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Agenda Item 4: Consideration of a draft UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023

This note serves as one of four supporting documents for agenda item 4, “Consideration of a draft UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023.”

The present document includes the second draft of UNEP’s Medium Term Strategy (MTS) for 2022-2025 for further review and guidance, following the consideration of the draft at the 151st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of 14 July 2020. The Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 will, in its final iteration, be annexed to the MTS, and will be presented separately in document UNEP/ASC.7/2/Add.1.

In line with the guidance provide by the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and taking into account the change of dates for the review of the MTS from 3 September to 14 September, and to respect as much as possible the timelines for document submission before the 7th Annual CPR Subcommittee, the Secretariat presents the same draft MTS considered before the 151st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

This draft MTS is also accompanied by document UNEP/ASC.7/2/Add.2, consisting of a comprehensive summary of the guidance received from member States during the 151st meeting of the CPR, including comments received in writing up to 21 September. The Secretariat will address these comments in the final iteration of the draft MTS, in addition to incorporating any guidance that may be received during the 7th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the CPR.

Furthermore, the draft MTS will be complemented by document UNEP/ASC.7/2/Add.3 - a summary report of the ‘Discovery’ sessions organized by the Secretariat with Major Groups and Stakeholders, Children and Youth, Faith-Based Organizations and the private sector to seek their views and inputs for the development of the MTS.

UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023

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1) Background

“With only 10 years left before the 2030 deadline, there is an urgent need to step up action. And every nation, every community and every person can and must make a contribution.”

- UN Secretary General António Guterres

UNEP was established in 1972 against the background of a series of scientific reports on the degrading state of the world environment. The Stockholm Conference gave science a platform that enabled world leaders to converge on the need to cooperate to tackle the most pressing environmental problems of their time. As a result, UNEP was tasked with coordinating global responses for the environment, within and outside the United Nations, while keeping the state of the world environment in check, linking science to policymaking.¹

Today, the world finds itself in a similar situation, but the state of the environment has worsened. Science is pointing to three environmental crises: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, which are putting us at risk of irreversibly changing our relationship with the natural world and how we benefit from it. These crises are directly linked to current unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, which were recognized at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 as “*the major cause of the continued deterioration of the global environment*”.² While an overwhelming evidence exists for this,³ the scale and pace of a global response to these three challenges is not where it should be. Collectively, we are off-track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially the environment-related ones, that will enable us to achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2030.⁴

Nevertheless, the importance of linking science to policy and decision-making remains stronger than ever, but science alone is not enough. Science underpins solutions and actions that can chart a transformational path in the way we live, work and relate to nature. Yet only when sustained by strong environmental governance can science be the foundation of a catalytic response to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. To enable a global transformation at the pace and scale required, science must inform and drive financial economic and behavioural shifts towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns, all while harnessing the digital revolution as a strategic asset for more inclusive, transparent and innovative outcomes.

This strategy sets out a vision for UNEP to meet current and future expectations, while continuing to deliver on the promises made to Member States in 2012 through the Rio+20 Conference and its Outcome Document “*The future we want*.”⁵ Under this lens, this Strategy describes UNEP’s future trajectory for the period 2022-2025, while outlining the organization’s contribution to Agenda 2030 as the direction of travel towards a global 2050 vision of planetary sustainability.

¹ UNEP was established by the United Nations General Assembly following the Stockholm Conference by resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, [https://undocs.org/en/a/res/2997\(xxvii\)](https://undocs.org/en/a/res/2997(xxvii))

² *Agenda 21, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, June 1992.*

³ The situation analysis in this document provides thorough evidence of the deteriorating state of the world environment, pointing to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution driven by unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

⁴ *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs*, published by UNEP in 2019, revealed that “of the 93 environment-related SDGs indicators, there are 22 (23 per cent) for which good progress has been made over the last 15 years. For the other 77 per cent of the environment-related SDGs indicators, there is either insufficient data to assess progress (68 per cent) or it is unlikely that the target will be met without upscaling action (9 per cent).

⁵ UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The future we want* (A/CONF.216/L.1), 19 June 2012, <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/13662/N1238164.pdf>

Through this strategy, UNEP places the three environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution at the heart of its work and it will tackle them through transformative multi-stakeholder actions that target their root causes and drivers, delivering deeper and broader impact. Through deploying a supporting system of foundational actions, UNEP will ensure that the science remains at the centre of all decisions, and that global environmental governance continues to inform sustainable law and policymaking under the direction set by the multilateral environmental agreements. As a way to accelerate its systemic interventions, UNEP will also engage with its many partners in a set of enabling actions that speak to financial and economic players that impact the environment, while leveraging the power of digital technologies to reflect environmental considerations in the global digital space.

This four-year Strategy provides a stepping stone toward the Decade of Action for UNEP to strengthen the collective UN response to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The UN Development System Reform represents a tremendous opportunity to empower the United Nations to address these crises, and UNEP will leverage this opportunity to elevate its guiding role, raise ambition and build back a stronger aspiration to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in the spirit of the Secretary-General's *Decade of Action*.

These are the fundamental tenets that lie at the heart of UNEP's medium-term strategy for the period 2022-2025.

2) Situation Analysis: Unsustainable Consumption and Production is Overburdening the Earth's Resources.

A rapidly deteriorating environment threatens not only human well-being, but the achievement of most Sustainable Development Goals.

- 1. Expanding human activities and the increase of unsustainable consumption and production over the last 50 years, is testing the Earth's environment.** Over the last 50 years, human population has doubled, the extraction of materials has tripled, primary energy production has more than tripled, the economy has grown nearly fivefold, and global trade has grown tenfold.⁶ Yet over 820 million people suffer from hunger.⁷
- 2. Human consumption is set to increase further as population and per-capita income also continue to increase.** Per capita consumption in developed countries generally far exceeds that of developing countries. Land, watercourses, and the oceans are increasingly being exploited for food production, infrastructure, industry and human settlements. Ever more living material, minerals and, water, are extracted for consumption. Up to 400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge, and other industrial wastes are released annually into the world's waters.⁸

⁶ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6: Healthy Planet, Healthy People*, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108627146>.

⁷ FAO et al., *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns* (Rome: and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 2019), <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5162en/ca5162en.pdf>.

⁸ IPBES Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, "Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services" (Bonn, November 2019), <https://ipbes.net/ga/spm>.

3. **The changing climate, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation and accumulating chemicals and waste are closely inter-related and are reinforcing each other. Global chemical production capacity almost doubled between 2000 and 2017.**⁹ Fertilizers entering coastal ecosystems have produced more than 400 ocean ‘dead zones’, totalling more than 245,000 km² – a combined area greater than that of the United Kingdom. Marine plastics pollution has increased 10-fold since 1980.^{10,11} Of 45 megacities monitored, only four attained World Health Organization guidelines for air quality.¹² Climate change, chemicals, waste and pollution, and unsustainable use of land, water and oceans can individually or in combination lead to degradation of ecosystems and their ability to provide ecosystem services that are crucial for human well-being and nature. This in turn then exacerbates climate change.^{13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18}

Combined environmental changes increase the risk of crossing thresholds in the socio-ecological systems that may harm human well-being, such as outbreak of pandemics and rapid ecological and climatic shifts.^{19, 20, 21, 22, 23}

1. **Trends and scenarios project clear improvement over time in reducing hunger, increasing access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation, and increasing access to modern energy services, but not enough to meet the related Sustainable Development Goal targets by 2030.**^{24, 25, 26} Current and future trends in environmental degradation make achieving the Sustainable Development Goals even more challenging. For example, in 2018, damages from climate-related disasters cost an estimated US\$155 billion.²⁷ Global economic losses due to decreased labour productivity, increased health care costs and decreased crop yields could amount to 1 per cent of

⁹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Chemicals Outlook II. From Legacies to Innovative Solutions: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2019), <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/global-chemicals-outlook-ii-legacies-innovative-solutions>.

¹⁰ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

¹¹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

¹² Zhen Cheng et al., “Status and Characteristics of Ambient PM_{2.5} Pollution in Global Megacities,” *Environment International* 89–90 (April 2016): 212–21, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2016.02.003>.

¹³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Climate Change and Land. An IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems. Summary for Policymakers” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), 2019), <https://www.ipcc.ch/srccl/>.

¹⁴ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, “Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.”

¹⁵ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

¹⁶ International Resource Panel, *Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want* (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2019), <https://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook>.

¹⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Chemicals Outlook II. From Legacies to Innovative Solutions: Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*.

¹⁸ FAO et al., *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019. Safeguarding against Economic Slowdowns and Downturns*.

¹⁹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

²⁰ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Climate Change and Land. An IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems. Summary for Policymakers.”

²¹ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, “Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.”

²² International Resource Panel, *Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want*.

²³ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Frontiers 2018/19 Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern*, 2019, <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/27538>.

²⁴ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

²⁵ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, “Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.”

²⁶ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Climate Change and Land. An IPCC Special Report on Climate Change, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems. Summary for Policymakers.”

²⁷ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

global gross domestic product by 2060.²⁸ Any further progression of climate change increases risks, specifically those relating to eliminating poverty, hunger, health and well-being, and clean water.²⁹ Furthermore, current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystem integrity undermine progress towards Sustainable Development Goal targets related to poverty, hunger, health, water and cities.³⁰ ³¹ For example, animal pollination is critical to more than 75 per cent of food crops, including many fruits and vegetables and some of the most important cash crops of developing countries, such as coffee, cocoa and almonds.³² Loss of pollinators thus threatens an annual global commercial crop output between US\$235-577 billion.³³

2. **The trajectory of global environmental change is out of line with international goals.** While the world is on course to restore the Earth's protective upper ozone layer, the global community is failing to meet international environmental goals on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The Earth's mean surface temperature has already warmed by about 1°C above pre-industrial level. At the current rate of greenhouse gas emissions, it will likely reach a warming of 1.5°C in the early 2030s. With current pledges, the world is on a pathway to 3-4°C or even greater warming, but even that is dependent on current pledges being met.³⁴ The web of life on Earth is rapidly eroding. Most of the Sustainable Development Goal targets for life on land and in water will not be met. One million of the world's estimated eight million species of plants and animals, including insects, are threatened with extinction.³⁵
3. **Environmental degradation can be halted with an integrated focus on climate, biodiversity, chemicals, natural resources and pollution.** It is still technically possible to limit global mean temperature increase to well below 2°C if immediate and more ambitious actions to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases are taken by all countries. Measures adapting to and mitigating climate change are synergistic: the lower the degree of warming the less the need to adapt. The more efficient use of natural resources becomes, the less greenhouse gases are emitted across the entire economy.^{36,37} Biodiversity can only be conserved and restored by addressing the underlying indirect and direct drivers of change. The adverse effects of chemicals and waste pollution on the environment and human health can be substantially reduced through implementing existing international frameworks and strengthening the science-policy interface.

Negative impacts on human development, increasing inequality, and challenges to the multilateral order, risk diverting attention from the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

1. **The global macro-economic outlook has worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerating inequalities across the world and threatening to wipe out significant progress on**

²⁸ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *The Economic Consequences of Outdoor Air Pollution* (OECD, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264257474-en>.

²⁹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

³⁰ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, "Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services."

³¹ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Global Environment Outlook – GEO-6*.

³² Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, "Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services."

³³ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

³⁴ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Global Warming of 1.5°C*, 2018, <http://www.ipcc.ch/report/sr15/>.

³⁵ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, "Summary for Policymakers of the Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services."

³⁶ Edgar Hertwich et al., *Resource Efficiency and Climate Change: Material Efficiency Strategies for a Low-Carbon Future. A Report of the International Resource Panel* (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2020), <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.3542680>.

³⁷ International Resource Panel, *Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want*.

sustainable development. In its World Economic Outlook Update (June 2020), the International Monetary Fund projected global growth at -4.9 per cent in 2020 and predicted “a particularly acute negative impact of the pandemic on low-income households worldwide that could significantly raise inequality”. UNDP warned that global human development is set to decline in 2020 for the first time in 20 years.³⁸ ‘Building back better’ requires better measurement and management of assets that underpin human, environmental, institutional, and economic progress.

2. **Increasing socio-economic inequality and inequity is not only deepening divisions between the haves and have-nots, but there is greater concern of backsliding on poverty gains made over recent decades.** Even prior to COVID-19, it was estimated that inequality had been steadily increasing for more than 70 per cent of the global population,³⁹ exacerbating divisions between and within countries. Megatrends, or global forces such as technological innovation; urbanisation and migration; in addition to climate change; environmental degradation; and resource depletion, reinforce each other to exacerbate such inequality. Current modes of production and consumption, and associated levels of inequality, threatens the achievement of the entire 2030 Agenda.⁴⁰
3. **The poor, women and children, face increased vulnerability from environmental stresses that lead to intensifying competition for scarce natural resources and result in migration, instability, and conflict.** Globally, 24 per cent of the land is degrading and more than 1.5 billion people directly depend on these degrading lands, with 74 per cent of them living in poverty.⁴¹ Climate migrants comprise some of the world’s most vulnerable populations. By 2050, over 143 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America – comprising 2.8 per cent of the population of these regions, will have become internal migrants. A major cause of that will be a result of various climatic impacts.⁴²
4. **Establishing more sustainable consumption and production patterns, at local, national, regional and global levels is key to reducing inequality and protecting the environment.** Resource extraction and processing create more than 50 per cent of global climate change impacts, and over 90 per cent of global biodiversity loss.⁴³ Yet, Sustainable Development Goal target 12.2 on sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources is on a long-term negative trend.⁴⁴ Indicators of resource consumption established for Sustainable Development Goal targets 12.2 and 8.4 on material footprint and domestic material consumption continue to rise at the global level.⁴⁵ This indicates that the rate at which materials are being extracted globally is outpacing both population and economic growth.⁴⁶ Reversing this trend requires transforming how we produce,

³⁸ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery* (UNDP, 2020), <http://hdr.undp.org/en/hdp-covid>.

³⁹ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), *World Social Report: Inequality in a Rapidly Changing World*. (New York: United Nations, 2020).

