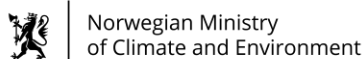
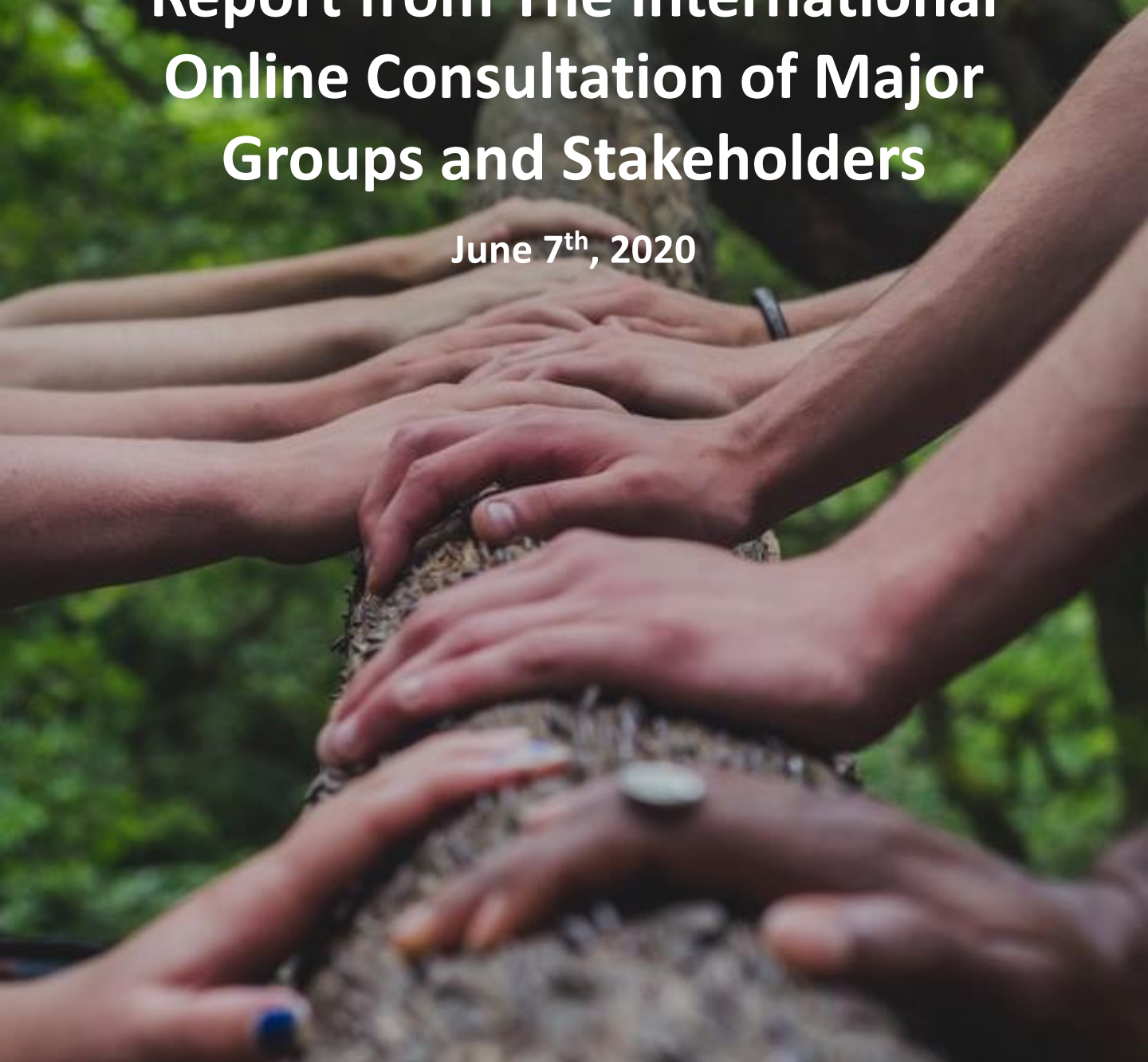


Report from The International Online Consultation of Major Groups and Stakeholders

June 7th, 2020



Preface to the report on the Oslo Major Groups and Stakeholder Consultation, presented through the Oslo Act #ForNature Online Forum, June 7, 2020

In preparation for the fifth UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA5) scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya, February 2021, an international online consultation for major groups and stakeholders was held on 7th June 2020 as part of the Oslo Act #ForNature Online Forum hosted by the Norwegian presidency of UNEA 5. The online consultation served as an integral element of the meeting of the UNEA 5 Bureau and the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, CPR, June 8 to 10, 2020.

The main themes of the consultation were: *Tackling Ocean Pollution, Health and Environment, Ecosystem Restoration, Biodiversity and Development and Involvement and Implementation*. Following public panel discussions and closed group discussions, the Major Groups^[1] came together to develop their concrete key requests and recommendations on these themes.

The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development^[2] was contracted by UNEP to organise and coordinate the online consultation including finalising its report. The content of the consultation was developed by the members and constituencies of the nine major groups through various inputs (see also the programme of the entire Oslo consultation).

This report is compiled and edited by The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development, as part of their contracted delivery. The structure of the report has been discussed with the Major Groups Facilitating Committee, which also mandated The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development, to compile the report. The report reflects the discussions and input by the non-state stakeholders and as such is not a joint consensus statement. Speakers identified or major groups directly referenced in the report are responsible for their own statements.

The content of the report is also based on written statements from the panellists as viewed during the on-line sessions, and the contextual perspectives given in the report are all based on notes from the moderators of each breakout session. Each thematic chapter is followed by a section highlighting key requests and recommendations from the major groups and stakeholders on that theme. These sections have been edited on format, according to mandate, to fit the structure of the report. The content with all requests and recommendations are from the notes provided by each major group following the major group discussions.

Any inquiries about this report or the consultation should be directed to The Norwegian Forum for Development and Environment and coordinator Ingrid Rostad at ingrid@forumfor.no

[1] As decided by UNCED 1992, the nine Major Groups are: Women, Children and Youth, Farmers, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, Labour and Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and Technology, Business and Industry.

[2] The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development is an independent Norwegian NGO umbrella organisation supported by 50 Norwegian member NGOs. <https://www.forumfor.no/en/>

How can an international agreement to stop plastic pollution be inclusive and efficient?

