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Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly  
and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives  
9-10 June 2020  
4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. (GMT+3)  
Online meeting

Agenda Item 3 (b): UNEA-5 Communication Strategy

**Draft Communication Strategy in support of the fifth session of the United Nations  
Environment Assembly**

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This note serves as a background document for consideration of agenda item 3(b) “UNEA-5 Communication Strategy” at the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to be held virtually on 9-10 June 2020.

It presents a draft communication strategy for the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly, and outlines various approaches to improve understanding of and foster excitement for the UNEA as the primary platform for world's environment ministers and other sectors, to identify and capture transformative actions and policies for nature, to rally support to encourage Member States for making more ambitious and robust commitments in support of nature, and to highlight and bring attention to the decision and outcomes of UNEA in support of their implementation.

Bureaux Members are invited to provide to guidance to the Secretariat with a view to finalizing and implementing the draft Strategy in support of successful preparations for UNEA-5.

# Draft Communication Strategy in support of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

## Introduction and Objectives

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The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. It addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today. Here, representatives from more than 190 countries convene to outline cooperation and action for the protection and preservation of our global environment. In recent years, the Environment Assembly has become known as an accelerator for some of the world's most impactful environmental movements.

The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) will take place in February 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya under the theme *Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. Its objective is to mobilize, motivate and energize member States and stakeholders into sharing and implementing successful approaches and nature-based solutions that contribute to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

As governments grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change continue to constitute our best, and only, global roadmap for a sustainable and healthy future. Environmental dimensions are playing a critical role in both understanding the origins of COVID-19 crisis and in helping to rebuild a post-pandemic world to maintain planetary sustainability.

February 2021 will be a unique and timely opportunity to place nature at the centre stage of the economic recovery debate. Under the theme to act to protect Nature to achieve the SDGs, UNEA-5 will position investments in nature and green jobs, sustainable finance, sound chemicals management, and sustainable production and consumption at the forefront of COVID-19 recovery plans. It will also provide an opportunity to leverage other strategic nature-based-objectives, commitments and action plans that underpin the implementation of the UN Decade of Action to deliver the Global Goals, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the post-2020 Framework on Biodiversity, the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on climate change, and the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021.

The year 2020 has shown the risks and negative effects of the unprecedented loss of biodiversity, which has left one million plant and animal species threatened by extinction and an increase of emergence of zoonotic diseases. Furthermore, biological diversity is integrally linked with tackling climate change and global health and is critical for realizing the SDGs. Lessons learned from the management of the COVID-19 crisis provide an opportunity to both revisit our relationship with nature and rebuild a more environmentally responsible world. More than ever, the international community is recognizing the investment in environmental health and a diverse and healthy planet is the foundation of human, wellbeing, security and sustainable development and fundamental to a long-term global response to the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a time when world headlines are almost exclusively focused on the health and economic crises, we must ensure that biodiversity, climate and the broader environmental agenda remain prominent within the public discourse and a political priority. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic compels us to connect the dots for people on how biodiversity and our natural systems work -- an intricate and interconnected web that not only threatens life, through the outbreak of zoonotic diseases, but also provides the ecological foundation to sustain all life on earth.

UN Environment Programme will conduct a global communications campaign to raise awareness and mobilize action on the theme of UNEA-5 and reframe the overarching narrative on nature for the next years to one which we push for understanding and appreciating the true value of nature, re-evaluating our relationship with it and transforming, working with absolute urgency to halt and reverse the decline of nature through sustained reforms deliberately designed to address systemic threats.

In addition, the communication campaign will aim to:

- Improve understanding of and foster excitement for the Environment Assembly as the primary platform for world's environment ministers and other sectors to identify and capture transformative actions and policies for nature
- Rally support to encourage Member States for making more ambitious and robust commitments in support of nature
- Highlight and bring attention to the decision and outcomes of UNEA in support of their implementation

In the lead-up to UNEA-5, the Secretariat intends to create synergies between “Time #ForNature” campaign from World Environment Day to “Act #ForNature” to support the messaging of the UNEA-5 on the call on the world to bring nature and biodiversity in the spotlight in line with the assembly theme of ‘Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.’ The intention is to rally the momentum and excitement generated by World Environment Day to all the way in the build-up to UNEA-5 by integrating and reinforcing messaging and campaigning. The campaign will include a series of multimedia materials, as well as a social media engagement plan.

## Strategy

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Building on the successful models of past Environment Assemblies, UN Environment Programme communication will help meet this ambition through a public-facing, thematic campaign, complemented by compelling content for all stakeholders, and a digital platform to capture and amplify stakeholder commitments, best practices, and stories.

The countdown to UNEA-5 will focus on an informative and emotive approach to communicating the benefits related to restoring nature and reversing biodiversity loss in the context of sustainable development and encourage millions of individuals to understand how we are part of nature and how intimately we depend on it. In doing so, the goal is to do more than just raise awareness, hoping to shift behaviours, generate momentum and support for action to protect nature and bring attention to UNEA-5 as the primary platform for world's environment ministers and other sectors to identify and capture transformative actions and policies for nature .