⁴⁰ Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future Is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Nations, 2019), <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/gedr2019>.

⁴¹ Aderita Sena, “Land under Pressure – Health under Stress. Global Land Outlook Working Paper” (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), August 2019), <https://knowledge.unccd.int/publication/land-under-pressure-health-under-stress>.

⁴² Kanta Kumari Rigaud et al., *Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration* (Washington, D.C: World Bank Group, 2018).

⁴³ International Resource Panel, *Global Resources Outlook 2019: Natural Resources for the Future We Want*.

⁴⁴ Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future Is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*.

⁴⁵ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs* (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2019), <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/measuring-progress-towards-achieving-environmental-dimension-sdgs>.

⁴⁶ Independent Group of Scientists appointed by the Secretary-General, *Global Sustainable Development Report 2019: The Future Is Now – Science for Achieving Sustainable Development*.

process and use and manage natural resources in our socio-economic systems, and how we design and implement national fiscal and economic policies. Prioritizing resource-intensive sectors for the shift to sustainable consumption and production could achieve very significant gains, often over a short period. For example, agriculture, food and beverage, and the building and construction sectors accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the world's total material footprint in 2015.⁴⁷

5. **Gender equality and a rights-based approach are key to ending all forms of discrimination and ensuring progress towards environmental sustainability.**⁴⁸ Climate change and the population crisis is not gender-neutral. A high and uneven burden is carried by women, who comprise 80 per cent of those displaced by climate change.⁴⁹ Women of child-bearing age and children are especially vulnerable. Women are responsible for 60-80 per cent of food production in developing countries.⁵⁰ However, women, are often excluded from land ownership and decisions as prevailing laws and customary practices in half of the world's countries restrict their right to access land.⁵¹ Women and children are often employed in the informal sector with higher exposure to risky jobs, such as artisanal mining or waste collection. This inequality is further compounded by a low level of political representation, with only 25 per cent of parliamentary seats in governments around the world held by women.⁵² A stocktaking of the Beijing Declaration, 25 years after its adoption, reveals that “major gaps remain and that obstacles, including structural barriers, discriminatory practices and the feminization of poverty, persist.”⁵³ Estimates indicate that it will take on average, another century to achieve gender parity globally. Indigenous populations constitute another group that, while comprising less than 6 per cent of the world's population, are known for stewarding 80 per cent of the world's biodiversity through traditional ecological knowledge.⁵⁴ Indigenous people can also contribute to climate solutions, through traditional knowledge, legal systems and cultures.⁵⁵
6. **Seventy-five years on from the signing of the UN Charter, the importance of environmental multilateralism remains as crucial as ever.** Global challenges, such as the climate emergency, high pollution levels, nature destruction, and the COVID-19 pandemic are clear signs of the need to champion environmental stewardship and cooperation. In its economic outlook for 2020, the UN warned of geopolitical risks: “amid a weakening commitment to multilateralism – whether in the economic or political arena— the capacity of the international community to contain and resolve conflicts has decreased.”⁵⁶ Reinvigorating multilateralism is essential to achieve the 2030 Agenda. An important milestone will be reached in 2025 when the UN turns 80 and this medium-term strategy comes to an end. This opportunity must be seized.

⁴⁷ Data source: the hotspot analysis tool for sustainable consumption and production, <http://scp-hat.lifecycleinitiative.org>

⁴⁸ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2020* (WEF, 2019), <https://www.weforum.org/reports/gender-gap-2020-report-100-years-pay-equality>.

⁴⁹ Senay Habtezion, “Overview of Linkages between Gender and Climate Change. Policy Brief” (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2016), <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/gender-and-climate-change.html>.

⁵⁰ Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), “Quick Guide to What and How: Increasing Women's Access to Land” (Sida, September 2009), <https://www.sida.se/English/publications/111176/quick-guide-to-what-and-how-increasing-womens-access-to-land/>.

⁵¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), “Social Institutions & Gender Index: 2014 Synthesis Report” (OECD, 2014), <http://www.oecd.org/development/gender-development/BrochureSIGI2015-web.pdf>.

⁵² Małgorzata Druciarek, “Women in Parliament: 1995–2020 - 25 Years in Review” (Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), 2020), <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2020-03/women-in-parliament-1995-2020-25-years-in-review>.

⁵³ Commission on the Status of Women, “Political Declaration on the Occasion of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. Document E/CN.6/2020/L.1” (United Nations, March 2020), <https://undocs.org/en/E/CN.6/2020/L.1>.

⁵⁴ World Economic Forum, *Global Gender Gap Report 2020*.

⁵⁵ David R. Boyd, “Safe Climate. A Report of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment. Document A/74/161” (Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), July 2019), <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Environment/SREnvironment/Pages/SafeClimate.aspx>.

⁵⁶ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2020* (New York: United Nations, 2020), <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-2020/>.

Seizing the opportunity to strengthen the UN Development System Reform through increased access and use of environmental data, and ensuring that the digital revolution helps deliver, not hinder, the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.

1. **UN Development System Reform provides the framework for integrated policy guidance and technical support to countries to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and realize the promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.** This means a greater opportunity to of working with our UN partners to enhance environmental sustainability through cutting edge scientific analysis in support of Member States and creating the enabling conditions to fulfil the aspirations of Paragraph 88 of “*The future we want.*” Coordinated work across the UN on Common Country Analyses and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks through the UN Country Teams, has already demonstrated the importance of integrating the environment in Sustainable Development Goal analyses and implementation.
2. **High-quality, credible, and relevant environmental data, information, statistics, assessments and expertise are critical to support integration efforts across the UN system as well as at national and regional levels.** In addition to contributing to the delivery of the Secretary-General’s Data Strategy for 2020-2022,⁵⁷ options for ensuring stronger integration of environmental data and analysis include: 1) engaging in the One UN development and better use of statistics and accounting, including those generated under multilateral environmental agreements, to promote sustainable development; 2) enhancing, through the Environmental Management Group, multilateral environmental agreements and multi-agency collaboration, environmental indicators and monitoring and scaling-up actions informed by environmental statistics and science, including integrated analyses across the three pillars of sustainable development; 3) working with multilateral environmental agreement secretariats and other multilateral platforms to promote coherence among Sustainable Development Goals and multilateral environmental agreements on indicator methodologies and analysis; and 4) bolstering engagement with UN Country Teams to inform Common Country Analysis on which UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks are built.
3. **Institutions, at every level, need to keep pace with the speed and scale of technological innovation in the digital space.** The digitalization of society and economy, encompassing *inter alia*, advances in artificial intelligence, offers a massive opportunity to build greater environmental sustainability, resilience, and transparency. It is changing many aspects of our lives, in both developed and developing countries, and will require enhanced cooperation across the UN and beyond.⁵⁸ A digital divide exists, however, with 86.9 per cent of the population using the Internet in developed countries compared to 19.1 per cent in Least Developed Countries. In addition, the Internet user gender gap for Least Developed Countries stands at 42.8 per cent in 2019 (compared to 17 per cent globally).⁵⁹ Globally, digital technology is moving faster than society’s ability to govern it. There is a growing understanding that beyond the technological revolution is a societal leap. Power, trust, and democratic institutions are shifting in many directions simultaneously. Full transparency on the environmental and carbon footprints of different goods and services, as well as

⁵⁷ United Nations, “Data Strategy of the Secretary General: For Action by Everyone, Everywhere with Insight, Impact and Integrity. 2020-2022” (United Nations, June 2020), <https://www.un.org/en/content/datastrategy/index.shtml>.

⁵⁸ United Nations, “Report of the Secretary-General: Roadmap for Digital Cooperation” (United Nations, June 2020), <https://www.un.org/en/content/digital-cooperation-roadmap/>.

⁵⁹ International Telecommunication Union (ITU), *Measuring Digital Development: Facts and Figures 2019* (Geneva, Switzerland: International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2019).

the environmental performance of companies, governments, and citizens is now within reach, but requires further efforts in the targeted dissemination of these key data. Environmental data and analytics should inform economic and social decision-making to deliberately pursue sustainability and resilience. Moreover, access to environmental data and information on environmental changes is paramount for sound environmental governance, and the participation of communities and disadvantaged groups. This facilitates informed and equitable decision-making, aimed at including those currently at risk of being left behind.

Building on the Past for Higher Performance in the Future -- *Lessons Learned*

UNEP strives for continuous improvement and follows an adaptive management model that is constantly refreshed through exhaustive monitoring and evaluation of its performance.

The medium-term strategy is built on UNEP's Transformation Process. In 2019, UNEP launched a transformation process to become more results-focused and effective in delivering its mandate. This process has resulted in a shift in UNEP's organizational capabilities and identity to deliver more impactful results. This strategy also builds on lessons learned, opportunities and recommendations for improvement from UNEP's transformation process, as well as a blend of internal and external reviews and audits, including from the previous medium-term strategy periods,⁶⁰ as defined below:

1. Investing in staff for a sustainable organizational change.⁶¹

Promoting and enforcing changes in individual attitudes and behaviors and creating channels to communicate feedback across all staff is key to a successful application of change management.⁶²

In response, UNEP will continue to build a healthy, results and performance-driven organization by tapping into the expertise and knowledge of staff to forge new forms of behavior, while building collaborative teams at all levels and developing a strategic, more collaborative leadership that targets resources on agreed priorities. Building on a diagnosis of the cultural and behavioral traits in the organization, UNEP will invest in training staff towards the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that can support a more coherent internal delivery of the organization's aspirations under this Strategy. Building stronger supervisory and peer support systems will ensure that these learnings translate into long-term capacities and ultimately improved day-to-day work routines that attest to a cultural transformation in the organization for enhanced outcomes.

2. Getting gender right: Increased responsiveness to human rights and gender equality.⁶³

Despite appointing gender focal points and introducing responsiveness to human rights and gender equity as a standalone project evaluation criteria in 2018, UNEP's performance on the delivery of gender and human rights outcomes at project level remains weak.⁶⁴ UNEP already takes part in the UN Sector Wide Approach on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and has met 12 of its 15 Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women indicators.⁶⁵ But this is not enough. UNEP will work to fully implement UNEA/4 Resolution 4/17, "Promoting gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance."⁶⁶ UNEP will fully support member states in their implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 5 in the context of the

⁶⁰ United Nations Environment Programme, Evaluation Synthesis Report 2018-2019, <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32007/Agenda%20Item%204%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

⁶¹ Review of change management in United Nations system organizations – Report of the Joint Inspection Unit, 2019 https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_4_english.pdf

⁶² Review of change management in United Nations system organizations – Report of the Joint Inspection Unit, 2019 https://www.unjiu.org/sites/www.unjiu.org/files/jiu_rep_2019_4_english.pdf

⁶³ United Nations Environment Programme, Evaluation Synthesis Report 2018-2019, <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32007/Agenda%20Item%204%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

⁶⁴ United Nations Environment Programme, Evaluation Synthesis Report 2018-2019, <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/32007/Agenda%20Item%204%20Evaluation%20Report.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

⁶⁵ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁶⁶ UNEP/EA.4/Res.17, <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28481/English.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y>

environment, calling for women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of environmental decision-making. UNEP’s focus will be on operationalizing gender and human rights dimensions and non-discrimination issues in programme and project design. But UNEP will move beyond applying a gender lens, towards ensuring that gender equality and human rights perspectives are fully embedded and integrated with associated commitments and indicators. Linkages between gender indicators and gender-disaggregated data and policy recommendations will be created as well as gender informed feedback loops and reinforcing monitoring frameworks, while collecting good practices that can be shared at the wider UN level.

UNEP will invest in enhancing staff abilities, including with the multilateral environmental agreements, to better understand, implement, monitor and analyze gender and human rights, intersectional gender, and non-discrimination issues, and integrate related objectives in UNEP’s analytical and operational work. Moving beyond project design and monitoring, UNEP will provide programme and project implementation support to ensure gender issues are integrated across the programme cycle, not just in design, but throughout project lifecycle, including implementation, project evaluation and feedback loops for continuous improvement.

3. Securing a stronger organizational design for collective accountability.⁶⁷

Accountability is critical to efficient and transparent operations, including in cooperation and coordination with the multilateral environmental agreements.⁶⁸ In response, UNEP will review its organizational design, including management roles and responsibilities between its Divisions and Regional Offices to ensure a solid alignment with the priorities outlined in this strategy. As part of this process, UNEP will place emphasis on improving task assignment and implementation for senior managers towards a more cohesive, inclusive and better performance. In pursuit of the UN Management Reforms, UNEP will also improve internal quality, controls and compliance for higher performance. To that end, UNEP will upgrade and improve its standards for internal controls and management, providing oversight, identifying opportunities for greater efficiency, and ensuring compliance with UN Regulations and Rules, including on Enterprise Risk Management.

4. Increasing focus on management for results.⁶⁹

UNEP recognizes that the continuing transition to results-based management is as much a transformation of the institution’s internal culture as it is a management issue. The use of data, monitoring and evaluation is a critical tool for decision-making.⁷⁰ In response, UNEP will enhance its internal capacity to deliver results and develop indicators that are aligned with organizational objectives to reflect true transformational change. UNEP will engage in a project cycle reform, invest in human resources and build capacity through customized and in-house training and the establishment of technical networks across the organization that can support programme delivery while developing “best in class” fiduciary and governance standards that build on enterprise risk management tools. As indicated in UNEP’s programme of work, UNEP will use Sustainable Development Goal indicators or internationally agreed environmental indicators, as much as possible, in its results framework to

⁶⁷ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁶⁸ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁶⁹ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme - Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁷⁰ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme - Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

increase ambition. Furthermore, UNEP will strive to monitor change over a longer term rather than a single biennium and the four years of this strategy. To that end, UNEP will employ impact metrics with project performance dashboards and cross-project leaderboards to gauge effectiveness, applying the concept of “product-market” to assess the level of uptake of its products and services. Projects that cannot demonstrate an impact in key metrics after a prescribed period and a series of iterations will be closed. UNEP will also seek to monitor and report on key digital metrics including social media (e.g., engagement, reach, referral and conversion rates), platform performance (e.g., unique users, new and returning users, session pages and duration, downloads and application programming interface calls) and uptake (e.g., references, use of data, application in policy design and implementation, media coverage).