Context

The ocean is under threat. The first frameworks to conserve and sustain marine life were introduced in the 1980s, but the abundance of marine animals and habitats, and marine ecosystems' capacity to provide ecosystems services have continued to decrease.^[1]

More than 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans each year, damaging marine wildlife, fisheries and tourism. Up to 80 per cent of all litter in our oceans is made of plastic.^[2]

A global legally binding agreement on plastic has been discussed in previous UNEAs, and UNEA-5 needs to establish a global goal of zero plastic going into the ocean.^[3] Ocean plastic is not just a marine litter problem. It is important to consider the whole life cycle of plastic, including production, consumption and waste.^[4]

The sustainable development goals are interlinked, and tackling ocean pollution is key in achieving them. We need to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The world's population, particularly coastal communities, depend on the ocean to provide their livelihood.

Every phase of an agreement process should consider sufficient consultation of all stakeholders with their feedback also taken into consideration, especially coastal communities. The agreement must bring together the collective effort of all parties, major groups and stakeholders.^[5]

[1] Duarte et al., 2020. *Rebuilding marine life*.

[2] UNEP, 2017. *UN Declares War on Ocean Plastic*.

[3] Eirik Lindebjerg, in the panel on Tackling ocean pollution. June 7th, 2020.

[4] Jane Patton, in the panel on Tackling ocean pollution. June 7th, 2020.

[5] Amayo Passy Ogolla, in the panel on Tackling ocean pollution. June 7th, 2020.

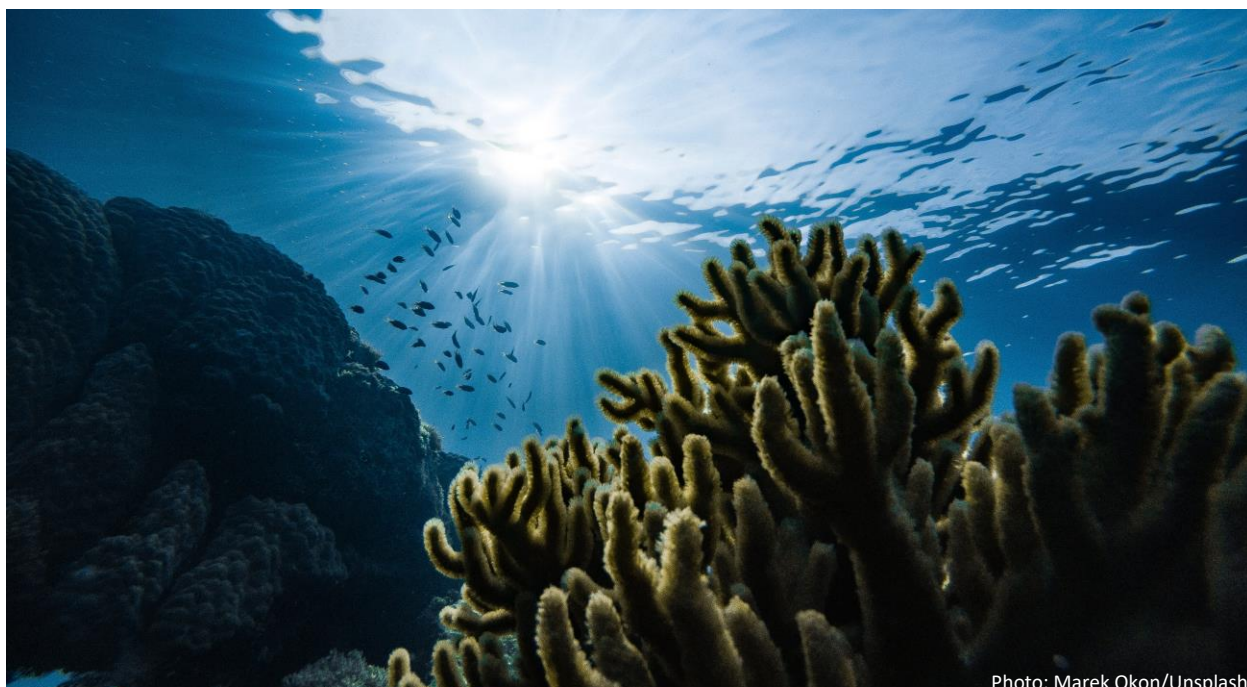


Photo: Marek Okon/Unsplash

Key points discussed

- Life cycle approach
- Inclusiveness
- Efficiency
- Capacity building
- Responsibility

Highlights of the perspectives shared

Perspectives on the life cycle approach

- **The whole cycle of production, consumption and waste** need to be tackled. The plastic issue is more than a marine litter problem.
- **We need to tackle the problem upstream.** An agreement needs to focus on reducing plastic production rather than fighting plastic waste, and it should address harmful subsidies for the petrochemical industry and plastic production. The more plastic we create the more we must remove from our oceans.
- **The availability and the low cost of plastic** packaging needs to be addressed, and the framework must be conscious of the threats created by bioplastics, which is also single use, disposable, negatively affecting marine life, and possibly toxicity.
- **Innovative and truly sustainable solutions** to the plastic problem helps create jobs, and they need to be at the heart of green recovery plans. Bottom-up initiatives are important as well as positive partnerships with the business sector.
- **A sustainable development index** could be implemented. One could underline good initiatives, for instance companies going completely plastic free. An index must be based on science and must not have unintended consequences.

Perspectives on inclusiveness:

- **Affected communities must have a strong voice** for an agreement to be inclusive in the entire life cycle of plastic. This includes communities affected by toxic impact from production and waste facilities on land, as well as those paying the direct price of marine plastic pollution, such as fishermen and other groups whose livelihood depends on the oceans. These communities are often forgotten, even though they are the ones who face the toxic impact on their health and environment.
- **Ensure monitoring by people on the ground** who are affected by plastic pollution, as well as local authorities.
- **The business community needs a voice** in the agreement. It is important that smaller businesses, such as community-based businesses and zero waste businesses, are included. We need more businesses than the plastic industry onboard. Inclusiveness means engaging with truly sustainable business models.
- **Look to other conventions for examples of inclusiveness**, e.g. the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and other people working in rural areas (UN-DROP) and the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small-Scale Fisheries (SSF).

