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His Excellency Mr Munir Akram  
The President of the Economic and  
Social Council  
United Nations Secretariat  
New York, New York 10017  
United States of America

31 March 2021

Your Excellency,

It is with great pleasure that I submit for your consideration and use the input of IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, to the preparations for this year's High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, in particular, on this year's HLPF theme and the specific SDGs under review as viewed from the perspective of IUCN and its mission of nature conservation.

The input, which accompanies this letter, addresses the various topics enumerated in the ECOSOC President's letter of 18 November 2020 in which you invite inputs. It is framed in terms of IUCN's major recently launched initiative on a "Nature-based Recovery", which is designed to encourage and support countries to incorporate significant nature-positive investments in their economic recovery packages so as to "build back better and greener" from the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts.

It is our analysis that such nature-positive investments can also yield significant economic and livelihood benefits to countries in both the near term and the longer run. We also encourage the allocation of some portion of those nature-positive investments to support community-led initiatives of indigenous peoples on their own lands, in the spirit of "leaving no one behind". Furthermore, we urge public and private creditors to consider using programmatic "debt-for-nature" and "debt-for-climate" swaps together with other measures aimed at relieving the debt burdens of the significant number of debt-distressed low-income countries.

We hope this input proves useful as you prepare with the UN Secretariat for the HLPF and as you begin to craft elements of the HLPF/ECOSOC Political Declaration.

We at IUCN stand ready to be of any further assistance we can provide to ensure a successful 2021 HLPF, with a view to getting the world on track and accelerating progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals in this the Decade of Action and Delivery.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BO', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dr Bruno Oberle  
Director General