5. Mobilizing resources and leveraging partnerships to enhance efficiency.⁷¹

Securing contributions to the Environment Fund, or funding that is only softly earmarked is indispensable for UNEP to be equipped to deliver on the priorities agreed by Member States, while demonstrating tangible results.⁷² Efforts by UNEP to widen and secure the resource base for the execution of this Strategy, both by UNEP directly and by its partners, need to be sustained. UNEP needs to define its comparative advantage and funding needs strategically, for both core and earmarked funding, and to comprehensively look at the landscape for potential funding sources, but also engage in strategic and innovative approaches to resource mobilization.⁷³ In response, UNEP will update its 2017 Resource Mobilization Strategy to reflect the recent decisions of the UN Environment Assembly, as well as prepare a fully-fledged implementation plan for the strategy with timelines and related resources. UNEP will also revise its Partnership Strategy to ensure a stronger pursuit of its comparative advantage that matches an increased resource ambition vis-à-vis the delivery of its strategic priorities.

3) A Medium-term Strategy for the Decade of Action

UNEP’s Vision for Agenda 2030 -- 2025 takes us halfway there

The situation analysis provides clear evidence that the world is facing three major environmental challenges: climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – largely driven by human activity through population pressure and policies and practices which drive unsustainable consumption and production.

Global challenges – multilateral solutions. The United Nations Secretary-General has stressed that as “we enter a Decade of Action on the Sustainable Development Goals we have to convince people that the United Nations is relevant to all and that multilateralism offers real solutions to global challenges.”⁷⁴ UNEP will step up to this challenge, and seize the opportunity provided by the Decade of Action to play a central role in shaping a more balanced, equitable and sustainable future for all, one where the environment is at the centre of political and economic decision-making.

⁷¹ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme - Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁷² Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme - Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁷³ Evaluation of the United Nations Environment Programme - Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, 2019: <https://oios.un.org/file/7751/download?token=F8yoCEm6>

⁷⁴ Secretary-General, Opening General Assembly Session <https://www.un.org/press/en/2019/sgsm19746.doc.htm>

This medium-term strategy will be the next step for UNEP towards achieving a global 2050 vision of:

Planetary sustainability for people, prosperity and equity

where

Net zero carbon emissions and resilience towards climate change are achieved, humanity prospers in harmony with nature and pollution is prevented and controlled, while ensuring good environmental quality and improved health and well-being for all.

Central to UNEP’s vision and contribution to the Decade of Action, will be the following strategic approaches:

1. **UNEP will support an integrated and balanced implementation of the 2030 Agenda.** UNEP will continue to build the capacity of Member States and partners to integrate the environment into all aspects of sustainable development, leveraging interactions and co-benefits among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Promoting integrated approaches to planning and implementation will be critical to ensuring that environmental perspectives are incorporated into country plans and policies and that connections are made with other development objectives, such as human rights, gender equality, economic growth, and employment.
2. **UNEP will strengthen institutional capacity for gender-responsive programme delivery.** Gender equality is a multiplier and crosscutting factor of sustainability and an effective and efficient way to address poverty, health, food security and access to energy among, other development objectives. In the period 2022-2025, UNEP will leverage the opportunities provided by the Sustainable Development Goals to strengthen institutional capacity among policy makers, UNEP staff and key partners to develop and implement gender responsive policies and strategies. UNEP will enable accessibility to information by stakeholders and government partners; development and implementation of gender-responsive, environmental policies and strategies; and strengthened strategic partnerships with key partners to secure commitments and prompt collective gender transformative actions to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. **UNEP will deliver transformational results.** UNEP will align its planning and action with the 2030 Agenda and aspire to deliver long-term, transformational impacts beyond the four-years covered by this strategy. UNEP will identify the key transformative actions for the environment that address the drivers of the desired systemic changes that lie at the heart of sustainable development. UNEP will then target these drivers through leveraging a “networked multilateralism” that demonstrates impact and scale, bringing together the UN system, regional organisations, international financial institutions and other key players.⁷⁵ To achieve focus, UNEP will develop a typology of projects that meet the following principles:
 - Alignment to UNEP’s core mandate areas and focus on the delivery of this Strategy with high expectations of outcomes that lead to transformative change.
 - Delivery on multiple Sustainable Development Goals, spanning the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, as well as other internationally

⁷⁵ Secretary General’s Opening remarks to the Press on the launch of the UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-06-25/remarks-press-launch-of-un-comprehensive-response-covid-19>

agreed environmental goals, while connecting to multiple United Nations Environment Assembly Resolutions.

- Demonstration of new and/or innovative concepts, with a potential ‘leapfrog’ under a clear vision that can ‘shift the needle’ while connecting and capitalizing on the diverse expertise of external partners that contribute to joint development, staffing financing and implementation.
 - Demonstration of value for money through an optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes.
4. **UNEP will provide a clear “line-of-sight” for its delivery of Agenda 2030 from the global environmental goals to regional and national action.** UNEP will pursue the global aspirations of the Sustainable Development Goals while delivering support in response to national needs and realities and taking account of differing regional integration processes, capacities, and levels of development. Through its regional offices, UNEP will increase its strategic engagement with regional interagency mechanisms, including Regional Commissions and fora on sustainable development, the UN Regional Collaborative Platform,⁷⁶ and issue-based coalitions. This will ensure increased consensus and better institutional coherence on sustainable development, while increasing the delivery of a common UN approach to regional Sustainable Development Goal priorities.
 5. **UNEP will make full use of the UN Development System reform to extend its reach as the global environmental authority to support all member states in their pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.** Working with and through its sister UN agencies, UNEP will support UN Country Teams, providing environmental data and analysis such that Common Country Analyses have environmental science at their foundation. UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks will then likewise include strong environmental components giving a focus for the entire UN System to support the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
 6. **UNEP will pursue collective action on environmental sustainability, resilience and environmental risk across all aspects of the UN charter, including peace and security, human rights and sustainable development.** The UN leadership collectively decided to “develop a common approach to integrating biodiversity and nature-based solutions for sustainable development into the UN’s policy and programme planning and delivery.”⁷⁷ UNEP will leverage this collective interagency effort to support the systemic changes that will enable the UN secretariat, agencies, funds and programmes to make significant progress on the climate, nature and pollution agendas.
 7. **UNEP will strengthen south-south and triangular cooperation⁷⁸ to enable all Member States to progress towards environmental sustainability.** UNEP will promote south-south and

⁷⁶ “UN Regional Collaborative Platform” (RCP will absorb existing, duplicative coordination mechanisms to foster collaboration on sustainable development across UN development system entities operating at the regional level (ECOSOC resolution E/RES/2019/15)

⁷⁷ <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2020-05-14/note-correspondents-the-virtual-meeting-of-the-chief-executives-board>

⁷⁸ South-South cooperation is “a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical know-how, and through regional and interregional collective actions, including partnerships involving Governments, regional organisations, civil society, academia and the private sector, for their [...] mutual benefit within and across regions”. Triangular cooperation “involves Southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country(ies) or multilateral organisation(s) to implement cooperation programmes and projects” (as defined in the Framework of operational guidelines on United Nations support to South-South and triangular cooperation, 2016).

triangular cooperation across its policy, programming and partnership activities.⁷⁹ Through continued engagement with the UN Office for South-South Cooperation and other multilateral system entities, government and non-government organizations, UNEP will strengthen regional engagement and inter-agency linkages to more closely monitor and follow up on strategic and political issues related to south-south and triangular cooperation, including in support of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries.⁸⁰

8. **UNEP will work to “leave no one behind”, while increasing its focus on the special needs of disaster and conflict-affected states...** UNEP will address the special needs of Least Developed Countries, Land-Locked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, facilitating access to finance, technology and innovative solutions to help them build more inclusive economies and societies, in a post-COVID-19 world. In its contribution, UNEP will channel the voices of those most vulnerable to environmental degradation, including women, indigenous peoples and their communities, children and youth.

... with special attention to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. By focusing on the special needs of countries that are vulnerable or affected by disaster and conflicts, UNEP will assist Member States in the full implementation of the Sendai Framework. UNEP will assist UN peacekeeping, peacebuilding, humanitarian and political missions where dedicated expertise and solutions on environmental dimensions to a crisis are required. In this context, UNEP will support capacities for early warning and early action, including through increasing the understanding of the interlinkages between climate change, natural resource extraction, security and migration, for better prevention and preparedness. UNEP will also engage in emergency and short- to medium-term post-crisis support, assisting Member States with integrating environmental considerations into oversight, assessment and planning for better response and recovery.

4) UNEP’s focus: Thematic, Foundational and Enabling programmes for increased ambition

Three planetary crises – three strategic objectives. In the four-year period covered by this strategy, UNEP will articulate its 2050 vision through developing responses and deploying solutions that aspire to achieve three strategic objectives:

1. Climate stability,
2. Living in harmony with nature, and
3. Achieving a pollution-free planet.

Three principal areas of action... In response to the findings of the situation analysis, UNEP will tackle three planetary crises, through three thematic subprogrammes: **Climate Action, Nature Action and Chemicals and Pollution Action** (Figure 1). Cognizant that these areas are strongly interconnected by several nexus issues that cut across all of them, UNEP’s programme of work (ref. Annex 1) outlines the organization’s approach to these issues, with the aim of ensuring the delivery of multiple benefits and mutual outcomes that contribute to its vision for planetary sustainability, human health and wellbeing.

⁷⁹ UNEP’s Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, adopted in March 2020, will serve as the guiding framework for all of UNEP’s activities on SSCT during the decade 2020-2030.

⁸⁰ Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), adopted by the United Nations Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries, 1978.

...underpinned by two “foundational subprogrammes.” To reverse climate change, halt the degradation of nature and arrest pollution, UNEP will draw on its core competencies, basing all actions on the prevailing science, while drawing on its skills in environmental law and governance. UNEP will step up delivery of its core mandate -- catalyzing actions outlined through two Foundational subprogrammes: Science-Policy and Environmental Governance. Since 1972, when UNEP was created, environmental science and environmental law have been critical and constant pillars of UNEP’s work, underpinning and informing engagements and actions in all other related areas of action. The focus on institutions, governance and the law remains a priority when addressing environmental challenges and all actions taken in the three areas must be informed by science.

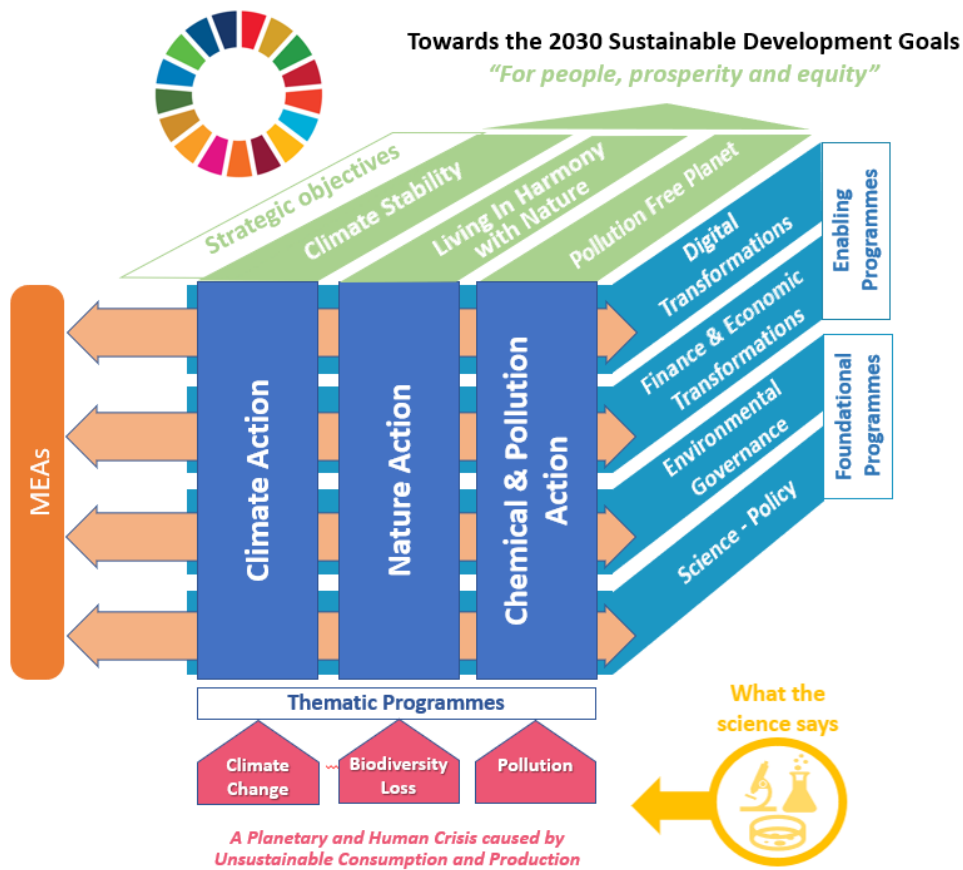
...and facilitated by two “enabling subprogrammes”. Environmental governance and science alone will not enable the shifts and transformation that are demanded to reach a more sustainable pollution-free future in which nature and climate are stabilized. Indeed, it is abundantly clear that engagement with finance and business practices to deliver more sustainable patterns of consumption and production will be key to reaching agenda 2030. This shift will be at the centre of the **Finance and Economic Transformations** enabling subprogramme. In parallel, and as the world sees ever increasing connectivity, digitalization will become key to systematize, integrate and democratize environmental data, knowledge and insight for new collaboration opportunities and enhanced impact. This will be the focus of the **Digital Transformations** enabling subprogramme.

Overall, to deliver on the 2030 Agenda all seven subprogrammes will adopt a three-pronged approach:

1. apply cutting edge scientific advances in data collection;
2. work with relevant partners from science, industry, investors, indigenous peoples, vulnerable groups, other non-government actors and policymakers; and
3. work across regions, countries, cities and subnational levels to strengthen and reinvent governance and norms.

