



HIGH IMPACT  
INITIATIVES



SEPTEMBER 2023

# NATURE DRIVING ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

Leveraging the power of biodiversity and  
nature to drive equitable economic progress

# HALFWAY TO 2030

High Impact Initiatives at SDG Action Weekend, 2023

## The SDGs are essential but we are off track

World leaders made a historic global promise to secure the rights and well-being of all peoples when they adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This Agenda recognizes that collectively, we can deliver a better future for all. However, the Agenda is a promise, not a guarantee.

Over the past eight years, the world has seen unprecedented mobilization around the SDGs and we have made significant progress on some fronts, laying the critical foundations for our future success. However, now halfway to the 2030 deadline, we are not halfway there – in fact, we are only 15% of the way.

## To keep the promise, we need a fundamental pivot

It will take more than rhetoric or increased attention to deliver the promise. We cannot stay wedded to current ways of working. Everything we do, in every corner of our world, will need to evolve for us to advance.

The fundamental pivot we need at the core of the 2030 Agenda demands that countries reorient economies, ways of working and mind-sets to ensure the rights and aspirations of all can be achieved while preserving our climate and natural environment.

## This change will take everyone

In many ways, the foundations for transformation are right in front of us - the technical know-how, institutional infrastructure, global financial resources and proven programmes – but we need to channel these resources more effectively. This is the critical moment for political leadership and bold action from national governments; for the international community to come together in common purpose; and for all partners on the SDG journey to take their contribution to the next level. We start tomorrow, by accelerating what works today.

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## THE HIGH IMPACT INITIATIVES AT SDG ACCELERATION DAY SUNDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER

As we look to the future, our goal is simple: to generate renewed momentum, strengthen political leadership and channel tangible, integrated and coordinated support behind national plans and priorities. As part of the global effort to meet this challenge, the United Nations development system is mobilizing behind 12 high impact initiatives which provide a platform to help take SDG progress to scale. This platform will enable us to learn, evolve and scale what works with greater coordination and collaboration. The platform cuts across three major areas: economic and social transitions, means of implementation, and a core aspect of the cross-cutting issue of gender equality.

- **Energy** Compacts: Scaling up ambition to deliver on SDG7
- Nature Driving Economic Transformation: Leveraging the power of **biodiversity and nature** to drive equitable economic progress
- **Food Systems** Transformation: Transforming food systems for a sustainable world without hunger
- Transforming **Education**: Learning to build a better future for all
- Global Accelerator: The Global Accelerator on **jobs and social protection** for just transitions
- **Digital** Public Infrastructure: Scaling inclusive and open digital ecosystems for the SDGs
- The SDG Stimulus: Scaling up long-term affordable **financing** for the SDGs
- Transforming **Trade**: Paradigm shift to boost economic development
- **Local2030** Coalition: Pushing key transitions and achieving the SDGs by 2030
- FutureGov: Building **public sector capabilities** for the future
- Power of **Data**: Unlocking the data dividend for the SDGs
- Spotlight Initiative: To eliminate **violence against women and girls**

## VISION FOR IMPACT

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The world's ecosystems, biodiversity and natural resources are fundamental to human health and well-being, as well as to sustainable and resilient economies. In addition, healthy biodiversity and ecosystems are fundamental to the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment. Billions of people around the world rely on over 50,000 wild species for food, energy, medicine and other uses, with 70 per cent of the world's poor directly dependent on wild species that require productive biodiverse landscapes. Furthermore, sustainable use of wild species is central to the identities and existence of many indigenous peoples and local communities. Ensuring sustainability in the use of wild species is critical to reversing the global trend of biodiversity decline.

This initiative focuses on assisting countries to fundamentally shift economic policymaking in favor of sustainability, resilience, risk reduction and equity. A group of champion countries committed to sustainable use of biodiversity will be launched and will demonstrate viable pathways for change for a diverse set of contexts.

As we strive towards impact by 2030, the ambition of this initiative for the next seven years includes an annual increase in Member States participating, that twenty Member States announce biodiversity-based economic policies by 2030, and that an investment of USD\$100 million is made annually to biodiversity-focused economic investments by 2025. In addition to supporting the realization of the SDGs, this High Impact Initiative will also support the realization of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the implementation of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, and the commitments made under multilateral environmental agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

This High Impact Initiative will drive progress not only across SDGs with an explicit focus on preserving the natural environment, including SDGs 12, 14 and 15, but across all SDGs. It specifically supports whole-of-society approaches, bridging sectoral worlds of environment, economy, agriculture, disaster risk reduction and others.