Perspectives on efficiency:

- **An agreement needs to balance “inclusive”** (which requires a wider consultation and as many stakeholders as possible) and “efficient” (which could mean speeding up the process) and minimize the tradeoff between the two. To find a balance we need to learn from previous agreements and remain inclusive: work both from bottom up, getting “champions” behind, but also learn from other processes.
- **It will take time to develop a legally binding mechanism.** In the meantime, we need to take immediate measures to end plastic pollution by banning single use plastics everywhere, to end burning of plastics, and to ensure there are no more loopholes in a closed life cycle for the remaining plastics still in circulation.
- **The agreement must be complementary** to, and imbedded in, other international frameworks to be efficient. It should not become another “empire” and a burden for developing countries in terms of reporting and bureaucracy.

Perspectives on capacity building:

- **To avoid a conversation just among “experts”**, the agreement must have a link to the broader community. Capacity building and awareness raising can contribute to forming such linkages.
- **We need much stronger education** and capacity building for consumers and stakeholders such as youth and women, and decision makers in cooperation with scientists, to quickly move consumption patterns away from plastics purchasing and littering. Education and capacity building must be independent and publicly funded.
- **We should build on partnerships** such as EU4Ocean platform, UNEP 10YFP for SCP and UNESCO’s Education for sustainable development, as well as The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.
- **Ocean Literacy is important** to reconnect people with ocean issues and pollution. Ocean literacy should therefore be a central part of capacity-building and raising awareness on ocean issues.

Perspectives on responsibility:

- **Common but differentiated responsibilities** should be the base of the agreement. We should not put the burden on developing countries, but rather look at the responsibilities of the industrialized ones. The damages for coastal countries must be considered.
- **Support for countries in the Global South** is needed to collect and recycle plastic that has already been produced, and that has to some degree also been dumped on them by the Global North.
- **We need a global trust fund**, funded by placing fees on the plastics industry, in order to fund the needed measures to build capacity to change consumption and production patterns, to create the legal measures to ban plastics and to clean up plastic pollution. We need to have extended producer responsibility, to ensure full lifecycle processing.

Women

- UNEA5 to adopt a mandate to negotiate a legally binding instrument to tackle plastic pollution that covers phase-out/reduction of plastic at the up-stream and middle-stream level, and addresses the health impacts of plastic pollution;
- Address other kinds of ocean pollution such as geoengineering (i.e. synthetic micro-bubbles, ocean fertilisation, marine cloud brightening), deep-sea mining and chemicals/hazardous wastes dumping to the ocean;
- Include the impacted communities and vulnerable populations in the plastic negotiation process (i.e. fish-eaters, communities impacted by fracking activities, petrochemicals industry pollution).
- Meaningful engagement with the right-holders to assess new technologies.

Children and Youth

- A structural approach for banning single-use plastic through international environmental legislation.
- More systematic protection of the oceans, including contamination through chemical waste.
- Indirect pollution through the effects of climate change (for example oil spills due to melting permafrost) has to be tackled structurally.

Indigenous Peoples

- Full, meaningful and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities, including women and youth, in UNEP's work on tackling ocean pollution, including in the partnerships.
- Recognition of traditional knowledge and practices and innovations of Indigenous Peoples' and local communities, and of women in plans and actions to address ocean pollution.

- The action to be taken can be the uptake of an "integrated landscape approach" to engage land-based stakeholders to promote their understanding and cooperation on reducing land-based impacts on marine environment.

Non-Governmental Organizations

- A clear mandate for negotiations for a new binding instrument to govern plastic across its lifecycle. The mandate should also include other ocean pollutants, within a larger holistic approach to chemicals and waste-management.
- Enforceable policy dealing with the majority of world oceans.
- Engage private sector not only for packaging issues but for friendly production and manufacturing plastics and hold private sector accountable and committed to the process.
- Encourage partnership between NGOs, government entities and the private sector to collaborate in raising awareness about microplastic effects and provide more sustainable ways towards dealing with plastic, especially with individuals.

Local Authorities

- Encourage local governments in leading sustainable consumption, procurement and circular economy practices.
- Enhance mobilization of national and global financial resources in order to support coastal zone municipalities.

Workers and Trade Unions

- A legally binding treaty on plastic pollution. Plastic pollution is threatening biodiversity, but also the livelihoods of millions of workers and their families.

Business and Industry

- Develop strong implementing guidelines in the local community waste management both upstream and downstream.
- Identify Centers of Excellence to build capacity in developing business models for waste management that would generate economic gains for the community and therefore minimize downstream waste by managing it upstream.

Scientific and Technological Community

- A clear, time bound, mandate to negotiate the adoption of a new, legally binding global convention on plastic pollution

- a global response with a legal mandate and a binding implementation mechanism to minimise marine plastic pollution through prevention. This can only be achieved through stringent upstream controls, global market restrictions and binding reduction targets.

Farmers

- Stop the formation of ocean dead zones, eliminate nutrient pollution of oceans mainly caused by fertilizer runoff from agricultural fields by using agroecological production methods and avoiding leaving soils bare, and restoring vegetation along river courses and on estuaries and wetlands.

Health and Environment: What post-pandemic recovery looks like

Context

75 percent of the land surface is significantly altered by human activity. Across much of the highly biodiverse tropics, huge amounts of forest are still lost, and globally around 1 million species face extinction.^[6] Environmental change cause increases in infectious zoonotic diseases.^[7]

Industrial agriculture is a major driver of deforestation, pollution and decline in the world's wildlife, and COVID-19 is the latest disease to emerge from our treatment of animals.^[8]

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the importance of the relationship between humans and nature for global health and prosperity. We all share one planet. Human health, the health of other animals, and the health of entire ecosystems are completely interconnected.

As we build back better in response to COVID-19, those that have been the last among us must be the first in our minds, and be reflected in the priorities of the post-pandemic recovery. Unemployed youth are among the groups that need support in the recovery.^[9]

COVID-19 has led to serious attacks on human and labor rights. Decent work and a just transition of the workforce should be at the center of a truly inclusive, sustainable and resilient post-pandemic recovery.^[10]

[6] IPBES, 2019. *The global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services*.