Collaboration with the multilateral environmental agreements will be central to all actions across UNEP’s subprogrammes to secure stronger synergies and enhance impact. Multilateral environmental agreements play a critical role in the overall framework of environmental laws and conventions. Complementing national legislation and bilateral or regional agreements, multilateral environmental agreements form the overarching international legal basis for global efforts to address environmental issues. Partnership with the multilateral environmental agreements will continue to be a critical cornerstone of how UNEP will support countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

Figure 1: UNEP’s Medium-term Strategy for 2022-2025 – on the road to 2030



I) Thematic Subprogrammes

Climate Action

Achieving long-term climate stability will depend on unprecedented changes in how we produce and consume goods and services and manage our ecosystems. A transition towards climate stability,

in line with the sustainable development goals and the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement requires that:

- By 2025, all fossil fuel subsidies and other climate-damaging incentives are redirected towards sustainable energy sources, creating a level playing field for a clean energy transition that can contribute to energy sector carbon neutrality by 2050 at the latest.
- By 2025, the world has fully harnessed climate benefits from resource and energy efficiency measures in all major resource and energy-intensive sectors of the economy.
- By 2025, the role of nature for climate change solutions has been fully reflected in all countries' level of climate ambition.
- By 2025, countries have increasingly invested to adapt to and protect their populations from unavoidable climate change, particularly in the developing world.
- By 2025, all countries' mitigation and adaptation actions are on track to meet the long-term goal of the Paris Agreement in line with the latest science.
- By 2025, the world is on track to meet the long-term finance goal of the Paris Agreement.

A clear focus on the Paris Agreement. In line with the Paris Agreement, the subprogramme will work towards “holding the increase in global average temperatures to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C” and “increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development”.

To help cut emissions and adapt to climate change, UNEP will facilitate stronger interactions between science, policy, finance and the economy. UNEP will build public support for market and political strategies and decisions that are compatible with the latest scientific information, including social sciences, and promote sustainable consumption and production to achieve the largest impacts on mitigating climate change and increasing resilience. Engagement of the finance industry will be key to shift public and private investments towards sustainable choices and business models that are adequately incentivized to support the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNEP will advocate for a rapid and comprehensive decarbonization. UNEP's efforts will follow a value chain and multisectoral approach that advocates for the deployment of timely renewable energy and energy efficiency solutions at all geographic levels; halting deforestation and habitat loss; restoring degraded ecosystems and changing the way we produce and consume food; transitioning to the circular economy and higher resource efficiency; and redesigning our cities and transport sectors.

Focus on those that can contribute to the highest impact. UNEP will help all countries raise the level of their mitigation ambition, with a focus on high-emitting countries. In parallel, UNEP will continue to engage in adaptation action, while integrating aspects of human health and security, providing support particularly to the countries that are most vulnerable and in need, such as disaster- and conflict-affected countries, Least Developed Countries, and Small-island Developing States. This approach will run in parallel to the collective aspirations included in the Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Strategies under the Paris Agreement.

Tangible results through partnerships and integrated approaches. UNEP will channel and scale up its actions through networks and partnerships, such as the Global Environment Facility, the Financial Mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Green Climate Fund, as well as the Climate Technology Center and Network – the technology mechanism of the of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change -- for increased impact. Working across the wider UN system for better

synergies, including with UN Country Teams and other UN agencies, UNEP's climate actions will follow an integrated approach that links the environment to the development, humanitarian, peace and security pillars of the work of the United Nations.

The **Climate Action** subprogramme will focus on interconnected actions and interventions to achieve two 2025 outcomes:

Outcome 1: Decision makers at all levels adopt decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience pathways.

- **In collaboration with its networks,⁸¹ UNEP will encourage countries to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by decarbonization, dematerialization and resilience and link them to higher climate aspirations.** UNEP will focus on high-emitting sectors,⁸² based on the latest scientific evidence of their share of national emissions and role in ensuring resilience of the socioeconomic fabric. UNEP will design and target action in these sectors through fostering action-oriented partnerships, including private sector alliances, and promoting the uptake at country level of sustainable solutions ranging from nature-based solutions to sustainable technologies and dematerialization practices. Special focus will be placed on supporting an evidence-based introduction and uptake of new technologies, including digital technologies, for their integration into sectoral and national policies and decisions. UNEP will work towards securing that countries embed these opportunities in their climate aspirations for higher impact, linking them to adjustments in the policy and regulatory frameworks that inform their Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Strategies, as well as their climate adaptation planning (e.g., early warning systems).
- **UNEP will catalyze public support and political will for climate action.** UNEP will be an advocate for societal change that brings climate-positive outcomes. Changing consumer behavior and generating science-driven public support for ambitious climate advocacy will be central to UNEP's focus. UNEP will continue to function as a link between policymakers and the public, leveraging the One Planet Network for communicating the benefits of using sustainable products and adopting sustainable lifestyles, while making the economic case for it.⁸³ Securing public access to environmental information and increasing public awareness through formal and non-formal education, youth-led action and grassroots campaigns will be key levers of change that will enable UNEP to shift knowledge and attitudes across society.
- **UNEP will accelerate the alignment of private and public finance with the long-term finance goals of the Paris Agreement.** UNEP will advocate the adoption of sustainable business and market models that can support a strategic shift towards low-carbon and resilient pathways in private and public sector investments and long-term planning across all sectors. Leveraging its partnerships and multi-stakeholder platforms, UNEP will accelerate design and implementation of public policies and fiscal incentives to address climate risks and impacts, within the scope of an investment environment that is conducive towards the goals of the Paris Agreement. This will be crucial to ensure that private sector actors gain a sight of policy

⁸¹ UNEP supports several networks and partnerships across science (e.g., World Adaptation Science Programme), technology (Climate Technology Centre and Network), finance (Net-Zero Asset Owners Alliance), as well as all key sectors e.g., United for Efficiency, Cool Coalition, Sustainable Rice Platform, UN-REDD Programme, Partnership for Clean Fuels, and Global Alliance on Buildings and Constructions. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, led by UNEP and FAO, will be a key platform for advancing nature-based solutions to climate change. The full range of current and future partnerships will be described in the Programme of Work and in-depth operational strategies.

⁸² Including but not limited to energy, industry, agriculture, forestry, transport, buildings, and finance.

⁸³ The One Planet Network is an open multistakeholder partnership hosted by UNEP that aims to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production in both developed and developing countries and implement SDG 12 under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (10YFP), <https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/>

changes, standards and norms to level the playing field to enable the transition to low-carbon, resilient business models. Providing reliable, accessible, state-of-the-art environmental information that reduces uncertainty and risk in decision-making will continue to be a central asset to UNEP's intervention.

Outcome 2: Global climate transparency and accountability are enhanced.

- **In collaboration with its networks and partners, including the GEF, UNEP will help countries meet their transparency obligations under the UNFCCC and operationalize the Enhanced Transparency Framework established under the Paris Agreement.**⁸⁴ UNEP will capitalize on its role of data-driven authority to provide support to national institutions in tracking and reporting on their climate actions, including through the development of greenhouse gas inventories, mapping progress towards their Nationally Determined Contributions and adaptation actions, as well as tracking financial support provided and mobilized. The enhancement of existing national arrangements and sharpening of related regulatory frameworks will be central to these actions. Synergies will be pursued with global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, including the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, to facilitate coordination and complementarity between the respective reporting obligations and contribute to greater coherence in tracking progress on implementing their decisions.
- **UNEP will facilitate interinstitutional collection, sharing and validation of climate-related knowledge at the national and subnational level.** UNEP will contribute to building trust amongst the sectoral Ministries that hold stakes in the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions while also securing greater involvement of subnational authorities in knowledge and data sharing and related decision-making, to facilitate synergies and harmonize efforts.
- **UNEP will assist countries in assessing and better reporting on their climate-related national capabilities and circumstances,** including their capacity building and technology needs and areas for improvement, especially for Least Developed Countries and Small-island Developing States, as well as related finance, investment and trade trends.
- **Through its networks and partners, UNEP will encourage non-government stakeholders, including the private sector and finance community, to increase coherence and transparency in the reporting of their climate actions.** This will contribute to increasing global confidence in the adoption of business models and market decisions towards decarbonization and resilience pathways.
- **UNEP will help countries measure progress towards decarbonization and resilience for stronger engagement in the global stocktake process.**⁸⁵ UNEP will provide the best available scientific information and best practice to guide countries towards effectively assessing progress and evaluating the need for enhanced action and financial support to ratchet up the level of their climate ambition. Through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Resource Panel, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity

⁸⁴ Article 13 of the Paris Agreement established an enhanced transparency framework to guide countries on reporting their greenhouse gas emissions, progress toward their NDCs, climate change impacts and adaptation, support provided and mobilized, and support needed and received. The enhanced transparency framework also includes processes for technical experts to review reported information and a multilateral peer review where countries can ask questions of one another.

⁸⁵ Article 14 of the Paris Agreement established the global stocktake as its key ambition mechanism. Every five years, countries will engage in the process to assess collective progress toward the Agreement's long-term goals. This stocktaking process is aimed at informing the next round of NDCs in order to increase their level of ambition; it also offers the opportunity to evaluate the need for enhanced action and support.

and Ecosystem Services and its flagship reports (e.g., Emissions Gap Report), UNEP will deploy the latest up-to-date, state-of-the-art compilation of climate change metrics and sectoral knowledge. This can support country engagement in the global stocktake with a view to increasing compliance with the Paris Agreement in a more transparent way. To that end, UNEP will facilitate dialogue between government actors and non-government stakeholders, including subnational authorities, business and civil society to add value, increase accuracy, accountability and relevance of the information collected and shared by decision makers. Guided by the need to ensure greater climate ambition in line with the aspirations of the Nationally Determined Contributions and Long-Term Strategies, UNEP will also focus on increasing country capacities to use climate change information in development planning and investment decisions and monitor climate finance trends as pathways towards increasing ambition.

Nature Action

Nature underpins the functions and health of the planet and thereby the existence and health of humankind.

Progress toward “Living in harmony with nature”, means “biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.”⁸⁶ This same objective will also remain the long-term objective of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.⁸⁷ Dependency on biodiversity and ecosystems, including for food, fibre, water, medicines and human health, climate regulation, and protection from extreme events, has been outlined clearly by Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Global Environmental Outlook, International Resource Panel and other assessments. Equally, the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation undermines the resilience of our economy and many critical product value chains and ultimately may reverse progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and human well-being.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the expected 2030 outcome of the subprogramme is that recovery of nature is ensured and is contributing positively to human well-being.

UNEP will respond to country’s priorities to achieve sustainability and their associated capacity needs to value, conserve, restore, and safely use nature, delivering benefits that are essential for all people. A transition towards living in harmony with nature requires that:

- By 2025, the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is taken on board in national planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting processes.
- By 2025, biodiversity is mainstreamed⁸⁸ for sustainable development and Integrated with other key areas and sectors (e.g., food and agriculture, sustainable forest management and zero

⁸⁶ Convention of Biological Diversity, 2010, Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, COP decision X/2, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-10/cop-10-dec-02-en.pdf>

⁸⁷ Convention on Biological Diversity, 2018, Comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, COP decision 14/34, <https://www.cbd.int/doc/decisions/cop-14/cop-14-dec-34-en.pdf>

⁸⁸ Convention on Biological Diversity, 2018, Mainstreaming of Biodiversity Within and Across Sectors and Other Strategic Actions to Enhance Implementation <https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/f11a/7fda/2d33287489b726fd5c1150e4/sbi-02-04-en.pdf>

deforestation, health, infrastructure, trade, energy, finance, governance and justice) to realize multiple benefits and avoid negative impacts on nature.

- By 2025, significant actions are taken to reduce ecosystems degradation and build the resilience of landscapes and seascapes, with ecosystems also leveraged as a tool for disaster risk reduction and greater social resilience.
- By 2025, methodologies and tools to integrate biodiversity and ecosystems into financial decision-making are developed and made available for financial institutions to align their policies and investment portfolios with global biodiversity targets.

A pathway to living in harmony with nature. UNEP will focus on increasing ambitions, building broad-based support and partnerships for transformational change, strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks, and upscaling best practices. These will deliver science-based ‘nature-positive’ solutions across sectors to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, which are key to many economic activities and the provision of goods and services critical for human welfare. Together, these actions will set the world on a pathway to ensuring well-functioning ecosystems and environmental safeguards, poverty eradication, social resilience, green and decent job creation and a resilient economic and trade system that works in harmony with nature.

Impact and strength through partnerships. UNEP will strengthen its strategic partnerships with organizations at the global, regional, national and local levels to facilitate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the relevant multilateral environmental agreement decisions by Member States. UNEP will contribute data, knowledge and technical expertise to the UN Sustainable Development teams at the global, regional and national levels to integrate biodiversity and nature-based solutions in the planning and delivery of national sustainable development frameworks and Sustainable Development Goal strategies. This will include, among others, close collaboration with the secretariats of key multilateral environmental agreements, UNDP, FAO and WHO to deliver direct benefits for people and nature in Member States. This will include partnerships, investment in outreach and engagement with key stakeholders such as academia, civil society, consumers, women, youth, indigenous communities, technology providers and the private sector which will mobilize civil society support for the nature agenda. In supporting the humanitarian community and UN Country Teams, UNEP will work through its environmental emergency response partnership with the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. In the field of ocean governance, Regional Seas Programmes will continue to be UNEP’s delivery mechanism working also with other ecosystem-based organizations, such as regional fisheries bodies.

The Nature Action subprogramme will focus on interconnected actions and interventions to achieve three 2025 outcomes:

Outcome 1: Economically and socially sustainable pathway to “zero net loss” and “net gain” established.

