WWF Key Messages for HLPF

The COVID-19 pandemic has stalled or even reversed progress on the SDGs. Meanwhile, we face an escalating planetary emergency: the interdependent biodiversity and climate crises. Despite a temporary reduction in emissions in 2020 related to COVID-19 measures, these are now surpassing pre-pandemic levels. Biodiversity continues to decline, and ecosystems are being degraded at alarming rates, with enormous consequences for humans and the planet.

Conflicts, including recent ones, exacerbate global instability, including through energy and food insecurity, worsening of many SDG indicators and increasing the risk of failure to deliver the 2030 Agenda.

Fortunately, the SDGs provide the road map to guide us in building forward better from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have the opportunity to address our planetary emergency while advancing sustainable development. However, complementary and mutually reinforcing actions on the SDGs must be accelerated if we are to meet these objectives.

The SDGs will not be achieved without achieving a healthy environment, as defined in SDGs 13 (Climate Action), 14 (Life Below Water) and 15 (Life on Land). Urgent action must be taken to deliver all targets under Goals 13, 14 and 15 as soon as possible, including those targets under these Goals that had a deadline for 2020. Unless all stakeholders act to halt and reverse nature loss, progress on sustainable development as a whole is at risk.

We need to urgently move towards an equitable, nature positive and net-zero emissions economy. This requires transformational change: we must properly value and measure nature’s contributions to society, put an end to investments and subsidies that harm the environment, increase funding towards conserving and restoring our natural assets, and halve the negative footprint of production and consumption.

Support for biodiversity is an effective development strategy which benefits everyone, especially the world’s poorest people. Biodiversity, which represents the part of nature which is alive, provides vital ecosystem services that we depend on to breathe, eat, drink and support livelihoods in sectors such as agriculture and livestock, forestry and fishing. It is essential to meeting our shared climate goals and reducing the risk of future pandemics. However, biodiversity is declining at rates unprecedented in human history. The impact of environmental degradation is most severe for people living in poverty, because they have few livelihood options to fall back on.

Securing a transformative, comprehensive and measurable post-2020 global biodiversity framework under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) will help to ensure that we
achieve the SDGs, and achieve a **nature-positive world by 2030**.

**Member States must agree on a process for updating the biodiversity-related SDG targets with a 2020 timeline**, ensuring alignment with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework once adopted by Parties to the CBD. This will ensure the appropriate attention is put on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and that the Agenda remains indivisible.

*Please refer to separate WWF briefs on SDG5, SDG 14, SDG 15 and SDG 17 for more detail on our key messages on the review of these Goals.*

### Background

#### Why nature matters for the SDGs

Lockdowns and general economic disruption has increased poverty and food insecurity, and negatively impacted ecotourism in biodiversity rich parts of the world. Hundreds of millions of people have been pushed back into extreme poverty and chronic hunger. It has exposed and intensified inequalities within and among countries.

The World Economic Forum *estimates* that $44 trillion worth of economic value generation – over half of global GDP – depends moderately or highly on nature and its services. SwissRe *found* that 55% of global GDP depends on high-functioning biodiversity and ecosystem services. Their study revealed that one-fifth of countries worldwide are at risk of their ecosystems collapsing due to a decline in biodiversity and related services. The World Economic Forum also estimates that a transition to a nature-positive economy could generate up to $10.1 trillion in annual business value and create 395 million jobs by 2030. A conservative estimate by the World Bank predicts that the continuous loss of biodiversity could result in significant decline in global GDP: US $2.7 trillion by 2030.

Nature is essential for human existence and good quality of life. Most of nature’s contributions to people are not fully replaceable, and some are irreplaceable. Nature plays a critical role in providing food and feed, energy, medicines and genetic resources and a variety of materials fundamental for people’s physical well-being and for maintaining culture. more than 2 billion people rely on wood fuel to meet their primary energy needs, an estimated 4 billion people rely primarily on natural medicines for their health care and some 70% of drugs used for cancer are natural or are synthetic products inspired by nature. However, nature and its vital contributions to people, which are fundamental to achieving the SDGs, are deteriorating worldwide.