[7] UNEP, 2016. *UNEP frontiers 2016 report: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern*.

[8] Philip Lymbery, in the panel on Post-pandemic recovery. June 7th, 2020.

[9] Hadia Sheerazi, in the panel on Post-pandemic recovery. June 7th, 2020.

[10] Francis Kim Upgi, in the panel on Post-pandemic recovery. June 7th, 2020.

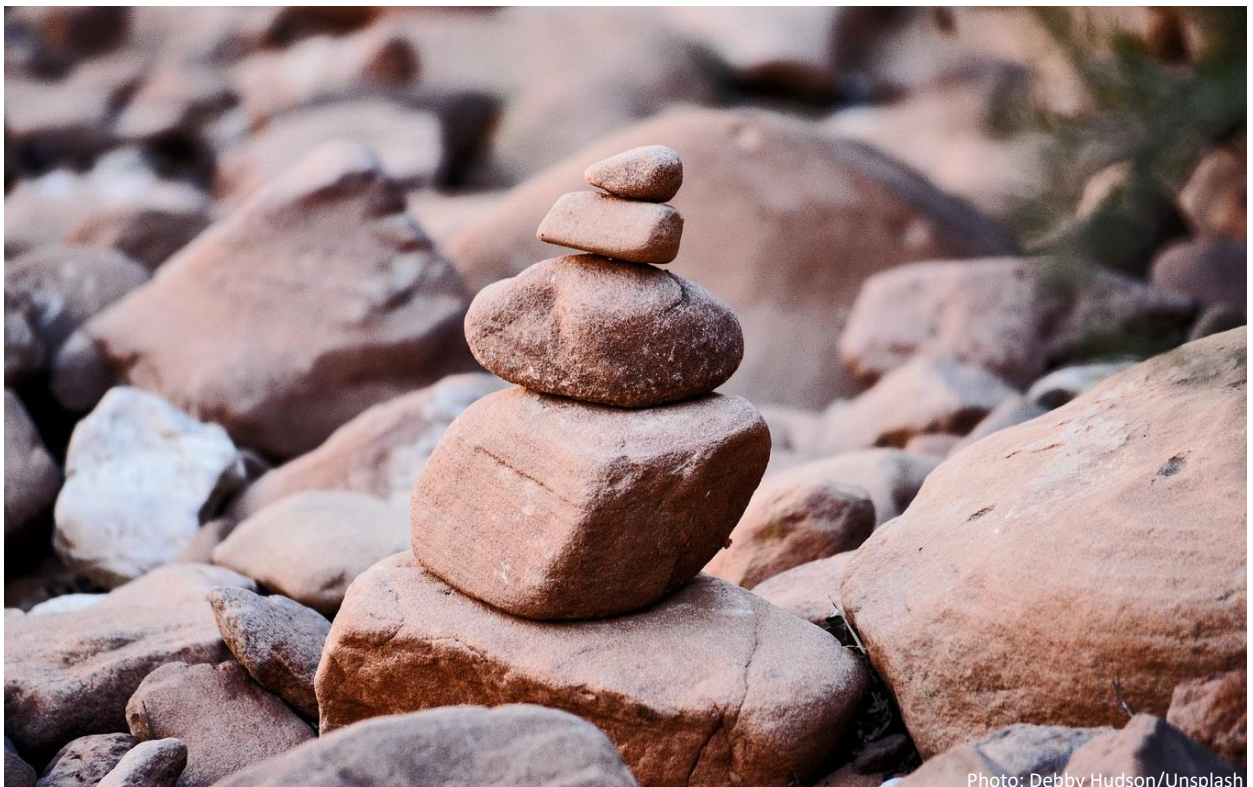


Photo: Debby Hudson/Unsplash

Key points discussed

- System change
- Building back better
- Just transition
- Health and environmental linkages

Highlights of the perspectives shared

Perspectives on system change:

- **Any policy or convention must address the root causes** of problems and the structural barriers to sustainability. The root causes of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as deforestation, wildlife trade, and displacement of indigenous communities must be addressed, as well as inequalities between and among societies and genders.
- **A transformation to sustainability** demands a change of today's power structures and involves rethinking and radically changing systems, such as the food system.
- **The COVID-19 crisis and recovery are the opportunity** of a lifetime for deep economic transformation. Government bailouts can reinforce the status quo or implement system change. Economic support in the recovery should only include conditional funding and be linked to environmental sustainability.
- **We must recognize cultural narratives.** The culture of competition can't be part of the new reality – we need to demonstrate a new shift in thinking and change the whole economic growth paradigm.
- **Radical change is possible.** The COVID crisis demonstrates that most people are willing to radically change their lives in order to protect human survival.

Perspectives on building back better:

- **How we monitor and respond to a crisis** is critical. We need to enhance international cooperation in how we deal with early monitoring. Reforming multi-lateral agencies to fit purposes is a timely discussion.
- **Strong policies and measures decided at UNEA-5** should prevent a roll back of environmental measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Novel consumption cultures** must be strongly encouraged. One way of improving people's access to goods and services without increasing the stress on the planet is to share or lease. A sharing economy reduces waste, improves resource efficiency, and enables development and innovative entrepreneurship for sustainability.
- **A non-toxic circular economy is the future.** We need to change consumption and production models to reduce our use of natural resources and CO2 emissions. A global minimum standard of chemical standards is needed to ensure a non-toxic circle.
- **We should rebuild the future of work** around uplifting people. The impact on workers during COVID-19 demonstrate the need to increase the focus on health in corporate social responsibility. Companies have an important role in protecting staff and communities.
- **A transition from large scale industrial sectors** to local, sustainable production and

consumption is one way to build resilience. Small and medium-sized enterprises need support to engage in sustainability reporting. We must discuss how we get the right policy environment for the new (aspired) business model.

- **A move to agroforestry** and restorative and regenerative agriculture, increase biodiversity and help prevent climate change. Governments should support small and medium scale food producers that take care of nature and provide jobs and food free of most antibiotics.
- **Environmental conservation** must be at the basis of all policy making, and this should be the main outcome of UNEA-5.
- **We need a cross sectoral view.** In the recovery it is not enough to address CO2 emissions alone. We must tackle pollution, improve sanitation and health services, and address human rights impacts, such as increased violence against women and girls due to COVID-19.
- **Cross-constituency collaboration** between Major Groups is needed. Local authorities can foster and stimulate this collaboration focusing on better regulation, involving all stakeholders and implementing innovative policies.