- **UNEP will assist member States in developing integrated strategies to achieve a sustainable balance between human prosperity and the sustainability of the natural resource base underpinning socioeconomic development.** This will require deep transformations in our current economic systems, which currently privatize benefits while externalizing environmental costs, and contributing substantially to inequalities. UNEP will support these transformations by assisting member states in developing sustainable economic pathways that benefit both people and nature and through mobilizing public support for the

nature agenda. A recognition of the true value of Nature, as well as of the costs of its degradation are essential for real and necessary transformations to take place. UNEP will tailor tools and guidance for the valuation of natural capital, and the design and implementation of policies and practices supporting the shift to sustainable consumption and production. UNEP will also refine nationally relevant metrics for measuring inclusive wealth and promoting their use in development planning processes, with close reference to Sustainable Development Goal targets and indicators. UNEP will also assist countries in developing integrated national infrastructure plans that prioritize ecosystems and nature-based solutions, including natural infrastructure.

- **UNEP will develop and advocate for economic measures and incentives that address the drivers of biodiversity loss and promote sustainable and just economic activities that reduces inequalities.** UNEP will assist countries in developing biodiversity-based economies as important components of their national economic development that ensures sustainability, equitable benefit-sharing and which will build social resilience.
- **UNEP will support countries in developing the necessary policies, legislation and strategies to implement their respective obligations under the multilateral environmental agreements,** while strengthening national institutions and mechanisms to monitor and report on related progress.
- **UNEP will support social and behavioral change, sustainable education and youth-led action** with outreach campaigns and public engagement as well as by engaging with formal and non-formal education activities that shift knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and norms to address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss and the degradation of nature.
- **UNEP will assist the UN system entities to lead by example,** ensuring that its operations are conducted sustainably to disclose progress against key sustainability measures, including biodiversity performance metrics

Outcome 2: Sustainable management of Nature adopted and implemented in development frameworks.

- **UNEP will assist member states and support UN Country teams to ensure that nature is mainstreamed effectively into all key sectors, using a well-coordinated whole-of-government approach that balances the demands of different sectors.** The establishment of clear, integrated and well-funded strategies and development plans, supported by rigorous legislation, can redress biodiversity loss. This generates overall policy coherence and public support towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNEP will play a key role in providing normative and analytical tools which assist UNCTs in mainstreaming policies and actions which reduce biodiversity loss and help build nature-based solutions.
- **UNEP will work with UN system entities and other partners to ensure the post-2020 global biodiversity framework is implemented and mainstreamed in national processes,** including applying science-based approaches in the sustainable use of biological resources and ecosystem services. This includes a coherent implementation of the post-2020 biodiversity framework with other multilateral environmental agreements. UNEP will also promote and reinforce ecosystem-based ocean governance based on the Regional Seas programmes.
- **UNEP will collaborate with UN agencies, funds and programmes to support Member States to strengthen biodiversity and health linkages to manage and reduce risks for both human and ecosystem health and to integrate Nature in national and international public health decision-making through science-based approaches.** In a post-pandemic situation this will include addressing nature degradation as a root cause of zoonotic disease and other

novel biological introductions. Work on establishing more sustainable food value chains will be central to this effort, given that so many zoonoses are triggered by unsustainable consumption and production of food. UNEP will also work with partners to strengthen the capacity of countries to implement the One Health approach focusing on biosecurity measures and support the development and subsequent implementation of the Global Plan of Action on Biodiversity and Health. UNEP will also support activities on mainstreaming biodiversity for health and nutrition.

- **UNEP will develop and promote frameworks and norms for biodiversity- and nature-positive financing and infrastructure.** Leveraging the portfolio of the enabling subprogramme on Finance and Economic transformations UNEP will advocate for the integration of biodiversity and ecosystems services consideration and related risks into financial and economic decision-making. UNEP will harness financial flows to achieve positive outcomes for people and nature, in line with the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, while focusing on sectors with high impacts and dependencies on nature. UNEP will also support the development of innovative funding mechanisms for conservation which support indigenous peoples and local communities in developing alternative livelihood opportunities while building sustainability and resilience and strengthening their rights.
- **UNEP will promote the sustainability and transparency of value chains and production methods** to ensure resource extraction and commodity production that contributes to healthy ecosystems and socially just outcomes. These activities will also use opportunities to influence demand side pressure on biodiversity and ecosystems through consumer information on adverse impacts and by encouraging the adoption of sustainable lifestyles.

Outcome 3: Enhanced Nature conservation and restoration.

- **UNEP will promote environmentally and socially sustainable approaches to natural resource management.** UNEP will promote transformations in land use management and planning and natural resource-based value chains. Alternative and resilient food systems, agriculture, and fisheries will be promoted to reverse unsustainable land use and habitat conversion, freshwater extraction, and misuse of ocean resources. Safe, equitably distributed, and environmentally sustainable food systems must be based on the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. UNEP will continue to assist Member States to strengthen the environmental performance of sustainable and restorative agriculture models through promotion of nature-positive practices, such as agroecology in collaboration with its partners. UNEP will continue to support integrated coastal zone management and marine spatial planning. UNEP will also continue to provide guidance for increased knowledge and institutional capacity to implement equitable access and benefit sharing regimes and catalyze action for the sustainable use of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystem resources. There will also be a focus on adopting holistic sustainable consumption and production approaches by using indigenous and local knowledge supported by sound science, data, and statistics also to guide procurement and consumer choice.
- **UNEP will support sustainable habitat management through transformative processes and outcomes including social and behavior change, to minimize damage to highly valued ecosystems, including damage from disasters, conflict, and climate change.** UNEP will support Member States actions to prevent and mitigate the degradation of ecosystems to restore nature and build back resilience, including through nature-based solutions as ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction. For forest ecosystems, UNEP will work with partners and through networks on advancing and strengthening UN-REDD as a platform to halt forest loss and

degradation. Together with FAO, UNEP will lead the United Nations System in implementing the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 in both marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

- **UNEP will provide necessary tools and guidance to develop sustainable blue economies in coastal and marine zones;** and promote transboundary collaboration for the conservation, sustainable use and restoration of vulnerable ecosystems, such as coastal, mountain, and wetland ecosystems particularly those vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Further promotion of sustainable tourism through the One Planet Network will scale up support for policies and practices which generate tourism revenue while maintaining the biodiversity and ecosystems that attract tourists.

Chemical and Pollution Action

Eliminating pollution is central to improving human well-being and prosperity for all.

This subprogramme will work towards the goal of a “Pollution-free Planet” through its related ‘Implementation Plan’.⁸⁹ A pollution-free planet will enhance human health, well-being and prosperity for all, especially benefitting the poor and disadvantaged.

Environmental quality and its positive implications for reducing inequity, poverty, and vulnerability are powerful motivations to move to a pollution-free planet. Healthy economies and communities depend on responsibly managed nature and climate. Addressing air pollution and waste are powerful climate mitigation actions, especially when taken against short-lived climate pollutants. A transition towards a pollution free planet in line with the Sustainable Development Goals requires that:

- By 2025, 30% of the world’s population lives in areas where WHO Air Quality interim targets for air pollutants are attained (e.g., for soot and smog pollutants).
- By 2025, open burning is banned to stop the release of unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants.
- By 2025, economy-wide nitrogen use is modified to halve the losses of anthropogenic reactive nitrogen to the environment.⁹⁰
- By 2025, a global mapping of contaminated sites including mine tailings, sludge deposits, landfills and waste dumps, is completed.
- By 2025, the capacity of developing countries to reach the Sustainable Development Goal target 6.3 of halving by 2030 the amount of untreated wastewater reaching water bodies, taking into account gender perspectives, is strengthened.⁹¹
- By 2025, a methodology for mortality attributed to vector and waterborne disease by sex as part of UNEP’s gender strategy is developed and implemented.
- By 2025, Sustainable Development Goal target 14.1, which aims to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, including marine debris and nutrient pollution by 2025, is achieved.

⁸⁹ Implementation Plan "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet" adopted at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (2019) through resolution UNEP/EA.4/21

⁹⁰ As per the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management, which followed the adoption of UNEA resolution 4/14 on Sustainable Nitrogen Management.

⁹¹ As per the UNEA resolution 3/10 on Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems.

- By 2025, progress is made on achieving Sustainable Development Goal target 12.4: environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes through their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks.⁹²
- By 2025, sub-targets on specific toxic chemicals, such as for persistent organic pollutants reduction, mercury levels, legal limits for lead, and capacities for chemicals monitoring and managing risks are established.
- By 2025, 20% of estimated waste flows in selected countries are redirected from dumpsites and recycled by 2027, promoting a more circular economy and resource efficiency.

Multilateral and regional environmental agreements provide a framework for international environmental governance and time-bound actions. Current challenges, however, limit their effectiveness in managing chemicals and pollutants soundly. These challenges centre on availability of data, information and knowledge; policy design and compliance mechanisms; availability of infrastructure and accessible clean technologies; institutional and technical capacity; business and industry leadership; intersectoral collaboration and transboundary cooperation, and true cost pricing. Better and more accessible consumer information on chemicals in products and production processes, can drive behavioral change and public awareness, triggering and empowering action on a larger scale supported by digital technologies.

UNEP will respond to country priorities and capacity needs to prevent, control and manage pollution and help transfer and share good practices, experiences, initiatives and green technologies within and across countries and local contexts – North-North, North-South and South-South, and triangular cooperation.

The Chemicals and Pollution Action subprogramme will focus on interconnected actions and interventions to achieve three 2025 outcomes:

Outcome 1: Capacity and leadership minimizes health risks linked to the environment and enhances sound management of chemicals and waste.

- **Promote sound science, information and knowledge sharing and management.** UNEP will facilitate access and sharing of up-to-date, credible, and relevant chemicals and pollution information data and statistics. This will further enable well-informed actions to address pollution and promote systemic shifts at all levels of governance and in all relevant areas of society, including consumers. UNEP will support countries to undertake analysis and apply tools to identify the most polluting economic sectors and products. UNEP will work with partners to support countries to adopt pollution release and transfer registers and link them to the UNEP World Environment Situation Room.
- **Accelerate policy shifts towards the sound management of chemicals and waste.** UNEP will support design of science-based, integrated and coherent regulatory frameworks and policies. This will assist in strengthening implementation and effectiveness - taking advantage of environmental data insights as enabled by digital technologies - and thereby significantly reduce harmful effects caused by chemicals of major public health concern.⁹³ UNEP will support and promote sound chemicals and waste management beyond the current 2020

⁹² Indicator 12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment.

⁹³ https://www.who.int/ipcs/assessment/public_health/chemicals_phc/en/

framework for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and prevent and mitigate environmental and health threats through use of a One Health⁹⁴ approach.

- **Enhance the capacity to act and strengthen institutions.** UNEP will support member states with technical capacity and institutional strengthening through the promotion of knowledge and information sharing, policy support, rapid response support, capacity building, technical assistance and financing using a multistakeholder, multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach. UNEP will also support the efforts undertaken within the framework of multilateral environmental agreements to ensure that human health and the environment are protected from the negative impact of chemicals and waste.
- **Raise ambition and leadership on sustainable and healthier living through advocacy, champions, and UNEP's convening power.** UNEP will engage with policymakers, the UN system, chemicals and waste-related multilateral environmental agreements, youth, academia, civil society, finance and the private sector to gain support for positive environmental change, reducing and preventing pollution and promoting sustainable, healthier living. UNEP, with partners, can reach millions through robust campaigns such as #BreatheLife, #CleanSeas, #BeatPollution, #TimeforNature, and the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, to change consumption and lifestyle choices to more rapidly scale action. This also includes mainstreaming pollution-reduction and sound management of chemicals and waste into humanitarian action and helping relevant actors address environmental risk factors negatively affecting the health of most vulnerable populations.

Outcome 2: Waste management improved through circular processes, and open burning and dump sites are reduced for decent jobs, community health and climate resilience.

- **Mainstream the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and circular processes to valorize, divert and re-use current waste flows** and progressively reduce the number of waste dumpsites globally and phase-out unsound waste management practices; facilitate the collaboration with companies, research institutions, the waste sector and civil society groups to identify innovative solutions to build circularity across the target sectors and offer alternatives to the current linear economic model; and work with municipalities and development organisations to create local employment.
- **Scale ongoing efforts on greening waste and wastewater management infrastructure:** UNEP will support Member States to develop resilient and effective waste management systems and greener infrastructure, including nature-based infrastructure. Partners include, multilateral development banks, solid waste associations and the private sector, adopting ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions, and combined with upstream solutions which promote circularity and monitoring of key environmental, health and climate indicators. UNEP will also leverage a digital transformation and apply green and digital technologies to identify, prevent, mitigate, and manage waste, wastewater and air pollution particularly in cities and urban areas, including by influencing consumer and lifestyle choices.

Outcome 3: Reduced releases of pollutants to air, water, oceans and soil and the ocean.

- **Support the shift away from production and use of hazardous and toxic chemicals:** UNEP will continue working towards minimizing the adverse effects of chemicals on human health

⁹⁴ <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/one-health>

and the environment and supporting the implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements, and the beyond 2020 framework for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. UNEP, with partners, will aim at ensuring that regulations, standards and policies are in place to facilitate the shift to safer alternatives. UNEP will strive towards the identification, phasing out and sound management of chemicals, in products, and in processes, from an environmental perspective. UNEP will increase and disseminate knowledge on chemicals of concern, develop and implement methodologies and tools for tracking and controlling of chemicals of concern and support high impact sectors in designing products and processes that are safer and cleaner, including through Green and Sustainable Chemistry.