### Messaging in line with WED 2020 and COVID-19 response

The UNEA 5 campaign will start with and build on this year's World Environment Day campaign theme: **Time #ForNature**. The 2020 World Environment Day campaign will transition from establishing a sense of agency by raising awareness on how restoring nature is critical for reversing the loss of biodiversity and sustaining a healthy planet to a call for action and commitment to **Act #ForNature** which will culminate with the fifth UN Environment Assembly in February 2021.



By delivering a message of urgency, between World Environment Day (5 June 2020) and UNEA 5 we will underscore that there is both a pressing need and an unprecedented opportunity to act. All actors must collaborate towards urgent, transformative, and sustained actions that deliberately reshape humanity's interaction with nature.

From an environmental and climate perspective, we will highlight that the planet and nature is in crisis, as we are losing species at a rate 1,000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history and one million species face extinction. The Assembly will provide an opportunity to highlight and share actions that recognize the solutions that nature can provide vis-à-vis mitigating and adapting to climate change in both terrestrial and marine environments and how is a fundamental in help rebuilding a post-pandemic world to maintain planetary sustainability.

From an economic perspective, we'll be asking audiences to consider the real cost of nature degradation and biodiversity loss and the consequences and impact of individuals to unsustainable use of nature. Reforms and investments over the next 10 years must simultaneously re-build our economies by addressing the systemic threats to nature, such as unsustainable consumption and production, rapid urbanization, as well as weaknesses in governance and accountability, which in turn feed the five direct drivers of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation

From a social perspective, the Assembly will provide an opportunity to announce and/or commit to actions that recognize the contribution of nature to public health. It is clear that enhanced, proactive and sound conservation practices, and sustainable use of ecosystems and their biodiversity will contribute to prevention of accelerated pathogen pathways amplified due to habitat encroachment and destruction; illegal wildlife trade; landscape fragmentation; deforestation, and similar anthropogenic activities. The Assembly will be an opportunity to announce and/or commit to actions that enhance stewardship of habitat and natural resources while ensuring the provision of food and nutrition for a growing population.

During UNEA 5 we will illustrate the urgent stakes and the innovation actions required to protect nature and embrace sustainable lifestyles. The messaging during the Assembly will build a mentality of coherency. We'll highlight the unity of purpose and joined-up action required to understanding the benefits of nature to all the dimensions of sustainable development, inter alia combat climate change and its impacts, halting the loss of biological diversity, reducing pollution and halt and reverse land degradation, including by contributing to the ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, with a view to achieving the SDGs and build back better a post-COVID-19 pandemic world.

Most of the content will reference the link between COVID-19 and nature to make it most relevant to the top topics today on news and social media.

The campaign will support policy advocacy efforts to build momentum for action and secure the agreements and pledges needed for the shift the focus to and raise awareness of the potential of nature solutions to achieve the SDGs in its three complementary dimensions (social, economic and environmental). In coordination with Regional Offices and other secretariat functions we will support countries in raising awareness of related problems, innovations, and solutions, including through propagating new science and highlighting success stories. Resources for member States and other stakeholders will be produced to help generate momentum and support policy efforts.

We encourage member States and other partners to share stories highlighting sustainable solutions to all the nature and environmental challenges – ranging from climate change to measures to avert biodiversity loss calling on all sectors of society to mobilize for a decade of action on three levels: global action to secure greater leadership, more resources and smarter solutions for the Sustainable Development Goals; local action embedding the needed transitions in the policies, budgets, institutions and regulatory frameworks of governments, cities and local authorities; and people action, including by youth, civil society, the media, the private sector, unions, academia and other stakeholders, to generate an unstoppable movement pushing for the required transformations for a sustainable pathway and stop biodiversity loss in the coming decade.

## Activities

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### Powerful storytelling

Storytelling will be critical to the success of the communication campaign. UNEP will produce a variety of compelling stories that put a human face on the benefits of nature-based solutions for communities, ecosystems restoration and conservation; driving discussion, awareness and action. We will explore new technologies and creative ways to tell stories about projects, including immersive experiences, virtual reality content, photo features and audio-visual content.

### Social media engagement

UNEP will use social media as a powerful tool to engage the public on the issues in focus at the Assembly. Ahead of and during the Assembly, the social media campaign will serve to educate, empower and inspire users to ask questions and take actions aimed at knowing how to understand nature to sustainably harness its benefits and preserve diversity of life in Earth as crucial actions to solving the critical environmental challenges we face. We will create compelling, issue-based visuals that bring strong engagement across channels and audiences. Infographics, animations and video content will address the depth of different issues, will provide positive paths forward.

At the Environment Assembly, the social team will profile concrete examples of the power of nature solutions, along with interactive opportunities for attendees to show how they are part of the sustainable living movement.

### **Building a powerful digital platform**

UNEA 5 related webpages will serve as a content platform for all stakeholders, serving as a critical rallying point for aggregating the stories, actions and impacts of the campaign. The [Environment Assembly website](#) will provide Member States the relevant information and documentation about the Assembly. Our 90,000 online subscribers will receive monthly email updates gathering the most relevant stories on our website and from our partners.

