SUMMARY

The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 shows that the cascading crises of COVID-19, climate change, biodiversity loss and conflict are putting the achievement of the SDGs in grave jeopardy. As the UN Secretary-General has described, humanity is waging war on nature. And nature always strikes back – it is already doing so with growing force and fury. The fallout of the assault on our planet is impeding our efforts to eliminate poverty and imperiling food security.

To accelerate recovery from the COVID-19 and achieve the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda we must urgently repair our broken relationship with the planet.

At HLPF in 2023 WWF urges Member States to recognize the newly adopted Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM GBF) and the agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement). Taking action to protect, restore and equitably use natural resources and ecosystem services will help to achieve the SDGs and a healthy, safe and prosperous future for all people.

Key recommendations for Member States:

- Recognize the KM GBF and the BBNJ Agreement as the main roadmaps for the biodiversity related dimension of the SDGs, supported by the full and inclusive implementation at national level of the right to a clean, healthy and safe environment, and reporting on progress by the next SDG Summit in 2027. Member States should Immediately ratify the BBNJ Agreement.

- Accelerate implementation of the SDGs through stepping up implementation of key environmental decisions including the Paris Agreement, the KM GBF, the BBNJ Agreement, UNEA and UNGA resolutions and others, ensuring that actions are at scale and impactful.
● **Goal 6 Clean Water and Sanitation**: Identify priority areas for *freshwater ecosystem restoration* in terms of importance for biodiversity, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction and including restoration of freshwater ecosystems into environmental and development policies and plans.

● **Goal 7 Affordable and Clean Energy**: Put in place the necessary conditions and practices for the *Just Energy Transition*, including economic and social policies that prioritize environmental and social justice.

● **Goal 9 Industry, Innovation And Infrastructure**: Develop *sustainable infrastructure* through applying participatory and inclusive planning and safeguard practices, and scale up efforts to achieve a *circular economy* and accelerate an *equitable and nature-positive transition of key economic sectors* that have a significant negative impact on people, nature and climate.

● **Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities**: Ensure that cities include *nature-based solutions* in their local climate and sustainability plans, along with commitments to *end deforestation and habitat conversion*.

● **Goal 17 Partnerships for the Goals**: Ensure a rights-based, whole of society approach to accelerating SDG implementation including through implementing the *right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment*.

This brief recommends *actions that Member States can take at national level*. WWF has produced a separate set of *recommendations for elements to be included in the political declaration of the SDG Summit* (which is expected to be negotiated in the run up to the HLPF in July 2023).
BACKGROUND

Nature underpins our societies, economies, our livelihoods and health and wellbeing. Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems are fundamental for economic activities related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture, energy, tourism, transport and trade (SDG 8). Biodiversity is also essential to ending poverty (SDG1), through providing resources and income, particularly for rural poor people. It is a key element of food security and a means of improving nutrition (SDG 2) and a substantial proportion of the world’s population depends on traditional medicines derived from nature for their health care needs (SDG3). The 2019 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Assessment of the State of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services found that continued negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems will undermine progress towards SDGs related to poverty (SDG 1), hunger (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), water (SDG 6), cities (SDG 11), climate (SDG 13), oceans (SDG 14) and land (SDG 15). The global assessment also found that incremental and fragmented change is not sufficient and will not work to reverse the loss of nature and the decline in life support systems we rely upon. The only way forward is to transform how we think, live, produce and consume; to achieve a new equilibrium that balances resilience, security and well-being, and does so in harmony with nature.

The Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM GBF), adopted in 2022 under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity outlines 4 global goals and 23 action targets to help the world to achieve transformational change to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030. Taking action to achieve the KM GBF goals and targets will accelerate the achievement of the SDGs. One example of analysis of the links between KM GBF targets and SDGs is depicted in the diagram below.

(source: Obura 2023)
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SDGS UNDER IN-DEPTH REVIEW AT HLPF 2023

Recognising the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction as the main roadmaps for the biodiversity related dimension of the SDGs in the 2023 SDG political declaration.