- **Support ongoing efforts to reduce in-country and transboundary air pollution.** UNEP will further scale up its work on air quality by supporting member States, with relevant partners, to improve air quality monitoring and assessments, strengthen air quality management at national and sub-national level, promote best practices, develop policies and legislation, design measures targeting specific sectors including mobility, industrial operations, energy, waste and agriculture. Through the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, UNEP will address emissions from short-lived climate pollutants that cause air pollution and climate change, thus promoting multiple benefits for the climate, air quality and human wellbeing. UNEP will work with UNCHR and the UN inter agency Global Plan of Action⁹⁵ to support clean energy to refugees and people displaced by conflict and environmental stresses to avoid health impacts from carbon-based cooking and lighting and related unsustainable deforestation. UNEP will work with UN regional economic commissions, regional cooperation fora and other organizations to promote joint action to address transboundary air pollution, coordinated policy approaches and regional communities of practice. UNEP will continue to track progress of key actions that improve air quality.
- **Scale ongoing efforts on addressing land-based sources of marine pollution, especially marine litter, nutrients, chemicals and plastic.** UNEP will support stakeholders through the Global Partnership on Marine Litter, the Regional Seas Programmes and the digital platform to take an evidence-based approach to identify key sources, pathways and hazards across source-to-sea and product lifecycles. Action on the most problematic products, polymers and sectors will be prioritized through marine litter action plans. UNEP will also continue to support governments, businesses, and other relevant stakeholders in achieving a fundamental system shift in the plastics economy away from the current fossil fuel feedstock. To this end, UNEP will engage all stakeholders of the plastics value chain to scale up sustainability and circularity by: continuing to build political support and leadership for reducing and reusing plastics; supporting countries, cities and businesses in meeting their commitments to tackle plastics pollution, including through legislative guidance; and raising awareness on innovative solutions, alternatives and new business models for circularity supported by life cycle assessments and accurate consumer information.
- **More system wide shifts adopted to transition towards a pollution-free planet.** UNEP will work to develop mechanisms to incentivize and redirect public and private finance and investments to cleaner economic activities through internalizing the costs of pollution in financial decisions and the adoption of costs and disclosure frameworks; circularity, and the necessary preconditions, including the absence of toxic chemicals, will be built across value chains. There will be a focus on high impact sectors and products, including food and agriculture systems, the extractives sector, transportation, and building and construction; ecosystem-based approaches, nature-based solutions, and green and digital technologies to

⁹⁵ <https://www.humanitarianenergy.org/what-is-the-gpa>;

mitigate and manage pollution, including in response to disasters, conflicts and other emergencies will be adopted; integrated policies and practices will tackle pollution, at national, subnational, local and transboundary levels; sustainable and responsible consumption choices will be aided by increased awareness, accurate information and incentives; and safe production processes and safeguards will benefit from fiscal support.

II) Foundational Subprogrammes

Science-Policy

Science is the foundation for any policy setting and identifying solutions and actions on the environmental challenges we face.

This subprogramme collects scientifically credible data, information and knowledge and provides policy-relevant analysis that can catalyse and accelerate solutions and actions for the environment. It underpins all actions under UNEP's other subprogrammes by informing policies and building capacities of government and non-government actors for the uptake of the latest scientific information that can drive transformative action on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, while pre-empting the rise of other environmental challenges.

UNEP's core mandate is to keep the environment under review and strengthen the interface between science and policymaking across sustainable development.⁹⁶ In response, this Foundational subprogramme will bring the latest scientific evidence and analysis on the state of the world environment to the attention of policy and decision makers and the public at large. The programme will reach beyond the environmental community and make the case for putting the environment at the centre of economic and social decision making. Through partnerships across all relevant areas of society, from governments to non-government organizations, the business and citizen community, UNEP will aim to be a catalyst for science-informed transformative shifts that can drive progress towards the aspirations of Agenda 2030.

Authoritative science that is delivered with greater coherence and integration. UNEP will continue to be an authoritative voice in the global scientific community, collecting, analysing and synthesizing scientific data that speaks to the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and beyond. UNEP's signature, policy-relevant assessments include the Global Environment Outlook, the Emissions and Adaptation Gap Reports, the Frontiers Report and the Global Resources, Waste Management and Chemicals Outlooks, among others. UNEP will ensure that these global assessments are complementary and are prepared with greater coherence and coordination for better impact. To that end, UNEP will leverage the Global Environment Assessment Dialogue⁹⁷ to bring the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Global Environmental Outlook, the International Resource Panel, the Global Sustainable Development Report and other processes together to secure stronger consistency and mutually benefitting comparability. This process will also add value to the preparation

⁹⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, [https://undocs.org/en/a/res/2997\(XXVII\)](https://undocs.org/en/a/res/2997(XXVII))

⁹⁷ The Global Environment Assessment Dialogue builds from Member States' "request to the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to promote greater coherence and coordination of global assessments undertaken within the United Nations system and in cooperation with relevant international bodies and the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements", as stipulated in UNEA/4 Resolution 4/23 on "Keeping the World Environment under Review: Enhancing United Nations Environment Programme's Science-Policy Interface and Endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook" (UNEP/EA.4/Res.23), <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28486/K1901170.pdf>

and delivery of coherent messages that can inform international negotiations and decisions under the multilateral environmental agreements, as well as global environmental platforms, such as the UN Environment Assembly.

Closing the gap on the availability of environmental data is key to assess and review progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNEP will continue to measure and monitor country progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, providing timely data analysis and early warnings for policy and decision makers. Building the capacities of countries to collect, analyze their own relevant data and conduct their own environmental assessments, and guiding them towards embedding these in their policies and decisions that drive actions on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, will be key aspects of UNEP's intervention. UNEP will contribute to easing country reporting burdens on progress made through building as much as possible on existing data and by aligning its reporting requirements with SDG indicators. UNEP will facilitate open-access, interinstitutional data and information exchanges, including at national, regional and subnational level. Pursuing synergies with the global and regional multilateral environmental agreements and facilitating coordination and exchanges amongst the multilateral environmental agreements themselves, will allow for greater harmonization of country data and methodologies for tracking progress and facilitate better analysis and comparability for decision making.

Digitizing scientific knowledge, democratizing availability. Digital tools and technologies can accelerate an integrated analysis of environmental with social and economic data, as well as better equip decision makers in assessing the effectiveness, relevance and impact of global environmental policies. To that end, the World Environment Situation Room will be an asset to UNEP's intervention. In line with the aspirations of a new Global Environmental Data Strategy,⁹⁸ UNEP will continue to leverage the World Environment Situation Room as the prime global digital platform that can allow governments and the public at large to visualize the state and performance of the world environment and draw an analysis of the efficacy of existing environmental policies underpinned by economic and social data. The World Environment Situation Room will draw on near real-time maps supported by geospatial technologies and offer a public knowledge platform informed by in-situ satellite and data modelling sources, as well as citizen science. These systems will enable the public to measure the effectiveness of the pace and scale of the required policy transformations for the environment, as well as assessing options for actions. As part of the horizon-scanning and foresight process, the World Environment Situation Room will also contribute to surveilling emerging risks to the environment and human health, bringing these issues to the attention of governments for prioritizing research, analysis and action.

An inclusive science-policy interface that speaks to all. An effective science-policy interface capable of catalysing transformative policies and decisions must be supported by inclusive environmental and social advocacy. UNEP will pursue broad stakeholder engagement as a critical step to enhance societal understanding, acceptance and uptake of its scientific analysis. Through platforms and networks such as the Science-Policy Business Forum, the International Resource Panel, the World Adaption Science Programme and the One Planet Network, UNEP will serve as a convener and knowledge broker that builds consensus around existing and emerging issues and enables partnerships and joint actions across stakeholders from the scientific, policy and citizen communities. Communication will remain a key tool to spur societal engagement. To that end, UNEP will communicate its scientific information in a

⁹⁸ Through the UNEA/4 Ministerial Declaration "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production" (UNEP/EA.4/HLS.1), Member States committed to supporting UNEP in developing a global environmental data strategy by 2025 in cooperation with other United Nations bodies. <http://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28463/K1901029.pdf>

language that is accessible to all and that can influence and stimulate inclusive policymaking and environmental action at the scale and pace required by science.

Science Policy – as a Foundation

UNEP will contribute to Climate Stability by providing scientific information that measures progress towards carbon neutrality and resilience. It will compile and communicate the latest climate-related scientific data, and propose policy options, to help public and private sector decision-makers engage in ambitious climate actions in line with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement.

UNEP will make Living in Harmony with Nature a reality by providing the scientific information and data to secure nature-positive policies and actions. Science will be the basis to justify the uptake of ‘nature-positive’ policies and actions and solutions across all sectors to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem integrity in line with the goals of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

UNEP will take us Towards a Pollution-free Planet by facilitating access and sharing of up-to-date, credible, and relevant chemicals and pollution scientific information, data and statistics. This will encourage systemic shifts towards less polluting outcomes at all levels of governance and in all relevant segments of society, including consumers, and secure the design of sustainable, supporting regulatory frameworks and policies.

UNEP will put the science at the center of sound Environmental Governance. Access to the latest environmental information will drive coherent decision-making towards more effective legal and institutional environmental frameworks at national and regional levels, including the post-2020 frameworks, and stronger environmental rights for all.

UNEP will secure that sound science backs all Financial and Economic transformations. It will triangulate science with the policy and business community to leverage finance and market systems towards sustainable shifts, advocate for the adoption of sustainable consumption and production patterns at all levels and accelerate societal changes towards more circular economic and business models.

UNEP will leverage Digital Transformations to digitalize scientific knowledge and democratize its availability. It will capitalize on the World Environment Situation Room as the prime global digital platform that can enable governments and the public at large to visualize the state and performance of the world environment and draw an analysis of the efficacy of existing environmental policies underpinned by economic and social data.

Environmental Governance

This subprogramme supports coherent policymaking by strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks which underpin the internationally agreed goals on climate, pollution, and nature in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Environmental governance is the institutional and legal architecture needed to make the environmental goals and commitments a reality. The subprogramme supports the delivery of this strategy by providing advisory services, robust data, analysis, awareness-raising and capacity-building to enhance integrated approaches for policy coherence and effectiveness, as well as the development

and implementation of environmental rule of law. The subprogramme promotes programmatic cooperation between UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements and supports Member States in implementing these agreements coherently and effectively. The subprogramme cuts across the entirety of UNEP's work and is delivered in cooperation with secretariats and governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, the United Nations system, civil society organizations, academic institutions and networks, and the private sector.

UNEP will support coherent decision-making towards more effective legal and institutional frameworks to underpin the achievement of internationally agreed goals on climate, nature and pollution in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNEP will lead the United Nations system and support Member States in achieving policy coherence for delivering environmental goals and commitments. As host to 15 global and regional multilateral environmental agreements, as implementing agency for multilateral environmental agreement relevant financial mechanisms, such as the Global Environment Facility or the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol (through UNEP's OzonAction Programme), and as Chair of the UN Environment Management Group, and as custodian of 26 Sustainable Development Goal indicators, UNEP is well placed to promote cooperation and coherence in the United Nations, across the global environment agenda. UNEP will also use these platforms to provide a stronger environmental voice in the United Nations and other global decision-making processes. UNEP will strengthen its cooperation with the multilateral environmental agreements to enhance policy coherence at all levels. UNEP will continue to develop practical tools and working methods to support coherent and effective implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements both within and across the thematic clusters.

UNEP will strengthen the transformational role of the UN Environment Assembly in environmental governance to support the achievement of internationally agreed environmental goals and implementation of the 2030 Agenda in a post COVID-19 world. UNEP will enhance coordination and cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements, other UN agencies and major groups and stakeholders on issues of regional and global significance by supporting relevant intergovernmental processes and regional and national institutions, including the UN Environment Management Group.

UNEP will continue to promote effective knowledge management and data reporting across national institutions to support countries in coherent implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements and increase the understanding of the linkages between the global biodiversity, sustainable development and health agendas.

UNEP will also contribute to strengthening the environmental dimension of key economic policy decisions and processes by further advancing its capacity building work related to the global methodology in support of enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development and its uptake in national planning and policy-making (SDG indicator 17.14.1).

UNEP will support countries in identifying integrated approaches to the three dimensions of sustainable development, including the incorporation of the environment into sustainable development planning. Working closely with the multilateral environmental agreements and the UN Environment Management Group, UNEP will strengthen the governance nexus between nature, pollution, climate change, and promoting the shift towards sustainable consumption and production. This will include

increased information sharing and common policy initiatives, taking into account opportunities provided by the new global biodiversity framework and the strategic approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020. These actions will help achieve environmental goals within the context of sustainable development through concerted efforts by the international community at global, regional and sub- regional levels.

UNEP will support countries to build relevant capacities in environmental law and contribute to the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the Montevideo Programme V. UNEP's support will include results-oriented and country-driven strategic activities to promote public participation, access to information, and access to justice in environmental matters. This capacity building will include a special focus on disaster and conflict-affected countries, as well as those most vulnerable to environmental risks. It will also include enhanced and sustainable capacity-building support for key environmental law stakeholders, including judges, prosecutors, and other enforcement officers. UNEP will also produce concrete guidance products including national, regional and global analysis and assessments based on robust environmental data. It will track and advance shared understanding and facilitate action on key emerging issues related to environmental law.

UNEP will lead the UN system and support national governments, upon their request, in the development and implementation of environmental rule of law. UNEP has a clear mandate to lead the United Nations system in supporting national governments with the rule of law.⁹⁹ Under the Montevideo V Programme, UNEP will do so through the promotion of information and data exchange, education, capacity-building, and technical assistance, all to strengthen national environmental governance systems and the improve the rule of law. As part of this support, UNEP will also conduct biennial data-informed global assessments of environmental rule of law, which will track and report on core elements of environmental rule of law, including laws and institutions, civic engagement, rights, and justice.

UNEP will strengthen environmental rights. A safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment is integral to full enjoyment of a wide range of human rights, including the rights to life, health, food, water, and sanitation. It is, thus, integral to improving the lives of the poor and marginalized. In partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other actors, UNEP will support the UN system and countries to enhance the promotion, protection, and respect of environmental rights. This will include monitoring threats against environmental rights defenders and advocacy for better protection, as well as supporting informed participation by rights defenders and civil society in environmental decision-making. The work on environmental rights will ensure continued progress towards realizing the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Environmental Governance – as a Foundation

UNEP will contribute to *Climate Stability* by promoting the rule of law to help achieve the aims of the Paris Agreement. National governments will be supported through the promotion of information and data exchange, education, capacity-building, and technical assistance, all to strengthen national

⁹⁹ UNEP Governing Council Decision 27/9. UNEP's mandate on the rule of law and its means to achieve it were strengthened through the adoption of UNEA resolution 4/20 on the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V).

environmental governance systems and to improve the rule of law with the aim of fully implementing the Paris Agreement.