### **Earned media outreach**

Our campaign will include a proactive approach to news and media. Working collaboratively across the house, the Communication Division will develop a calendar of earned media touch points designed to build awareness, create anticipation and secure coverage around key content opportunities. Our external narrative will focus on the urgency of the theme and position the Environment Assembly as a critical moment for building global consensus around nature and SDGs. Our earned media approach will seek to capitalize on “soft media” opportunities by connecting the Environment Assembly agenda and theme to other high-profile environmental news. During the assembly itself, media attention will be built around key policy outcomes and further amplified by close collaboration with member States and regional assets.

### **Leverage high profile events in 2020**

- 5 June 2020: World Environment Day 2020
- June 2020: Joint UNEA 5 retreat, Science Policy Business Forum and MGSF in Oslo
- The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2020 from 7 July, to 16 July 2020, including the three-day ministerial meeting from 14 July to 16 July 2020.
- 75th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 75) and the 5th anniversary of the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2020
- Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)
- 7-15 January 2021: IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille

### **Flagship reports launches during 2020 and UNEA 5**

There are several major advocacy and flagship publications related to nature to be launched between now and UNEA. Each of these gives us an opportunity to attract attention and reinforce our aforementioned overarching narrative. Many of these are still in their early stages of drafting and the Communication Division recommends the responsible division to revisit the focus of each to ensure they are most relevant to today’s crises.

- Frontiers 2020/21
- GEO-6 for Business
- Global Waste Management Outlook II
- Pollution Summary Report: Tracking Progress: where is the world in taking action to address pollution
- Protected Planet 2020 Report
- State of finance & investment in nature-based solutions

- Synthesis Report on the Global Environment: Key messages drawn from the latest global environmental assessments

### **Kick-off of the 50th Anniversary of UNEP**

The Communication Division will support the commemorations by offering multimedia coverage and visual identity development. A proposal for multimedia content development during the year of celebrations have been produced and shared.

### **Internal communications and staff engagement**

Information on preparations of the Environment Assembly and its campaign will be disseminated to all staff via the usual channels such as the internal newsletter *Your Weekly Digest*, the intranet *weCollaborate*, and a weekly Environment Assembly newsletter to be launched 4 weeks before the event. In the lead up to UNEA 5, substantive teams will hold digital brown bag sessions on Teams for regional colleagues learn and get involved with UNEA 5 preparations and expected outcomes. During UNEA 5, a CPR and staff newsletter will be produced and distributed every morning. The newsletter will include wrap up videos, press releases, programme for the day and useful information about the Assembly and Nairobi.

## **Communication during UNEA-5**

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### **Coverage during UNEA 5**

Video and photo coverage of the event will be carried out by UNEP's in-house multimedia unit focused on delivering daily/engaging content for use on social media platforms.

- Communication coverage to ED, DED and Presidency of UNEA
- Additional photography-only coverage via IISD and the Earth Negotiation Bulletin
- Coverage of science-policy interface, especially for the business sector through supporting Sustainable Innovation Expo, Geo for Business, Science Policy Business Forum, etc.

### **On site exhibitions**

The Communication Division coordinates and approves exhibitions requests for the UN Environment Assembly. In some cases, we support logistics and provide design and art directions such as for the Sustainable Innovation Expo 2020 and the World Situation Room.

### **Media events**

Journalists and media houses from across the globe will be invited to report on the Assembly. Journalists will be granted access to the galleries during the open sessions, the high-level segment, side events and leadership dialogue to ensure visibility of the UN Environment Assembly and parallel events.

The Assembly will have an opening and closing press conference. UN Environment Programme will also be launching a number of publications, including the Frontiers Report. Other press encounters/gatherings may be organized including field exposure visits highlight to the best nature solutions.

The Communication Division also encourages Member States to submit examples of stories in their regions which may lend themselves to these media trips. Member States are further encouraged to inform the Communication Division of any journalists who will be traveling with their official delegations, so we can assist the journalists with accreditation and plug them into our notification system.

### Communication roadmap to UNEA-5

June 2020	First draft of UNEA 5 strategy First draft of UNEA 5 identity
October 2020 – February 2021	Rich multimedia- <a href="#">storytelling</a> on the main theme through UN Environment digital channels
October 2020	<a href="#">Visual identity</a> of UNEA5 in all UN languages
October 2020	First draft of Government, and major groups toolkits in the 6 UN Languages
<u>October 2020</u>	Social media toolkit and resources.
November 2020 – February 2021	Multimedia storytelling opportunities with President of the UN Environment Assembly
November 2020 – February 2021	Conscientization and awareness raising on social medial and digital channels
January 2021	Graphic and multimedia assets, including PSA video
February 2021	Planned in coordination with member states, media field trips in the regions will highlight the best (and most urgent) of the world’s natural threats and NBS.
February 2021	Produce and distribute a UN Environment Assembly curtain raiser

The Assembly’s communication strategy will deliver to a level matching the resources made available for the purpose.

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