---

1. see [The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2021](#).
The SDG targets with a 2020 timeline

Twelve of SDG targets with a 2020 timeline reflect elements of the 2011-2020 Aichi Biodiversity targets, agreed under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). An assessment conducted by the CBD found that none of the Aichi Targets were fully met\(^3\). Parties to the CBD are currently in discussions to agree on a new framework for the period 2022-2030 (referred to as the ‘post-2020 global biodiversity framework’). A clear process is required to update the biodiversity related targets whose timeline lapsed in 2020, in alignment with the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as a crucial step to maintaining the integrity of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and enable the achievement of the SDGs.

WWF urges Member States to:

- Accelerate ambitious and continuous action on the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals with a 2020 timeline;
- Commit to continue reporting on the targets of the SDGs with a 2020 timeline;
- Agree on a process for updating the SDG targets with a 2020 timeline, ensuring alignment with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework once adopted by Parties;
- Commit to the adoption of a bold, ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework, with strong and transparent implementation and accountability mechanisms at the 15th meeting of Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) and to ensure alignment between this framework and the biodiversity-related SDGs, in order to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda;
- Join ambitious efforts to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 for sustainable development like the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature, and translate those into actions and game changing solutions in key moments, including the 2023 Summit of the Futures.

Annex 1 outlines previous decisions made by Member States, which are relevant to these points.

---

\(^3\) CBD (2020) *Global Biodiversity Outlook 5*. 
Annex 1: Previous decisions made by Member States relevant to deciding on a process to update the 2020 environmental targets:

The SDG targets with a 2020 or 2025 timeline need to be updated to maintain the integrity of the 2030 Agenda. A set of these targets were adapted from the 2011-2020 (Aichi Targets) under the Convention on Biological Diversity. Member States have committed to ensuring ambitious and continuous action on the SDG targets with a 2020 timeline:

- Recalling A/RES/74/4 (OP4) We will maintain the integrity of the 2030 Agenda, including by ensuring ambitious and continuous action on the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals with a 2020 timeline.

- Recalling E/HLS/2021/1 (OP23) We welcome the review of the 2020 targets at the 2021 high-level political forum, note with concern that the Goal targets with a 2020 deadline have not been fully achieved and commit to maintain the integrity of the 2030 Agenda and achieve these targets in an accelerated time frame, reflecting the urgency conveyed in the 2030 Agenda, while keeping track of and taking fully into account the related ongoing intergovernmental processes to allow updated targets to reflect a suitable level of ambition for 2030.

Member states have commenced a process to develop a global biodiversity framework for the period 2021 – 2030:

- Recalling A/RES/74/221 (OP2) recognizes that a post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted is intended to contribute to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is expected to place the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity;

Scientific evidence shows that the environmental SDG targets with a timeline of 2020 were not met:

- Recalling A/RES/74/4 (OP19) We take note with appreciation of the Secretary-General’s progress report on the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Sustainable Development Report, including the identified entry points for transformation and transformative levers for realizing the 2030 Agenda. We acknowledge the potential of a systemic and holistic approach, taking into account interlinkages between Goals and targets.

- Recalling A/RES/74/221 (OP37) and noting with concern the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and stresses the urgent need to halt the global decline of biodiversity, which is unprecedented in human history, including its main indirect and direct drivers, in particular changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, climate change, pollution and invasion of alien species;

The mandate of the High Level Political Forum:

- Recalling A/RES/70/1 (OP82) The high-level political forum will have a central role in overseeing a network of follow-up and review processes at the global level, working coherently with the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other relevant organs and forums, in accordance with existing mandates. It will facilitate sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, and provide political leadership, guidance and

---

recommendations for follow-up. It will promote system-wide coherence and coordination of sustainable development policies. It should ensure that the Agenda remains relevant and ambitious and should focus on the assessment of progress, achievements and challenges faced by developed and developing countries as well as new and emerging issues. Effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant United Nations conferences and processes, including on least developed countries, Small Island developing States and landlocked developing countries.

- Recalling A/RES/67/290 (OP19) which outlines the format and organisational aspect of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and states that ‘the forum shall contribute to the enhanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels, and in this regard invites the forum to take into account the contributions and work of relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies in the social, economic and environmental fields.

For more information
Claire Blanchard
Head, Global Policy and Advocacy
cblanchard@wwfint.org