UNEP will make *Living in Harmony with Nature* a reality by support countries to develop legislation to shift the needle. Countries will receive support in developing the necessary policies, legislation and strategies to implement their respective obligations under the multilateral environmental agreements, while strengthening national institutions and mechanisms to monitor and report on related progress. Furthermore, UNEP will develop and advocate for economic measures and incentives that address the drivers of biodiversity loss and promote sustainable and just economic activities that reduces inequalities.

UNEP will take us *Towards a Pollution-free Planet* by advocating for the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. The Montevideo V Programme will accelerate policy shifts towards the sound management of waste, including marine litter, with a focus on the environment and health nexus. Environmental rights will continue to be supported and, in particular, the right to safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

UNEP will use *Science-policy* to support strong Environmental Governance. National governance frameworks will be strengthened through the promotion of information and data exchange, education, capacity-building, and technical assistance, all to strengthen national environmental governance systems and improve the rule of law based on proven scientific evidence.

UNEP will ensure policy coherence when supporting *Financial and Economic Transformations*. Strengthening the environmental dimension of economic policy decisions will lead to enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development and its uptake in national planning and policymaking and will assist countries to draw up and implement effective policy, regulatory, and enabling frameworks that cut pollution through cleaner economic activities which also reduce biodiversity loss.

UNEP will use *Digital Transformations* for coherent and inclusive environmental governance. Support to the upscaling of knowledge management and data reporting at the national level will be accelerated. This will support countries in coherent implementation of the multilateral environmental agreements and increase the understanding of the data linkages between the global biodiversity, sustainable development and health agendas.

III) Enabling Subprogrammes

Finance and Economic Transformations

Shifting finance and business practices towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production - towards reducing impact on climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution – is key to realizing Agenda 2030. Against the backdrop of growing awareness by consumers and citizens of social and environmental inequities, progressive policies need to be developed, responsible business models established, and the providers of capital engaged. Important opportunities exist to decarbonize and manage resources more responsibly, while addressing sustainability, poverty, equity, employment, economic growth, security, and health objectives. With digital technologies and connectivity, new ways to enable natural resources to support green and inclusive rural and urban transformations are being

tested and piloted. Reframing national development and economic planning, and re-directing finance, investment, and trade are means to take these initiatives rapidly to scale.

Based on the above approach, UNEP will engage in the following actions to support real and lasting change across its three thematic subprogrammes:

1. **Reframe national development policies with sustainability objectives.** Countries need support to enable a re-shaping of business models, production practices, and consumer choices. UNEP will assist countries to draw up and implement effective policy, regulatory, and enabling frameworks that cut pollution through more resource efficient and cleaner economic activities which improve climate stability, reduce biodiversity loss and move individual economies and societies towards a pollution free world. Activities will include support for subsidy reduction and price reform for sustainability; support for a just transition promoting resource and energy efficiency; and identifying policies and investments to create new green jobs through reskilling and green finance strategies and roadmaps.
2. **Promote business models and policies for accelerating responsible and circular patterns of consumption and production.** UNEP and its networks, including the One Planet Network and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy,¹⁰⁰ will support countries and businesses in accelerating a transition to more circular and resource efficient value chains. This ranges from the design of products and the circularity of material flows to creating the right incentives and enabling frameworks for circular economy business ideas. UNEP will use enabling tools like sustainable public procurement, sustainable lifestyles and education or consumer information to change behavior and shift consumption. These approaches can be adjusted to target small and vulnerable suppliers and markets, considering global, regional, national, and local contexts. The digital ecosystem will be harnessed to maximize sustainability gains from the transformation and monitor its impacts, guided by data analytics utilizing science-based approaches.
3. **Accelerate the alignment of finance with sustainability objectives and policy priorities.** UNEP, together with partners including the UNEP Finance Initiative, will work through its various normative initiatives¹⁰¹ to align banking, insurance, and investment practice and accountability to drive an economic transformation. UNEP will thereby scale its engagement with industry triangulating the science, policy and business and investor communities to leverage better behavior and standards in high impact sectors such as extractives, infrastructure, and agriculture. UNEP will seek to promote access to green and digital finance that is gender-responsive, including for micro, small, and medium enterprises.
4. **Support the greening of cities and creating more circular and clean economies in urban and peri-urban areas.** The findings from the International Resource Panel - such as the *Weight of Cities* report - will inform a systems approach aimed at transforming finance, industry and sectors. UNEP will focus on more sustainable and resilient value chains, in the food, mobility and energy sectors, and in infrastructure.¹⁰² UNEP will work with local administrations and subnational governments, given their essential role for creating change and implementing policy decisions.

¹⁰⁰ The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) was launched in 2013 as a response to the call at Rio+20 to support those countries wishing to embark on greener and more inclusive growth trajectories in line with the aspiration of the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 8: "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."

¹⁰¹ UNEP Finance Initiative Principles for Responsible Banking, Principles for Sustainable Insurance, Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance and Positive Impact finance.

¹⁰² This will build on the GEF-7 Sustainable Cities Programme, with an integrated approach and emphasis given to circularity, nature-based solutions through integrated planning and design, and greening cities to ensure enhanced quality of life.

5. **Catalyze investment for a green rural transformation.** In the context of COVID-19 and other socio-economic drivers, with many migrants returning to rural areas, ensuring ecosystem resilience and job opportunities to absorb the returnees and reduce migration will be critical. UNEP will work with its partners in government and industry towards the creation of green and resource-based employment; restoration of degraded ecosystems for new job opportunities, biodiversity enhancement, and climate adaptation; support the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems and enhanced environmental governance for natural resource management. Cooperative, multi-stakeholder partnerships and other institutions specializing in sustainable rural economies and digital transformations will be promoted.
6. **Provide Inclusive Wealth¹⁰³ statistics to better inform the links between natural assets, poverty, and inequality and thereby enhance the capacity of Member States to deliver the 2030 Agenda.** This will be done by: 1) updating Inclusive Wealth accounting across countries, covering topics such as human health and skills, physical infrastructure (e.g. transport, housing, utilities and ICT), sustainable natural resource and ecosystems management (including air quality, biodiversity, and climate systems), social trust and the strength of communities; 2) assessing impacts of pollution on human and natural capital and its impact on the sustainable economy; 3) automating and digitalizing Inclusive Wealth data collection; 4) strengthening the existing measures of natural, social and human capital – as underlying assets and as SDG indicators; 5) assessing how income and wealth inequality and multidimensional poverty arising from the impacts of COVID-19 in developing countries have interfered with resilience and the state of ecosystems and biodiversity; 6) supporting National Statistical Offices in their efforts to monitor the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals; and 7) developing a statistical infrastructure for Inclusive Wealth statistics, which will present an opportunity to explicitly define the recovery from COVID-19 in terms of sustainable development, linking to the aspirations of the Paris Agreement, and the Beyond GDP movement.

Finance and Economic Transformations – as an Enabler

UNEP will contribute to *Climate Stability* by promoting business models and markets for decarbonization and resilience. It will promote transparency and accountability of the financial sector on the climate risks and opportunities of their decisions, actions and investments. It will also advocate for financial measures to support sustainable lifestyles.

UNEP will make *Living in Harmony with Nature* a reality by developing and advocating for finance and economic measures that redress biodiversity loss and values the socio-economic dimension of nature and biodiversity. It will promote the economics of biodiversity, identify its value and link to human health, as well as socially just outcomes of natural resource management.

UNEP will take us *Towards a Pollution-free Planet* by promoting the internalization of the true costs of pollution in financial and economic decisions by public and private actors, to redirect finance and investments towards cleaner economic activities, more responsible behaviour and healthier people and planet.

¹⁰³ United Nations Environment Programme, Inclusive Wealth Report 2018 (Nairobi, Kenya), <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27597/IWR2018.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

UNEP will leverage *Science-policy* by drawing on robust science and data to inform policy decisions and track the impacts of actions. It will enhance the understanding, acceptance and uptake of scientific findings by the financial sector and inform their investments.

UNEP will leverage global, national and subnational *Environmental Governance* frameworks, in partnership with non-state actors, to institutionalize change. It will aim to mainstream sustainable finance and economic dimensions in sectoral and institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks.

UNEP will use the *Digitalization-finance-sustainability* nexus to facilitate access to and use of knowledge and emerging technologies to address our environmental challenges. It will enhance its use of digitalization to make green finance more accessible and adapted to public and private users of all size and at transnational, national and subnational levels.

Digital Transformations

Digitalization is sweeping the planet - changing our economy, society, institutions and even our humanity. But this is not always happening in an inclusive, equitable or sustainable manner with the environment in mind.

When applied to the environment, digital technologies can accelerate and amplify our ability to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. As reported by the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation,¹⁰⁴ the digital transformation bears implications on all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and its 169 targets.¹⁰⁵ As an example, the World Economic Forum estimates that artificial intelligence alone has over 80 different applications for the environment, including through transforming traditional sectors and systems to address climate change, protect biodiversity and bolster human well-being, therefore contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁰⁶

Bringing transparency and accessibility to knowledge of the state of the environment in alignment with the UN Secretary General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation. UNEP has the responsibility to ensure environmental and sustainability values and goals are reflected in the digital economy. UNEP will take advantage of digital tools to accelerate and amplify impact across its three thematic subprogrammes and bring more transparency to knowledge of the state of our planet. In line with the Secretary-General's Roadmap for Digital Cooperation, the Secretary-General's Data Strategy and the System-wide Roadmap for Innovating UN Data and Statistics, UNEP will use digital entry points and digital ecosystems as a strategic opportunity to embed relevant environmental data and analytics into the work of the entire UN System.

The Digital Transformations subprogramme will ensure that by 2030, digital technologies and mobile applications are used to nudge, direct, amplify and accelerate sustainable consumption

¹⁰⁴ The Age of Digital Interdependence, Report of UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation, 2019, <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/DigitalCooperation-report-for%20web.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ Of the 169 Sustainable Development Goals targets, 103 are directly influenced by a combination of seven digital technologies, including: digital access, fast internet, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, extended reality and blockchain. Digital with Purpose: Delivering SMARTer2030, GeSI and Deloitte, 2019, https://gesi.org/storage/files/DIGITAL%20WITH%20PURPOSE_Summary_A4-WEB_watermark.pdf

¹⁰⁶ World Economic Forum, Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for the Earth, 2018, http://www3.weforum.org/docs/Harnessing_Artificial_Intelligence_for_the_Earth_report_2018.pdf

and production behaviors by consumers, companies and investors to scale up environmental sustainability.

UNEP will pursue this goal by enabling the following interventions actors its three thematic subprogrammes:

1. **Support and scale environmental change through an effectively governed and inclusive digital architecture.** In strategic partnerships with technology companies, UNEP will help establish the global digital standards, architecture and governance framework needed to integrate datasets and analysis on climate, biodiversity loss and pollution within an inclusive digital ecosystem for people and planet. This digital ecosystem will include a range of datasets from public and private sector that will be used to produce actionable, real-time and predictive insights to monitor global, national and local progress towards key climate, nature and pollution targets in the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant multilateral environmental agreements. In delivering this work, UNEP will also provide analysis and guidance to help mitigate the direct environmental impacts from digital technology supply chains, energy requirements and e-waste. All these results will be achieved leveraging the Science-Policy subprogramme, especially UNEP's work on statistics and SDG indicator monitoring and the World Environment Situation Room, in line with the aspirations of the new Global Environmental Data Strategy.
2. **Encourage a transformative use of environmental digital public goods to amplify and accelerate progress towards global climate, nature and pollution targets as well as a circular economy.** UNEP will undertake assessments of national digital infrastructures needed to produce digital public goods on the environment and support e-government services, aiming to bridge the global architecture for environmental digital public goods with the international efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the multilateral environmental agreements. UNEP will aim to inspire action that leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness in achieving climate, nature and pollution targets as well as deeper structural transformations to impact markets, value chains, consumer behaviours and decision-making. It will also explore the use of digital technologies to support global and national environmental governance and citizen engagement on these themes including through digital nudging, environmental consensus building, and collaborative decision making.
3. **Strengthen the capacity of citizens and diverse stakeholders to engage in the environmental dimensions of digital transformation and related policies, with an emphasis on the Global South.** This investment is a prerequisite for all stakeholders to effectively design and deploy digital technologies and policies to solve the climate, nature and pollution challenges and support the nexus of science, digital technology and global environmental governance. To that end, UNEP will enhance the environmental digital literacy of citizens and diverse stakeholders through inclusive digital capacity building, facilitating policy dialogue, enhancing education curricula, fostering social collaboration, open innovation and the development of new communities of practice. UNEP will seek to connect social entrepreneurs with citizen science, and inspire citizen action through various digitally oriented challenges, hackathons, innovation labs, impact hubs, moon-shots and other competitions designed to spark innovative and inclusive engagement. All these activities will have a special focus on the Global South and secure the participation of women, indigenous groups and youth.

4. **Improve institutional efficiency and impact through a digitally enabled UNEP.** UNEP will integrate a range of digital technologies, processes and practices into all areas of the organization in order to improve how it operates, innovates, delivers value, engages with stakeholders and builds capacity. UNEP will strive to become a digital organization which treats data as a strategic asset that can drive insights, innovations, and impact, including through better project design, implementation and impact evaluation.

Digital Transformations – as an Enabler

UNEP will contribute to *Climate Stability* by accelerating the adoption of low carbon behaviours and products by consumers and citizens. Digital solutions will drive sustainable lifestyles and the consumption of low carbon goods and services through increased carbon emissions transparency. UNEP will communicate carbon footprint information through certifications, digital apps and e-commerce platforms. UNEP will also scale efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of the information and communications technology sector focussing on data centres, blockchain applications and the gaming sector.

