

## LEADERS' PLEDGE FOR NATURE

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### *United to Reverse Biodiversity Loss by 2030 for Sustainable Development*

We, political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, representing 64\* countries from all regions and the European Union, have come together today, on 28 September 2020, ahead of the Summit to send a united signal to step up global ambition for biodiversity and to commit to matching our collective ambition for nature, climate and people with the scale of the crisis at hand.

We reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism, based on unity, solidarity and trust among countries, peoples and generations, as the only way for the world to effectively respond to current and future global environmental crises.

We are in a state of planetary emergency: the interdependent crises of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation and climate change - driven in large part by unsustainable production and consumption - require urgent and immediate global action. Science clearly shows that biodiversity loss, land and ocean degradation, pollution, resource depletion and climate change are accelerating at an unprecedented rate. This acceleration is causing irreversible harm to our life support systems and aggravating poverty and inequalities as well as hunger and malnutrition. Unless halted and reversed with immediate effect, it will cause significant damage to global economic, social and political resilience and stability and will render achieving the Sustainable Development Goals impossible.

Biodiversity loss is both accelerated by climate change and at the same time exacerbates it, by debilitating nature's ability to sequester or store carbon and to adapt to climate change impacts. Ecosystem degradation, human encroachment in ecosystems, loss of natural habitats and biodiversity and the illegal wildlife trade can also increase the risk of emergence and spread of infectious diseases. COVID-19 shows that these diseases have dramatic impacts not only on loss of life and health but across all spheres of society.

Nature fundamentally underpins human health, wellbeing and prosperity. We need to appropriately value nature and the services it provides as we make decisions and recognize that the business case for biodiversity is compelling. The benefits of restoring natural resources outweigh the costs ten-fold, and the cost of inaction is even higher.

Despite ambitious global agreements and targets for the protection, sustainable use and restoration of biodiversity, and notwithstanding many local success stories, the global trends continue rapidly in the wrong direction. A transformative change is needed: we cannot simply carry on as before.

This Pledge is a recognition of this crisis and an expression of the need for a profound re-commitment from World leaders to take urgent action. Against the backdrop of COVID19, which has crippled the world's economies and pressured governments everywhere to begin the process of rebuilding and renewing, decisions made now will have ramifications for all of us and for generations to come.

We are committed to taking the necessary actions to achieve the vision of Living in Harmony with Nature by 2050. To put the world on the right track towards this long-term goal will require strong political will combined with real accountability and the appropriate legal, economic and financial tools and incentives. Everyone, governments, business and individuals, has a role to play. We must broaden and strengthen the movement for change.

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\*\* As of 26/9/2020 –

The latest information on the number of endorsements can be found at <https://www.leaderspledgefornature.org/>

We therefore commit to undertake the following urgent actions over the next ten years as part of the UN Decade of Action to achieve Sustainable Development and to put nature and biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030:

1. We will ensure that our response to the current health and economic crisis is green and just and contributes directly to recovering better and achieving sustainable societies; we commit to putting biodiversity, climate and the environment as a whole at the heart both of our COVID-19 recovery strategies and investments and of our pursuit of national and international development and cooperation.
2. We commit to the development and full implementation of an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD CoP 15) as a key instrument to reach the Sustainable Development Goals that includes:
  - a. A set of clear and robust goals and targets, underpinned by the best available science, technology, research as well as indigenous and traditional knowledge;
  - b. Commitments to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and halt human induced extinction of species, to ensure species populations recover, and to significantly increase the protection of the planet's land and oceans through representative, well-connected and effectively managed systems of Protected Areas and Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures, and to restore a significant share of degraded ecosystems;
  - c. Commitment to the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in decision making and recognition of their rights, as acknowledged in relevant national and international instruments;
  - d. Commitments backed up by a strong monitoring and review mechanism, and means of implementation commensurate with the challenge of halting and reversing the decline in biodiversity;
  - e. Commitments to strengthen the cooperation among relevant multilateral environmental agreements, international organizations and programmes to contribute to effective and efficient implementation of the biodiversity framework.
3. We will re-double our efforts to end traditional silo thinking and to address the interrelated and interdependent challenges of biodiversity loss, land, freshwater and ocean degradation, deforestation, desertification, pollution and climate change in an integrated and coherent way, ensuring accountability and robust and effective review mechanisms, and lead by example through actions in our own countries.
4. We commit to transition to sustainable patterns of production and consumption and sustainable food systems that meet people's needs while remaining within planetary boundaries, including by:
  - a. Accelerating the transition to sustainable growth, decoupled from resource use, including through moving towards a resource-efficient, circular economy, promoting behavioral changes and a significant scale-up in nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches on land and at sea;

