, and ensure that the planet is effectively protected, restored and sustainably managed in a natural state, and for the benefits of the communities & indigenous people who depend upon them*
 - b. *stop the loss of species and decline of wildlife populations whilst protecting the diversity of life. Concerted efforts must be made to prevent poaching, and to halt the introduction of invasive alien species*
 - c. *make our consumption and production model sustainable. Reduce the negative impacts of greenhouse gas emissions, pollution, food production, loss & waste, freshwater stress, and raw material consumption while still meeting the important needs of people.*
3. Agree to join forces with others to lobbying heads of state / governments to sign on to the **Heads of State declaration** to:
 - a. *Improve global, national and local governance by implementing existing, and where necessary, new incentive mechanisms and regulation to promote decisions that reward the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of nature*
 - b. *Transition away from fossil fuels and towards sustainable agriculture and renewable energy that empowers people particularly Indigenous Peoples and local communities*
 - c. *Recognize the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral lands and territories as well as governance systems as means of protecting and restoring nature*
4. Agree to join forces with others to lobbying Private Sector / Corporates to sign on to **Business for Nature declaration** to:
 - a. *Make commitments to reduce business footprints by at least half by 2030 through the promotion of business models that protect, restore and use nature sustainably*

5. *Agree on raising public awareness on the critical state of nature and to a Citizen Nature Declaration to:*
 - a. *Make personal commitments and action pledges to restore and defend nature where they live, change their consumption and production patterns and embrace renewable energy.*
 - b. *Hold governments and political leaders to account for good governance of natural resources*

WHY NOW?

Next year, there is an unmissable opportunity to choose a new direction for people and the planet. Important global decisions will be made on biodiversity, climate change and sustainable development at a series of UN meetings in 2020. Together, these could form an action plan for change, a real *New Deal* for nature and people.

We have the opportunity to create an ambitious and strong post 2020 framework for Nature and People towards protecting and restoring nature. The period between 2019 and 2020 will provide numerous fora to review current status, identify solutions, create ambition and set targets – CBD COP15, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, UNFCCC COP25 and COP26, UNCCD COP, as well as the potential to secure new Treaties for the world's Oceans and to tackle plastic pollution.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Challenge - What is at stake?

How can we build a unified narrative around the value of nature for development?

Benefits and trade offs

What benefits and trade offs should we consider in intersecting nature and people?

Call for Action

If you were a 'benign dictator', what key actions will you impose to course correct and better manage natural resources?

POSSIBLE IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS:

1. Participants at the meeting **agree to a public call to action or a manifesto**, and to actively promote it on social media and other media channels
2. Participants make a commitment to join forces in **creating a public movement** that calls for urgent action by all stakeholders to protect and restore nature for the benefit of people and development
3. Participants agree to develop an advocacy **strategy and roadmap to 2020**, including identifying key moments and events where they come together powerfully over the next 13 months