UNEP will make *Living in Harmony with Nature* a reality by increasing the speed and scale of the development and adoption of sustainable technologies to support the application of nature-based solutions. UNEP will convene partners to take up emerging digital technologies that can help society achieve nature and biodiversity goals. In addition, UNEP will stimulate a digital network on the status of nature and biodiversity including, trends, pressures and human responses as a digital public good to inform public and private decision making.

UNEP will amplify the adoption of clean technologies and digitalized circular approaches *Towards a Pollution-free Planet*. Digital technologies and circular design bring significant potential in reductions in waste and pollution. Likewise, the adoption of chemicals and pollution monitoring and data sharing standards throughout the product life cycle, will support transparency in materials traceability from raw materials to production and consumption as well as disposal or reuse. Finally, UNEP will support global efforts on the challenge of e-waste, emphasising the need for a circular economy.

UNEP will accelerate *Science-Policy* through increased influence, uptake and impact of digital public goods produced by scientific analysis on environmental priorities. Global environmental data standards will be developed to underpin an open digital ecosystem for the planet. UNEP will use digital tools to conduct science-based analysis of environmental trends on climate, nature and pollution and monitor progress in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal targets and the multilateral environmental agreements. Customized environmental data and analysis will be made available to the wider UN system.

UNEP will strengthen global and national capacities for digitalizing *Environmental Governance and collective action*. This includes an emphasis on addressing the environmental requirements of new global standards on open data, inter-operability and licensing, data quality assurance, human-centred design, and safeguards for public-private partnerships. UNEP will support the digital literacy of environmental stakeholders, including digital challenges, moon-shots and hackathons. There will be a specific focus on supporting small and medium sized enterprises, social entrepreneurs, women, indigenous groups, youth and under-represented stakeholders that are exposed to the digital divide.

UNEP will accelerate *Finance and Economic Transformations* with digital public goods and insights informing green investments. Digital public goods will enable the design of inclusive green economy policies, help assess environmental risks, insights and natural capital accounting to inform investment decisions. UNEP will support the public disclosure of information and tracking of value chain performance using standard environmental, social, governance investing criteria.

5) Four Levers of Change for Better Delivery

To secure enhanced delivery of the transformational, systemic shifts outlined in this medium-term strategy, UNEP will address five key levers of change. These represent a combination of internal and external actions and opportunities that will drive UNEP toward greater effectiveness, while accelerating impact.

1. Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their ‘multiplier effect’

The multilateral environmental agreements are one of the foundation stones of UNEP’s work and they play an indisputable role in achieving Agenda 2030 and delivering the Sustainable Development Goals. While fully respecting the autonomy of the multilateral environmental agreements, UNEP will fulfil its coordinating role in promoting a coherent and synergized cooperation across the 15 global and regional multilateral environmental agreements to ‘multiply’ impact and deliver enhanced results across Agenda 2030. UNEP will capitalize on opportunities to support Member States in planning for the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements decisions and synergize them with the Sustainable Development Goals, brokering cross-institutional cooperation and partnerships, creating the required policy instruments and legislation, and developing related capacities.

UNEP’s relationship with the multilateral environmental agreements will continue to be underpinned by regular dialogue, joint messaging and advocacy, and informed by mutual exchanges of science-based data and holistic assessments for increased strategic and programming alignment towards common goals. Stronger focus will be pursued on cross-cutting areas, such as sustainable consumption and production, climate change and pollution, as well as human rights, including rights of indigenous peoples and local communities and issues of intergenerational equity and gender equality.

Post-2020 frameworks for Biodiversity and Chemicals will provide key guardrails. Central to UNEP’s engagement with the multilateral environmental agreements will be the continued support to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity framework as well as the post-2020 Strategic Approach and Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste, while leveraging linkages and integrated approaches with the Paris Agreement.

2. Raising environmental ambition within the UN System through UN Reform:

The United Nations Reform process aims to reposition the United Nations development system with a stronger, better-defined collective identity as a trusted, cohesive and effective partner to countries in the 2030 Agenda. By reducing systemic fragmentation, duplication and operational inefficiencies, the Reform presents a tremendous opportunity for UNEP to commit to its role as the leading environmental voice in the UN and fulfilling its coordination mandate on the environment within the UN system more effectively through its array of regional policy and operational assets.

UNEP will approach the UN reform through the thematic lens of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, while strengthening integrations across all aspects of the UN mission, including on development, peace and security, humanitarian operations and human rights.

To better leverage the opportunity offered by the Reform, UNEP will review its operational arrangements and processes to ensure these are aligned to the reform guidelines, tools, mechanisms and digital requirements. UNEP will strengthen the staff capacity across the organization to contribute substantively to identify opportunities and apply adaptive management methods to implement the aspects of the UN Reform at all levels.

UNEP will foster impact-oriented partnerships with UN sister agencies, drawing on the respective strengths and capabilities. This will offer unique policy and operational opportunities to leverage the technical and operational expertise of other entities for greater joint impact, while amplifying UNEP's own programme delivery.

UNEP's Regional Offices will be the anchor for delivering UNEP's strategic aspirations and securing stronger engagement at regional and country level. They will serve as conduits of UNEP's alignment with the UN Reform guidelines and processes, securing enhanced engagement with UN Resident Coordinators and peace operations and stronger collaboration with UN Country Teams, the regional UN Development Cooperation Office and the Regional Economic Commissions. UNEP will ensure that science informs policy as it contributes to the design and implementation processes of Common Country Analyses and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. Decisions from these joint processes will inform UNEP's own programme planning and implementation at country level and modalities for engagement in UN Country Teams work. UNEP will support countries to ensure due consideration of environmental matters in their Voluntary National Reviews in a feedback loop between country-level, regional and global environmental priorities.

UNEP will actively participate in regional platforms and processes such as the Regional Collaboration Platforms and Opportunity/Issue-Based Coalitions, Regional Knowledge Platforms and other joint UN platforms. Stronger engagement in these platforms will be secured while leading environment-related opportunity/issue-based coalitions and providing strategic support and input to the preparations of regional ministerial environmental fora, inter-ministerial committees and fora for joint ministers' meetings. UNEP will draw linkages between the decisions from these fora and its own programme planning and implementation, and foster synergies between them and the UNEA as well as the Regional Forums for Sustainable Development.

UNEP will contribute to key intergovernmental and interagency coordination mechanisms. Through providing evidence-based environmental information and raising public awareness on critical and emerging environmental issues, UNEP will influence global environmental policy-making under the global intergovernmental processes and deliberations of the General Assembly; the Economic and Social Council; the Human Rights Council and the Security Council, among others. At interagency level, as chair of the Environment Management Group, UNEP will enhance the United Nations system-wide coordination related to specific issues in the field of environment, harnessing the Environment Management Group's collective capacity to develop transformational responses for a more sustainable world, including in a post-COVID-19 scenario. UNEP will also support the integration of environmental sustainability in the policy, programme and operational guidance within the UN system through engaging in the UN Sustainable Development Group, the Chief Executives Board for

Coordination and other ad hoc processes and supporting the dissemination of their decisions and guidance tools through regional and country mechanisms.

UNEP will advance the UN system corporate environmental performance, supporting the delivery of the UN 2020-2023 Sustainability Strategy and its follow-up process, through upgraded reporting, coordination, and technical assistance, including through partnerships with sister agencies.

¹⁰⁷ In the spirit of Delivering as One, UNEP will continue to generate knowledge, advocate for, and curate the creation of a support system that will feed into and enhance the UN leadership vision on corporate sustainability, including through improved partnerships with the UN and other international organizations.

3. Inclusive multilateralism for stronger global environmental governance

UNEP will value and uphold inclusivity to promote transparent and accountable environment governance at all levels. In today's rapidly changing environment, UNEP will strive to maintain high scale ambition in global environmental multilateralism, focusing not only on current challenges and opportunities, but also on emerging needs - particularly those of future generations and for digital cooperation on global environmental issues.

UNEP will build an inclusive environmental multilateralism to mobilize all those who can influence the changes needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Nearly 30 years after its adoption at the 1992 Earth Summit, Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration – one of the cornerstones of stakeholder engagement in environmental policy and decision-making – remains as relevant as ever.¹⁰⁸

Powerful young voices within a revamped worldwide environmental movement have shown the power of committed individuals to influence decisions on planetary justice. In commemorating the 75th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Charter, the UN Secretary General stressed the need for “an inclusive multilateralism, drawing on the indispensable contributions of civil society, business, cities, regions and, in particular, with greater weight given to the voices of youth.” UNEP will leverage these newfound societal commitments to engage in strategic partnerships with major groups and stakeholders¹⁰⁹ and the public at large, benefitting from their effective technical and advocacy functions. As part of this engagement, UNEP will continue to promote faith-based organizations and communities as custodians of far-reaching, value-based perspectives on environmental sustainability that speak to billions of people around the world.

Leveraging the United Nations Environment Assembly – the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment – as the primary global platform for environmental action. The Assembly will serve as an opportunity for the international community across all sectors and walks of life, to come together to discuss and address global environmental issues. Driven by sound science, the UN Environment Assembly will continue to inspire, identify and capture bold transformative actions

¹⁰⁷ Strategy for Sustainability Management in the UN System 2020-2030 https://unemg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/INF_3_Strategy-for-Sustainability-Management-in-the-UN-System.pdf

¹⁰⁸ “Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, everyone shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.”

¹⁰⁹ Agenda 21 recognized that sustainable development requires the meaningful involvement and active participation of the following nine ‘Major Groups’: Business and industry, Children and youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples and their communities, Local Authorities, Non-governmental organizations, The Scientific and technological community, Women, Workers and Trade Unions.

for the environment, while focusing on solutions that speak to all. Through the Assembly, UNEP will further consolidate its relationship with the multilateral environmental agreements, and enhance its contribution to implementing the 2030 Agenda, by strengthening convergence and dialogue on common strategic actions and shared experiences, as well as providing increased visibility to the decisions of the governing bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements.

Stronger engagement with the private sector as a key partner to drive systemic shifts to sustainable pathways. Building on its Strategy for Private Sector Engagement,¹¹⁰ UNEP will engage the private sector to power ahead with significant shifts that will result in the generation of sound policies and sustainable digital technologies informed by state-of-the-art scientific knowledge. UNEP will interact with the private sector at various levels, including through open networks, policy discussions and multi-stakeholder fora, such as the UN Environment Assembly as well as on specific applications of digital technologies for the environment. Through partnerships and alliances with the private sector, UNEP will target specific objectives and engage in impactful advocacy actions to promote the necessary cultural shifts to orient producers and consumers towards sustainability. UNEP will promote value chain and sector collaboration through joint ventures driven by the urgency to transform entire industries and sectors. This will be done while continuing to share best practices and accelerating the uptake of innovative solutions that bring measurable environmental and accompanying economic and social benefits. Some of the key sectors where UNEP will strive to achieve such systemic shifts include: energy production and consumption; food systems; infrastructure and the built environment; chemicals and waste management; the extractive sector; sustainable value chains for less resource and pollution intensive products; global financing, market and investment systems.

4. Innovative communication as a driving force for empowered environmental advocacy

UNEP's communications will help deliver coherence and consistency across the broad spectrum of environmental action. Communication efforts will be informed by the latest available science, including social science, and strive to shape the global narrative around the environment through generating political and social commitments and bring about the societal and policy changes required for tackling the challenges outlined in the situation analysis.

UNEP's approach to its communications will be highly innovative, using the growing foothold in digital spheres and social media spaces to reach and engage with a diverse and expanding range of audiences and stakeholders. UNEP will focus on empowering individuals and groups for environmental action, placing emphasis on the voices from sectors and actors typically outside the environment space. UNEP will amplify the voices of youth, consumers, environmental entrepreneurs, activists, innovation leaders and faith-based actors and organizations; and activists among others.

UNEP will focus on delivering impact stories to enhance the understanding of environmental sustainability, its various benefits and mobilize societal behavioral change. To that end, UNEP will highlight and share innovative practices, immersive digital technologies, storytelling and case studies, including on nexus issues and the linkages between the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, for their adaptation to the local contexts and broad delivery at scale.

6) Looking Forward: Driving the change towards the future we want

¹¹⁰ UNEP, Strategy for Private Sector Engagement, 11 October 2019.

Achieving climate stability, living in harmony with nature and a pollution-free planet by 2050 will require a recalibration of our economies and societies towards more sustainable and equitable models. Based on the latest science, this strategy provides the focus needed for transformative actions that target the drivers of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. It sets out the actions needed to reshape consumption and production patterns towards sustainability, so that a deteriorating environment will not threaten human well-being and the health of the planet.

This Strategy sets out a focused and cohesive path for UNEP to provide solutions that can achieve the aspirations of Agenda 2030 and paragraph 88 of “*The future we want.*”¹¹¹ and a vision of planetary sustainability for people, prosperity and equity. UNEP will leverage the *Decade of Action* and help Member States deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals by being a catalyst and facilitator of ambitious actions on climate change, nature and pollution. UNEP will employ a clarity of focus to deliver efficient and effective programmes for tangible and sustainable results.

UNEP will not embark on the journey charted by this Strategy alone. UNEP will leverage the UN Development System Reform to engage the wider UN system in stronger, more coordinated and mutually supportive environmental action, while solidifying its ability to meet individual country needs. UNEP will engage the Multilateral Environmental Agreements to amplify impact and bring about more coherence in how they cooperate and benefit from each other. UNEP will operate on the basis of an inclusive multilateralism that reaches beyond governments and supports systemic shifts with the help and collaboration of the private sector and business community, youth, civil society at large and faith-based organizations.

This is how UNEP will drive the change towards *The future we want.*

¹¹¹ UN Conference on Sustainable Development, *The future we want* (A/CONF.216/L.1), 19 June 2012, <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/13662/N1238164.pdf>

Please see Annex I in separate document for the Programme of Work and Budget for 2022-2023 that supports this MTS.