Policy and institutional coherence are critical for accelerating implementation of the SDGs. WWF welcomes the adoption of the KM GBF committing 196 parties to the CBD to ‘take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet by conserving and sustainably using biodiversity, and ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources, while providing the necessary means of implementation’ by 2030. The agreement of the new legally binding international instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction – known as the ‘BBNJ Agreement’, is equally historic. These two new agreements now provide the direction for the biodiversity-related and biodiversity-dependent SDGs.

In the SDG political declaration WWF urges Member States to:

- Welcome the KM GBF and the BBNJ Agreement, commit to take the necessary steps to secure adoption, ratification, acceptance or approval of the BBNJ agreement, striving for a goal of entry into force as soon as possible and recognise these two agreements as the new roadmaps for the biodiversity-related and biodiversity-dependent SDGs,
- Recommend that the UN and Member States maximize synergies and alignment between monitoring frameworks for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- Commit to stimulate the necessary investment for SDGs by:
  - Increasing finance and fast tracking innovative rights-based and equitable finance mechanism and partnerships for SDG implementation, including with the private sector,
  - Identifying and eliminating, phasing out or reforming subsidies and incentives that are harmful to the environment, aligning both private and public finance with the SDGs, the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal GBF, and increasing biodiversity related domestic and international financial resources as agreed in the KM GBF.
- Commit to re-evaluate what counts as national development beyond traditional GDP measurement.
- Commit to ensure the full integration of biodiversity and environment and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning, budgeting and development processes and scaling up the application of equitable and rights-based nature-based solutions to address societal challenges while benefiting biodiversity,
- Commit to redouble efforts to address the root causes of societal and environmental challenges in an equitable manner through transforming unsustainable production and consumption, including through a sustainable food systems transition, reducing overconsumption, and shifting immediately to deforestation free and conversion free trade and supply chains,
- Commit to ensure the right processes are in place and functioning effectively for a true whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to SDG planning and implementation at national level,
- Commit to adopt a rights-based approach to achieving the SDGs, including implementing the recently adopted right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment by the UN General Assembly,
- Recommit to the urgent agreement of a legally binding global instrument to end plastic pollution and ensure a plastic free planmanet for all (UNEP/EA.5/Res.14).
- Commit to continue monitoring progress and take necessary actions to ensure accountability and effective delivery of SDGs and all related MEAs.

See Annex 1 for previous decisions made by Member States relevant to deciding on a process to update the 2020 environmental targets.
WWF has developed recommendations for the SDG Summit and the SDG Political Declaration, which can be found in this brief.

Related SDGs:

**Securing financing for climate and biodiversity**

WWF welcomes the provisions of the language of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework relating to resource mobilization, and their clear alignment with SDG 17.1, 17.2, 17.3 and 17.5.

As such, WWF urges all Member States to:

- Reflect the resource mobilization related goal and targets of the KM GBF (Goal D, Targets 14, 18 and 19) as well as the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 decision 15/7 on Resource Mobilization into key SDG related processes including the high level meeting and the outcome documents of the Financing for Development forum and the SDG Summit, and
- Immediately implement these KM GBF targets to avoid the risk of undermining the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, prioritizing the development of national biodiversity finance plans in line with national target setting and revising of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans (NBSAPs) to translate the KM GBF into national action.

As defined by Member States in the UN 75th Anniversary political declaration, sustainable financing is key for the future wellbeing of people and safeguarding the planet. This requires the transformation of economic and financial sectors. WWF welcomes the consultations of Member States on Our Common Agenda and the relevant policy briefs of the UN Secretary General’s Office on the financial architecture reforms and Beyond GDP measures, as well as evolving thought leadership emerging from the Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank and the Summit for a new global financial pact: towards more commitments to meet the 2030 Agenda, amongst others to achieve the SDG17 and all other SDGs.

Building on these, WWF calls on all Member States to:

- Urgently adopt needed reforms to ensure a global financial architecture that is carbon neutral, nature-positive and equitable and measure progress beyond GDP to achieve the wellbeing of all people and safeguard the planet, keeping in mind the opportunity of the Summit of the Futures (2024) and its pact for our future.