Perspectives on just transition:

- **Recovery policies must include all stakeholders.** Such policies need to be perceived as fair, equitable, and respective of justice. Just transition policies promoted by the unions are a concrete proposal for this. Other proposals include participatory democracy measures.
- **We must put health before wealth.** Health problems in developing countries often emanate from weak policies that do not protect the health of citizens. Investments in health and environment need to have priority over investments in non-essential sectors.
- **Building local capacities is central** to a just transition. Most underdeveloped and developing economies are suffering from a lack of knowledge and capacity building systems. Education and empowerment of women on reproductive health is important.
- **It is of vital importance to ensure that social justice,** environmental justice, and respect/protection of indigenous knowledge and peoples are part of the recovery as well as ascribing legal rights to nature.

Perspectives on health and environmental linkages:

- **We need to enforce and strengthen** existing conventions on health and environment, particularly the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata conventions, to halt spread of toxic substances weakening health and resilience.
- **Non-communicable diseases** are also worsened by pollution and environmental destruction and needs to be addressed.
- **Nature experiences, food, and exercise** are linked to physical and mental health. A more active and outdoor lifestyle with nourishing food is positive for both human and planetary health.
- **Research on health and environment,** as well as implementing robust vaccine programs is essential.

Women

- Stop bailing out polluters (chemicals industry, airlines, agro-industry, etc.) and divest from dirty technology/industry.
- Admit and emphasize the link between environmental pollution and human health that affect all populations, especially the vulnerable populations.
- Replace agriculture and food production system with decentralised, localized, and biodiverse peasant and women-led agriculture system with agroecology approach.
- Enforce existing environmental health conventions and agreements (Climate Change, BRS and Minamata Conventions, and SAICM), phase-out harmful chemicals production and use in products and processes, replace with organic and nature-based materials.

Children and Youth

- Address and recognize the inter-linkages between biodiversity loss, zoonotic diseases and biodiversity.
- member states must make a clear call for stepping up youth involvement in decision-making on health issues.
- A holistic approach to health.
- Specifically talking about COVID-19, the impact of the pandemic on food security and safety for children and youth, particularly migrant children.

Indigenous Peoples

- Provide a crucial foundation for community-based solutions.
- Recognition of Indigenous knowledge of sustainable development which represents an ecological alternative to economic progress which is based on a human rights approach that emphasizes universality, equality, participation and accountability.
- Granting political and cultural rights ensuring

the preservation of traditional practices and lands, indigenous peoples can play a meaningful role in global disaster management process.

- Develop a platform that puts indigenous initiatives nowhere but at the forefront of sustainable development and solution agenda, and enable constructive right-based multi-stakeholder dialogue between indigenous peoples, authorities, the academic and business groups in building and promoting actionable indigenous science.
- Design a roadmap for multi-stakeholder partnership that simultaneously fosters economic development, empowers local actors, and conserves traditional indigenous practices and increase the awareness of interested stakeholders

Non-Governmental Organizations

- Sustainable production and consumption with intersectoral transparency standards for chemicals of concern, to eliminate them from material flows - which would also unlock the circular economy and protect ecosystems from further extractive activities.
- Transitioning out of industrial agriculture and fishing, and into regenerative agriculture/agroecology and artisanal, small-scale fisheries.
- No investment that harm the environment and climate should be encouraged.
- Green jobs must be supported and fostered.
- Local food systems and smallholders must be adequately supported and included in the conversation around food systems.
- A One Welfare: mental health and all dimensions of welfare must be taken into account and addressed.
- Mainstream human and animal health and welfare, and prioritize health care in any decision.

- Develop harmony with nature and change consumer habits, way of living, and business industry.
- Access to clean water for all.
- Recovery package should be sustainable.
- Stop illegal trade with animals.
- Focus to solve environmental challenges for human health such as air pollution.
- Prioritize health care rather than cure and medicine

Local Authorities

- UN and national governments must renew their commitment and mobilize more resources to deliver SDGs, and the Rio Conventions on climate-land-nature through multilevel and collaborative action, so that the health of citizens, livelihood and planet is sustained.

Workers and Trade Unions

- environmental sustainability will not be possible without social justice. Introducing this crucial element of social justice in the UNEA negotiations will be crucial to provide policy answers that can deliver the changes we urgently need.
- Just Transition measures and policies that combine environmental protection with decent jobs, social protection and social justice are needed. Without these measures, there will never be the necessary support in society for the measures that are urgently needed.
- Integration of a strong Human Rights dimension in the negotiations. It is important to stress that 'labour rights' are 'human rights'.

Business and Industry

- UNEA5 should discuss policies that would institutionalise ESG disclosure on businesses. Environmental, Social and Governance disclosure in businesses are either

mandatory or voluntary. As it is right now, there is no strong regulatory framework that will mandate business disclose on environmental impacts.

- UNEA5 should include in its programme of work mechanisms to involve and build capacity on MSMEs to disclose environmental impacts. This will eventually bring MSME value by allowing them to integrate to the global value chains.
- Develop networks of key partners for in-country implementation, outreach and roll-out of standard ESG disclosure for business taking the MSME's into consideration.

Scientific and Technological Community

- A renewed focus on human and ecological wellbeing that requires new infrastructure designs and deep reforms in governance arrangements, corporate accountability and responsibility, financial institutions, sustainable lifestyles, economic models, and business practices to build social capital, equity and trust.

Farmers

- Take concrete action on systemic issues such as poverty, landlessness and lack of land ownership of women farmers, poisoning of land, water and food, destruction of biodiversity by monocropping, corporate control and industrial farming.
- Strengthen local food systems, local markets and short supply chains, small and women farmers, indigenous people and fisherfolk. They are the resilience against any future pandemic, which climate change threatens very potently.
- Encourage the adoption of sustainable, diverse diets by creating nutrition policies linked to a diverse, nutrition-sensitive agriculture based on agroecological principles.

Ecosystem Restoration, Biodiversity and Development: How can we have development in harmony with nature?