## OVERVIEW: NATURE DRIVING ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

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Nature has the power to drive economic transformation, as reflected in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework adopted by 193 parties in 2022. Based on principles of sustainable use, equity and access and benefit sharing that leave no one behind, delivery of this Framework can catalyze greater action in support of key SDGs.

Three key pillars make up this High Impact Initiative:

1. **Advocacy**, using experience, science and evidence, is needed to leverage the full value and potential of nature to drive economic and social transformation that is risk-informed and comprehensive.
2. **Environmental-economic accounting frameworks** that measure and value nature's contribution to our economies and inclusive wealth estimates that measure the sustainable bases of the economy through a focus on all forms of capital, need scalable rollout in national economic development plans – we cannot manage what we do not measure. Effective risk-informed approaches that are grounded in equitable, socially just and inclusive governance will be amplified.
3. **Concrete action** must be taken based on these measurements, specifically across financing, institutional reform and country leadership. Significant new investment, from a range of sources, is needed in countries that have demonstrated commitment through their policy and enabling environment. This High Impact Initiative will leverage UN reform and associated commitments from the entire UN system to deliver the UN Common Approach to Biodiversity and Nature-Based Solutions to support country leadership in making their economic transition.<sup>1</sup>

# PLANS FOR THE 2023 SDG ACTION WEEKEND

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The session will focus on showcasing examples of national action to catalyze biodiversity-focused economic investments, reinforcing the message that nature and biodiversity are driving forces for economic and social prosperity and wellbeing. In particular, it will highlight an international launch by at least two key Member States of new biodiversity and nature focused economic development policies, and announcement by one donor country of new economic enabling and finance activities.

## ROADMAP TO 2030

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*Long-term plans will evolve as we learn and circumstances change. Below is our current approach to acceleration through 2030 after the SDG Action Weekend.*

The ambition for 2030 is to grow the number of Member States who announce biodiversity-based economic policies and commit substantial biodiversity-focused economic investments pursuant to this initiative, as well as to support their commitments to implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

### Timeline and deliverables for progress:

- **2024:** At least three additional Member States have announced biodiversity-based economic policies
- **2024:** Global advocacy campaign has been launched, involving Global Biodiversity Framework Member States and key non-state actors
- **2025:** An investment of USD\$100 million is made annually to biodiversity-focused economic investments
- **2027:** Group of Champion States have announced plans to advance biodiversity-based economic policies
- **2030:** 20 Member States have committed to biodiversity-based economic policies

### Metrics for success:

In addition to monitoring millions of dollars directed annually to biodiversity-focused investments and number of member states having announced biodiversity-focused economic policies, this initiative will explicitly track the following metrics:

- *UN Common Approach to Biodiversity*, Objectives 6 (investment to accelerate green, just transitions) and 10 (reform of markets, economic, financial practices)
- *Convention on Biological Diversity*, headline indicators D.2 (domestic public funding), 18.1 (positive

incentives introduced), 18.2 (harmful incentives eliminated), Target 14 indicators (including number of countries with implementation of system of environmental-economic accounting)

- *Sustainable Development Goals* indicators 8.4 (resource efficiency), 12.2 (sustainable management of natural resources), 15.9 (ecosystem and biodiversity values integrated into planning, processes and strategies), 15.A (financial resources mobilized), 17.14 (enhanced policy coherence)

### Roles and responsibilities of partners:

- UNEP will lead the coordination of this HII
- Other UN agencies will provide overall support in relation to particular dimensions of the initiative, including United Nations Development Programme to ensure a development focus; Food and Agriculture Organization to integrate with agrifood systems transformation; Convention on Biodiversity to align with Global Biodiversity Framework Targets; United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to link with comprehensive risk governance and risk financing; UNESCO to coordinate an approach linking research, nature and culture to conserve biodiversity and use it sustainably through World Heritage Sites, the Man and the Biosphere programme and the UNESCO Global Geoparks; Environment Management Group to support system-wide collaboration to implement the UN Common Approach to biodiversity; Development Coordination Office to support coordination of actions at the country level
- Member States, International and Regional Financial Institutions and the private sector will also serve as critical partners

## LEADING AGENCY



## COLLABORATING AGENCIES



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For an overview of the High Impact Initiatives visit the [Transformative Actions](#) action tab on the [SDG Summit website](#)