Related SDGs:

**GOAL 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**

Meeting our basic water needs through healthy freshwater ecosystems

Countries have struggled to meet people’s basic needs for clean water and safe sanitation, with nearly half the world’s population lacking access to safe sanitation and 2 billion people in need of safe drinking water supplies. Freshwater ecosystems provide and regulate water supply, as well as provide flood regulation and carbon sequestration. However they are among the most threatened ecosystems in the world, with global declines in their area by 64% from 1997 to 2011. The climate crisis will exacerbate these problems. Freshwater is at the forefront of adaptation to climate change. It also needs to be at the forefront of restoration if we are to build climate resilience for people and nature.
Restoring rivers and wetlands to enhance resilience

At the CBD COP15 in Montreal, Parties adopted the KM GBF, which specifically includes inland waters, and thus freshwater ecosystems. Target 2 of the KM GBF, to achieve 30 percent restoration of degraded ecosystems by 2030, will amount to 300,000km of rivers and 350 million ha of wetlands coming under restoration globally. The UN Water Conference, held in March 2023, resulted in the Water Action Agenda, a collection of all water-related voluntary commitments to accelerate progress in the second half of the Water Action Decade 2018-2028 and second half of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Freshwater Challenge, a country-driven initiative that aims at leveraging the support needed to bring Target 2 of the KM GBF to fruition by 2030, was also launched at the UN Water Conference.

Member States, taking into account the need to align country-identified priorities and trans-boundary river basin priorities, now need to translate the Water Action Agenda, the water-related elements of the KM GBF and, for whom appropriate, the Freshwater Challenge into national plans and actions. WWF recommends:

- Identifying priority areas for freshwater ecosystem restoration in terms of importance for biodiversity, climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Support this prioritization with narratives that answer political priorities while supporting sustainable local development and improved livelihoods.

- Including restoration of freshwater ecosystems into environmental and development policies and plans, including by setting national targets or updating existing ones in the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs), National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) and the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets, Strategic National Plan (SNAP) for disaster risk reduction, National Ramsar Strategy and Action Plans, and National Implementation Plan for the SDGs, and

- Incorporating social and cultural objectives alongside biodiversity and climate adaptation goals into river basin plans, water allocation regimes, development plans, and the design and operation of water related infrastructure.

In Changde, China, wetlands have shaped the city’s history for 6,500 years. They play a central role in the country’s flood mitigation strategy because they have a natural capacity to store large amounts of water and regulate water quantity during droughts and floods. One of the wetlands in Changde, Chuanzi creek, is an important waterway because it connects Liuye Lake, the largest urban lake in the city, to Yuan River which flows into Dongting Lake, the second-largest freshwater lake in China. Over fifty years, the creek became increasingly degraded, the water quality in the creek worsened, with severe pollution that flowed into other wetlands.

Over 14 years, the local government worked with WWF and other organizations to restore the natural functions of the creek. Waste, rubbish, and invasive species were removed from the wetland. The drainage system was also repaired as it was frequently overwhelmed during heavy rainfall, leading to floods. As a result of the restoration, the creek regained its natural connection to Liuye Lake and Yuan River. The water quality significantly improved, boosting ecotourism activities in the creek. The pollution has disappeared and more than 50 species of waterbirds have reappeared. Local drainage systems that used to be overwhelmed during heavy rainfall can now regulate water flow during storms. These changes have immensely improved the quality of life for the 300,000 residents living nearby. Read more about the case study in the WWF publication Nature in All Goals.

Related SDGs: 

6. Clean Water and Sanitation 
3. Good Health and Well-being 
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth 
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure 
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities 
12. Responsible Consumption and Production 
13. Climate Action 
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
GOAL 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Urgently making a just energy transition to renewables
The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) AR 6 Report from Working Group III has once again highlighted the urgent need for decarbonizing energy systems. The UNFCCC 2022 NDC Synthesis Report and the UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2022 have alerted us that we are not on track on climate commitments and that we are headed to around 2.1 to 2.9°C of average temperature increase by 2100. Irreversible damage is already occurring to natural ecosystems, communities, and human rights, and will accelerate to an unprecedented scale and pace if global temperature rise surpasses 1.5°C.