Context

Living in harmony with nature means that we must do things differently. To change the current development model, we must ask what development means and who it is for.^[11] The COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to redefine development and prioritize health.

Indigenous peoples have experience with living in harmony with nature. Comprising less than five percent of the world's population, indigenous peoples' lands guard as much as 80 percent of the world's biodiversity.^[12]

Indigenous people feel responsible for the ecosystems but decentralized from decisions. A human rights approach to ecosystem restoration, biodiversity and development could better include indigenous peoples and other stakeholders such as local communities, women and youth.^[13]

We need to protect nature and environmental defenders such as indigenous peoples and women's groups.^[14]

[11] Isis Alvarez, in the panel on Development in harmony with nature. June 7th, 2020.

[12] Rodion Sulyandziga, in the panel on Development in harmony with nature. June 7th, 2020.

[13] Rodion Sulyandziga, in the panel on Development in harmony with nature. June 7th, 2020.

[14] Noelene Nabulivou, in the panel on Development in harmony with nature. June 7th, 2020.



Photo: Marte Skaara

Key points discussed

- Development
- Human rights
- Nature-based solutions
- The role of indigenous peoples

Highlights of the perspectives shared

Perspectives on development:

- **Development needs to focus on health.** Development too often focuses on GDP and not the wellbeing and prosperity of people and nature. Human and ecosystem health is inextricably connected.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity** to recognize the misevaluation of materialism; to rethink and re-evaluate relationships, community, justice and equality; and to reframe the intersectionality of the crises and underlying patriarchy to develop a new vision of progress.
- **Compassion and respect for nature is** ultimately the foundation for development in harmony with nature.
- **The role of many transnational industries** in ecosystem degradation must be acknowledged, transparency must be increased, and industries must be held accountable. Small businesses in developing countries and/or community-led businesses should have a stronger voice.
- **The Sustainable Development Goals** provide a useful framework for engaging citizens, governments and the corporate world. Companies can gain more by adopting practices that are better harmonized with nature.
- **We need to invest in inclusive community** driven cooperative models of development that are more harmonious with nature, as well as promote new economic activities for youth to avoid repeating previous harmful activities.
- **Governments need to work together** to solve this global problem. We need improved laws, legislation and a strong program of action to enforce compliance at global, national and local levels and ensure development in harmony with nature.

Perspectives on human rights:

- **There is a need to integrate a human rights-based approach** with ecological concerns. The impending ecological crisis and human rights are cross-cutting issues and can no longer be separated. Industries that are a threat to biodiversity and disrespect the human rights of traditional communities must be stopped.
- **Upholding human rights** is not possible without a clean and healthy environment. Thus, UNEP needs to support the implementation of human rights legislation, such as UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas.
- **Vulnerable groups must have the right to their land**, and they must be empowered to make decisions and organize themselves. Governments, businesses and industry actors must listen to vulnerable groups in policy decisions.

- **The gender aspect is central**, and gender equality must start from the principle of equal pay for equal work.
- **Education is needed to change** environmental injustice.

Perspectives on nature-based solutions:

- **Novel technologies** and “nature-based solutions” need to be considered carefully, not allowing urgency of concerns about pandemic recovery or climate crisis to over-ride the precautionary principle, especially in relation to local communities, health and preservation of existing ecosystems and biodiversity.
- **Global funds** such as Green Climate Fund (GCF) should include multi-level accountability mechanisms that work as founding pillars of any ecosystem restoration and nature-based solution programs and projects to avoid green washing.
- **We need to move away** from industrial agricultural systems, and towards regenerative agriculture, which has been used traditionally for centuries.
- **It is important to focus on** solutions in and by local communities, who are the ones that are first impacted by environmental issues. Local communities affected by natural disasters need to be supported to better understand the problem and be part of the solution.
- **Local communities, indigenous peoples, women and youth** are part of the solution towards a green world, yet they are often neglected in the consultation processes. These groups must be included in problem/solution identification. This means that national governments must pay more attention to them and consider gender and inclusion in planning and implementation.

Perspectives on the role of indigenous peoples:

- **Indigenous local knowledge** is important for protecting and enhancing all aspects of biodiversity and the preservation/restoration of local ecosystems. Indigenous knowledge and ways of life must be honored and respected.
- **Indigenous peoples’ value systems**, knowledge and experiences offer an ecological and sustainable alternative to consumptive, materialist and profit-driven economic practices and growth.
- **We must empower, support and strengthen** local communities and indigenous peoples and recognize their crucial role in preserving ecosystem and biodiversity and developing alternatives.
- **We need to listen to and learn from** indigenous communities. Indigenous knowledge should be at the basis for educating communities and decision-makers, so that decision-makers can understand the importance of protecting ecosystems, supporting restoration and regenerating ecosystems services.
- **It is crucial to recognize the legal rights** and territories of indigenous people in international treaties, conventions and national laws. Weak legislation and legal practice are causing indigenous land to be usurped for agricultural and urban expansion.
- **We need to consider the impact of economic activities** on ecosystems where indigenous people live.

Women

- End dirty business practices that destroy the ecosystem and ecosystem services.
- Rethink the development paradigm, and development financing, stop funding false solutions.
- Support interventions using a landscape approach to maintain high biodiversity mix in the ecosystem.
- Promote and support sustainable economic activities especially in the impacted communities in harmony with nature.
- Promote and support more investment in real renewable energy (solar, wind, wave).
- Interventions to restore the ecosystem should be beyond administrative borders and consider ecosystem boundaries.
- Support community-based/women-led initiatives for ecosystems conservation which are the decentralized solutions that can be implemented by indigenous peoples & local communities, including agroecology.

Children and Youth

- Member states should step up contributions to the multi-partner trust fund under the decade, with focus on youth engagement and supporting community-led initiatives and reflect the same in the ministerial declaration.
- UNEP as the custodian for CBD process needs to ensure that the post-2020 biodiversity framework does not suffer from its postponement.
- Ecosystem Restoration has to be conducted in a way that structurally includes youth as actors within the implementation process. In order to do so, grassroot organisations, local communities, indigenous peoples and youth groups have to be empowered through capacity building and targeted resource provision.
- New financial mechanisms and contracted

work have to first be provided to grass-root organisations, local communities, indigenous communities and youth instead of transnational businesses, whenever possible.

