

World Animal Net Draft Statement: Day 2

Principles

The gap report includes some useful existing principles. However, as many member states have stated, we need to go beyond this to incorporate new principles, which need to be strong and far-reaching to breathe new life into the fight to save our environment.

These should include:

- Recognition of the intrinsic value of nature
- Earth systems: The impact of interconnectedness – the web of life
- Recognition of planetary boundaries – action to be taken to ensure that we return to and remain within planetary boundaries.
- A duty to care for the environment

Prevention is a key principle. But we are concerned by the current weak wording on prevention – which only requires that activities do not “**significantly**” damage the environment beyond territorial boundaries. “Significantly” is problematic, as it considerably weakens the principle.

Precaution is also an important principle. Indeed, we need to apply a precautionary approach to achieve effective prevention.

The “**Polluter Pays**” principle needs to be strengthened, and linked to prevention as a primary objective, rather than entrenching pollution (for those who can pay). We need to bring in here the removal of any subsidies paid for unsustainable products, and subsidies/support for transition towards sustainable alternatives.

As regards **Environmental Democracy**, environmental education is also an important component of this. - Providing this imparts a “solutions-based approach”, and a spirit of respect and reverence for nature and animals.

Finally, there is recognition that international environmental law lacks an appropriate legal framework to protect **environmental rights defenders**. However, this point is currently tucked in under the Right to a Clean and Healthy Environment. We consider that the protection of environmental defenders is a pressing, priority issue, worthy of a separate principle.