The good news is that the World Energy Outlook 2022 has also demonstrated it is still possible for the sector to get to net-zero emissions by 2050. To achieve this, developed countries must set a date to end fossil fuels and pledge support to other countries for the transition; middle-income economies must work on decarbonization plans in their Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Strategies and the least developed and most vulnerable countries must focus on their own climate resilient development and protecting their ecosystems.

Member States need to put in place the following conditions and practices for the Just Energy Transformation:
- Economic and social policies that prioritize environmental and social goals, upholding social justice,
- Protection and restoration of nature, as it provides the foundations of society’s well being,
- Sharing best practices, and technologies; providing financial support to the right projects and supporting good governance.

The benefits of affordable and clean energy to people on the ground are evident. Since 2014, Maasai communities have harnessed the power of solar energy to reduce human-wildlife conflict in the Kajiado and Narok counties by installing solar powered Predator Deterrent Lights (Popularly known as Lion Lights) in livestock enclosures. As a result predation in livestock enclosures with Lion Lights has reduced by 100 percent. Solar systems have also been installed in 177 homes. These systems offer a healthier energy source than paraffin lamps which irritate eyes and cause respiratory infections. School children have reported having more time to study using the solar lights and one community member has reported saving money from installing the lights, enabling them to use the savings to buy books for children and put some savings away for the future. Read more about the case study in the WWF publication Nature in All Goals.

Related SDGs:

Road construction and expansion can impact the surrounding ecosystem including the forests, villages and wildlife.

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GOAL 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Developing sustainable infrastructure

While the development of infrastructure plays a vital role in economies, at the same time roads, dams and other infrastructure can present a big threat to natural habitats and wildlife. If not carefully planned, these infrastructure projects could leave countries with huge debts, increased poverty, and irreversible damage to the natural environment. Applying participatory and inclusive planning and safeguard practices starting at the earliest conceptualization phase through to financing, designing, operating, and decommissioning can dramatically avoid or minimize impacts as well as risks to the infrastructure itself, as described in the United Nations Environment Programme’s ‘International Good Practice Principles for Sustainable Infrastructure’. This local people-informed and science-based process provides opportunities to apply indigenous knowledge, new technologies and nature-based solutions that will reduce infrastructure’s impacts and have a positive effect on nature.

A tool that policy-makers and investors can use immediately is a spatial intelligence platform, WWF-SIGHT, which brings together diverse spatial datasets and satellite imagery to provide a near real-time understanding of the status of key biodiversity areas around the world. The data help improve transparency in financial decision-making and facilitate constructive dialogues at early planning stages. With accurate information and a holistic understanding of the implications of infrastructure projects, investors can direct investments towards sustainable development outcomes that promote policy coherence and provide long term value. Read more about the case study in the WWF publication Nature in All Goals.

Related SDG targets:

Adopting circular economy approaches

The evidence is clear that unsustainable production and consumption is a major driver of biodiversity loss. Halving the global footprint of production and consumption is a necessary condition to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, and therefore successfully deliver the SDGs and the KM GBF. UN Environment Assembly 5 (UNEA 5.2) Resolution 11: Enhancing Circular Economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production, promotes the integration of innovative approaches to achieve sustainable production and consumption, in which products and materials are designed in such a way that they can be reused, remanufactured, recycled or recovered and thus maintained in the economy for as long as possible, along with the resources of which they are made, and the generation of waste, especially hazardous waste, is avoided or minimized, and greenhouse gas emissions are prevented or reduced.

WWF recommends that Member States:

- Scale up efforts to achieve a circular economy and accelerate an equitable and nature-positive transition of key economic sectors that have a significant impact on nature and climate, notably food and agriculture, forestry, fisheries and infrastructure. This would also contribute to KM GBF targets 7 on pollution and 10 on sustainable production systems.
- Work quickly to agree on a legally binding global instrument to end plastic pollution and ensure a plastic free ocean.