Indigenous Peoples

- Combining traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, including peasants in all levels of implementation. UNDRIP, UNDROPS, ILO169, CEDAW and other international HRs agreements should be taken into account.
- Synergies with other Rio Conventions (CBD and UNFCCC) including the work of CBD on WG8j on Traditional Knowledge and other MEAs.
- Address the main drivers of biodiversity loss, including unsustainable production and consumptions models (big agribusiness, mining, infrastructure, energy - as these are also part of mainstreaming biodiversity into sectors in the CBD discussions) and recognise agroecology and other alternatives to addressing holistic approaches to restoration
- Address perverse incentives model and ensure that ecosystem restoration is based on well-being and living in harmony with nature.
- A clear global agreement on the term on NBS
- Addressing the systemic barriers needs to be nested in the human rights based approach if it is to leave no one behind.
- Increase participation in decision-making processes of projects, including Environmental impact assessments (EIA) and strategic environmental impact assessments (SEIA)
- Reference and take into account the reports and recommendations prepared by the SR on Human Rights and the Environment report on healthy ecosystems and human rights: sustaining the foundations of life that will be presented to the GA in October 2020.

- Address the lack of indicators that reflects on the rights to land and territories of IPLC, including gender responsive indicators.
- Support creating an Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group, as GEF.
- strengthen the engagement of UNEP and FAO with IPLCs, Peasants and women in the work on the Decade on ecosystem restoration
- Implementation mechanism of the UNEPs Environmental Defenders Policy.

Non-Governmental Organizations

- Some existing institutional arrangements and instruments need to have far more of a concern around environmental justice, as well as verified impacts and good value for local communities and the most vulnerable.
- Recognition of the legal rights of indigenous peoples to the lands, territories, and resources that they have traditionally owned or occupied.
- New paradigm for the economic system.
- Focus on renewable energy and regenerative agriculture and Ecosystem restoration and protection.
- More resources allocated for research, experts and consultants.
- Putting the rights of nature on the agenda (legal framework for nature, human rights and environment rights).
- Achieve SDGs for environmental protection and climate action.

Local Authorities

- Post2020 deal for nature should advance the engagement of local and subnational governments into a new level and invite other UN processes to be inspired with this experience.

Business and Industry

- UNEA5 should tackle programs and policies

that support scaling-up investment on biodiversity protection on the national and subnational level, supporting innovation on agriculture, fisheries and others that supports the AICHI biodiversity targets and the SDGs.

- Identify and build a network of partners that would speed up sharing of best practices and technology transfer from developed countries to emerging economies and vice versa.
- Build and support establishment of Impact Investing networks for Biodiversity related investments, a mechanism that would capture private investment capital to scale up innovative and sustainable biodiversity related investments

Scientific and Technological Community

- Find a way to protect the indigenous and local communities in sustainable practices but also new ways of using science and technology including ancestral knowledge.
- Build bridges between legal rights and indigenous knowledge – how can scientific community help protect indigenous rights but also biodiversity.
- Promote the idea of a new strategy for development integrating science and nature based solutions.
- Capacity building should be request-driven by the South. South mobility of scientists and engineers is vital to promote the exchange of experience and capacity that will benefit all parties and work toward gender parity in science and technology fields.

Farmers

- A new international framework to halt biodiversity loss in the context of the CBD should emphasize win-win solutions for food security and nature conservation.
- Transformation of our food systems should be a key target for the new deal on nature.

Involvement and implementation: Road to Stockholm+50, UNEP@50 and achieving the SDGs

Context

The loss of biodiversity is accelerating, and more species are under threat today than ever before in human history.^[15] In this time of environmental crisis, UNEP is more important than ever, and its role needs to be discussed.^[16]

Major Groups and Stakeholders have an important role in the UNEP and UNEA processes. Technological advances in combination with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for civil society to engage in international processes in new ways, but the technology gap creates a potential barrier for accessibility.

There is a need to acknowledge the technological gap and that such a gap affects women, indigenous peoples and grassroot groups in particular.^[17] This consultation of Major Groups and Stakeholders was the largest digital consultation on the environment so far, and thus it was important to discuss involvement as well as the environmental issues related to the overall theme of UNEA-5.

The regulations and frameworks the world implements in the coming years will impact the future of those who are young today.

Children and youth are taking to the streets for justice. They are already taking actions and initiating change. The narrative for young people needs to shift.^[18]

[15] IPBES, 2019. *The global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services*.

[16] Jan Gustav Strandenæs, in the panel on Involvement and implementation. June 7th, 2020.

[17] Neth Daño, in the panel on Involvement and implementation. June 7th, 2020.

[18] Yugratna Srivastava, in the panel on Involvement and implementation. June 7th, 2020.



Photo: Major Groups representatives speaking at The International consultation of MGS, June 7th, 2020

Key points discussed

- The structure of Major Groups and Stakeholders
- Access to meetings
- The role of UNEP
- Improving the processes
- The way forward

Highlights of the perspectives shared

Perspectives on the structure of Major Groups and Stakeholders:

- **Partnerships and strengthening of civil-society engagement** are essential in the preparation of UNEA 5 and Stockholm+50.
- **UNEP's Stakeholder Engagement Policy should be continuously updated** with the view to open new and better engagement opportunities for major groups and stakeholders.
- **It is time for Major Groups and Stakeholders** to look forward and shape a role for MGS as key players by developing more strategic ways of lobbying.
- **All civil-society, including less advantaged stakeholders**, should be recognized as self-organized rights-holders by UNEA-5 and member states. This could take the form of an agreement on the role of civil society being co-decisionmakers and actors in the implementation, monitoring and reporting on environmental governance.

Perspectives on access to meetings:

- **Many Major Groups and Stakeholders are unable** to participate in meetings due to limited funding. Resource mobilization and support is required to factor in their voices and participation, especially grassroots organizations/groups.
- **Digital meetings should be further developed**, including ensuring translation and a mapping of the digital gap, resulting in measures to ensure all stakeholders have access to connection means, especially to ensure participation of grassroots organizations that are currently excluded from digital meetings.
- **Non-state actors need capacity building** in various ways to ensure meaningful participation. Meaningful participation is also dependent on MGS receiving preparation material and information on meetings along with other resources in time to prepare.
- **State Actors need to put in place a deliberate strategy** to include youth in delegations to high level events and in all global events. All national delegations should include a youth representative with a well-defined active role in the delegation.
- **When MGS get an opportunity to speak**, it is usually after all member states have spoken and the majority have left the plenary sessions. This should not continue to be the norm. Additionally, all the MGS are not given equal opportunity to speak and share their positions and messages from their constituencies.