- b. Supporting sustainable supply chains, significantly reducing the impact on ecosystems caused by global demand for commodities and encouraging practices that regenerate ecosystems;
  - c. Shifting land use and agricultural policies away from environmentally harmful practices for land and marine ecosystems and promoting sustainable land and forest management to significantly reduce habitat loss, unsustainable land use change, deforestation and fragmentation, achieve land degradation neutrality and maintain genetic diversity;
  - d. Eliminating unsustainable uses of the ocean and its resources, including illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing as well as unsustainable fishing and aquaculture practices, and working collaboratively to develop a coherent global approach to protect the ocean and sustainably use its resources, including by aiming to conclude at the next intergovernmental conference, the negotiations for an effective international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction;
  - e. Significantly enhancing our efforts to reduce the negative impacts of invasive alien species;
  - f. Significantly reducing pollution in the air, on land, in soil, freshwater and the ocean, in particular by eliminating plastic leakage to the ocean by 2050 as well as pollution due to chemicals, excess nutrients and hazardous waste, including through the strengthening of global coordination, cooperation and governance on marine litter and microplastics, with focus on a whole life-cycle approach and supporting an ambitious outcome for the process on the *Strategic approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020*;
5. We commit to raising ambition and aligning our domestic climate policies with the Paris Agreement, with enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions and long-term strategies consistent with the temperature goals of the Paris Agreement, and the objective of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by mid-century, strengthening climate resilience in our economies and ecosystems and promoting convergence between climate and biodiversity finance.
6. We commit to ending environmental crimes which can seriously impact efforts to tackle environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, and can undermine security, the rule of law, human rights, public health, and social and economic development. We will ensure effective, proportionate and dissuasive legal frameworks, strengthen national and international law enforcement and foster effective cooperation. This also includes tackling environmental crimes involving organized criminal groups, such as the illicit trafficking of wildlife and timber, as serious crimes, acting along the whole supply chain, reducing the demand for illegal wildlife, timber and by-products, and engaging with local communities to ensure sustainable solutions for people, nature and the economy.
7. We commit to mainstreaming biodiversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectoral policies at all levels, including in key sectors such as food production, agriculture, fisheries and forestry, energy, tourism, infrastructure and extractive industries, trade and supply chains, and into those key international agreements and processes which hold levers for change, including the G7, G20, WTO, WHO, FAO, and UNFCCC and UNCCD. We will do this by ensuring that across the whole of government, policies, decisions and investments account for the value of nature and biodiversity, promote biodiversity conservation, restoration, sustainable use and the access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization.

8. We commit to integrating a “One-Health” approach in all relevant policies and decision-making processes at all levels that addresses health and environmental sustainability in an integrated fashion.
9. We will strengthen all financial and non-financial means of implementation, to transform and reform our economic and financial sectors and to achieve the wellbeing of people and safeguard the planet by, inter alia:
  - a. Incentivizing the financial system, nationally and internationally, including banks, funds, corporations, investors and financial mechanisms, to align financial flows to environmental commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals, to take into account the value of nature and biodiversity, promote biodiversity conservation, restoration and its sustainable use in their investment and financing decisions, and in their risk management, as well as including through encouraging the use of taxonomies;
  - b. Enhancing the mobilization of resources from all sources, public and private, maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of existing resources and facilitating access to support where needed, in order to significantly scale up support for biodiversity, including through nature-based solutions, which contribute effectively not only to the achievement of biodiversity and climate goals, but to sustainable development, livelihoods and poverty alleviation where needed;
  - c. Eliminating or repurposing subsidies and other incentives that are harmful to nature, biodiversity and climate while increasing significantly the incentives with positive or neutral impact for biodiversity across all productive sectors;
  - d. Improving the efficiency, transparency and accountability in the use of existing resources, including through co-benefits, finance tracking and reporting frameworks.
10. We commit that our approach to the design and implementation of policy will be science-based, will recognize the crucial role of traditional and indigenous knowledge as well as science and research in the fight against ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change; and will engage the whole of society, including business and financial sectors, indigenous peoples and local communities, environmental human rights defenders, local governments and authorities, faith-based groups, women, youth, civil society groups, academia, and other stakeholders.

In endorsing this Pledge for Nature, we commit ourselves not simply to words, but to meaningful action and mutual accountability to address the planetary emergency. It marks a turning point, and comes with an explicit recognition that we will be judged now and by future generations on our willingness and ability to meet its aims. With this Pledge, we also aim to support the United Nations system and its fundamental role in catalysing the global response to this crisis in the upcoming decisive months and years.

We will join forces in the run up to the key international events and processes taking place throughout 2021, including the G7, the G20, the IUCN World Conservation Congress, the fifth UN Environment Assembly, UNFCCC COP26 and the UN Ocean Conference, aiming to achieve ambitious and realistic outcomes to pave the way for a strong Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and we urge all stakeholders to join us in making commitments to address the planetary emergency on the road to CBD CoP 15 and beyond.

We commit to meeting again next year, and beyond, at such key international events, in particular at the next UN General Assembly High Level Week in September 2021, to review our progress and reaffirm these commitments.