Related SDGs:
GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Creating and maintaining urban green spaces

Creation and maintenance of green spaces in cities not only improves local quality of life, it also combats air pollution, increases cities’ resilience to climate change, supports biodiversity, reduces emissions from cooling and creates local job opportunities. Such spaces can also contribute to improved nutrition, local food production and awareness of sustainable food issues through urban agriculture. These characteristics were particularly valued during pandemic travel restrictions.

Member States should:

- Ensure that cities include nature-based solutions in their local climate and sustainability plans. These can be even more powerful when combined with commitments to end deforestation and habitat conversion.

In Milan, Italy, the local municipality is leveraging nature to build the city’s resilience through a partnership with local citizens, WWF, Fondazione Politecnico di Milano, Ambiente Italia, Eliante, AMAT, RFI, and Italferr. The partnership has designed three projects to improve the city’s infrastructure and address several environmental health risks including noise and air pollution, flood risks, heatwaves, and a phenomenon known as the urban heat island effect. Read more about the case study in the WWF publication Nature in All Goals.

Related SDGs:

Utilizing green architecture to reduce building footprints

Member States should:

- Encourage the utilization of green architecture such as green walls and roofs and permeable pavements which can reduce the cooling and heating requirements in buildings and reduce rainwater run-off.

Related SDGs:

GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Ensure a rights-based, whole of society approach to accelerating SDG implementation

Global, regional, national and local partnerships are at the core of SDG17. Partnerships that are inclusive, equitable, effective and gender-responsive provide an integrated and coherent policy and social space, enabling multi-stakeholders and rights-holders partnerships to accelerate SDG implementation that is right-based, just and effective. This is needed to overcome inequalities, empower those in vulnerable or marginalized conditions, eliminate discrimination and nurture inclusivity and guarantee sustainability.

Civil society groups, networks and organizations are key partners to engage at all levels in mobilizing actions, pursuing voluntary commitments, and sharing knowledge, expertise and resources - including the local solutions, knowledge, practices and innovation of Indigenous peoples and local communities, women, and other rights-holders.
Member States should:

- Implement the recently adopted **right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment**, through existing and new national legislation and policies. Monitoring and compliance systems between local and national governments should be linked to identify local contribution to the objectives related to the right to a healthy environment.

The Kanan Kay Alliance ("guardian of the fish" in Mayan) is a voluntary, multi-stakeholder collaborative network formed by 40+ organizations (fishing cooperatives, government, nongovernmental organizations, researchers, and philanthropic foundations). The alliance established a shared vision and collaborative work plan focused on the establishment of fish refuges (no-take zones) within territorial use rights in fisheries (TURFs) across the Mexican Caribbean. Read more about the case study in the WWF discussion paper *Importance of whole-of-society & multi-stakeholder processes in the global biodiversity framework*.

Multi-stakeholders partnerships can promote economic policy coherence and alignment for sustainability and equity, and enhance capacity for a just and rights-based implementation of the SDGs. The Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Initiative, which was launched in November 2019, brings together over 70 initiative members, representing over US$11 trillion of Assets under management (as of June 2022). The initiative provides an interactive finance platform to support the implementation of sustainable blue economy principles and share good practice on finance that promotes the sustainable use of the ocean and its resources. Read more about the case study in the WWF publication *Nature in All Goals*.

Related SDGs:

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**For More Information**

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Annex 1: Previous decisions made by Member States relevant to agreeing on a process to update the 2020 environmental targets

The SDG targets with a 2020 or 2025 timeline need to be continued to maintain the integrity of the 2030 Agenda, with a set of these adapted from the 2011-2020 global biodiversity framework (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.

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 34 and is expected to place the global community on a path towards realizing the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity;

Scientific evidence shows that we are not on track to meet the majority of the environmental SDG targets with a timeline of 2020 by 2020 (see Annex 3):

- 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 organizational 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.'