Perspectives on the role of UNEP:

- **UNEP should always** work closely with its accredited stakeholders, including less-advantaged groups such as indigenous peoples or children.
- It is suggested to **strengthen the role of the UNEP Civil Society Unit in Nairobi**, to allow them to better assist Major Groups in their engagement with UNEP and UNEA.
- **It is important for civil society** to work in close partnerships with UN agencies' local or regional offices that support civil society representatives along the various processes.
- **The UN should upgrade** UNEP to a Specialized Agency in light of the environmental crisis and the challenges to restore nature. It will be critical for sustainable development. Upgrading UNEP to a Specialized Agency will increase the political weight of UNEP.

Perspectives on improving the processes:

- **Capacity building is necessary.** Having MGS actors at meetings that are not prepared may disturb the process and annoy Member States. Civil society representatives need to be equipped with the right tools and continuously strengthened capacity in different areas, such as: technology, communication, mobilizing communities.
- **More and larger environmental organizations** could be involved on certain topics related to UNEA. The quality of the NGOs is more important than the quantity of participants.
- **There is a wish for more seats at the table** for additional involvement, while keeping in mind that the best way to get more seats is to fill adequately the ones that are already available.
- **Intergovernmental processes are challenging** and multi stepped processes that require strategic coalition building to link inputs to outputs and outcomes. MGS need to know and learn the process and work together. Present, there seems to be a lack of cooperation.
- **MGS need to seize the opportunities** that are presented.

Perspectives on the way forward:

- **Having an MGS conference** prior to Stockholm+50 and UNEP@50, will allow ample time for MGS to meet, discuss and prepare for their interventions and involvement.
- **Stockholm+50 should become** an overarching environmental framework conference, partly virtual, aiming at concrete action, such as binding agreements on ensuring biodiversity protection is at the basis of economies, including the post-pandemic recovery.
- **There is a need for a strong political declaration** on environmental rights at Stockholm+50.
- **The string of UNEP conferences** in the coming years is needed to help build and keep the momentum intensely alive.
- **We should include Interim Targets** in the 2030 Agenda to be established at UNEA-5 and followed up in 2022

Women

- UNEA should recognise the devastating impact of business stakeholder (profit-focused) on rights-holders and the environment, and the conflict of interest of UNEP partnerships with polluters
- UNEA should recognize the gender-digital-divide: fewer women than men have smartphones /access to the internet and are affected by the environmental and social impacts of digital tech (energy use, emissions, scammer, etc.).
- Business stakeholders should also include sustainable solutions providers (recycling industry, alternative delivery system providers, biomaterials packaging manufactures. etc.).
- Meaningful engagement and dialogues with high levels delegates, not only between the major groups.
- Provide more support for sustainable community-led solutions.
- UNEA should support/facilitate meaningful participation of rights-holders, incl. to assess the impact of new technologies.

Children and Youth

- Focus must be laid on how to increase the relevance of the UNEP system as a whole. From laying foundations for SDG12, mainstreaming green economy, success in chemicals and waste agenda, to being an institution that continues to find “a place” for itself in the evolving environmental context.
- Mainstreaming MEAs of UNEP - the CMS convention, the chemicals and waste process, the process on marine litter, the flagship work on UN Decade, and range of themes that are incredibly important, instead of only pushing for climate change, biodiversity and topics that are covered through different UN bodies.
- MGCY supports expanding the outreach to bring a diverse range of groups on the table,

however, this outreach and engagement needs to be done together with the right-holder Major Groups and Stakeholders, which should have early and structured engagement in the lead-up to and at the Stockholm+50 commemoration.

- This includes suggestions such as hosting a large MGOS Forum (similar to ones in UNEA) in lead-up to Stockholm+50, providing space for regional and thematic consultations, self-organised by constituencies, including virtual ones
- Engagement of different actors needs to be inclusive and right-based by design, and not by chance, so the government of Sweden and Kenya must work together with MGS to step up support and their involvement
- We note with much disappointment that the UNEP Mid Term Strategy (MTS) does not include a reference to youth/youth organisations. We suggest addition of a new section, which MGCY is happy to provide a draft of, for reflection in MTS
- MGCY, through its diverse range of member organisations, would like to host youth preparatory consultations/conferences in the preparation for Stockholm+50
- Evolving narrative of engagement of young people from just being a stakeholder group, to being agents of change and group that needs to be empowered and included in the implementation process early and in a structured way.

Indigenous Peoples

- Strengthen the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities and other relevant stakeholders.
- Bring in the dimension of Human Rights approach to well-being and living in harmony with nature, including provision for the recognition of rights.
- Legal empowerment of indigenous peoples and local communities.

- Recognize and support community lead initiatives, including recognition of Biocultural Community Protocols.
- Indicators for the processes to also acknowledge and address traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of IPLCs and of women.
- Identify quantitative and qualitative indicators for the biodiversity strategic framework and its targets, targets adopted under the new Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.
- Realisation of the Global Pact for the Environment in 2020, making space also for addressing the rights of IPLCs and women, including ensuring their participation.

Non-Governmental Organizations

- Adequate support of the agenda going forward, particularly in terms of finance, capacity building and awareness raising.
- Agility for UNEP Secretariat that is adequate given the large breadth of work required.
- More seats at the table for additional involvement, keeping in mind that the best way to get more seats is to fill adequately the ones that are already available.
- Rise against the disconnect with the grassroots by taking into account issues around information and access. Intergovernmental processes are challenging and require strategic coalition building.

Local Authorities

- The practice of multilevel and collaborative governance should be proposed as the new normal in the deliberations for the UN75. The Ministerial-Mayoral Dialogue held on May 28th 2020 could be replicated at the G20 Environment Ministerial planned for September 2020.
- UNEA-5 should provide a better visibility and engagement for the Cities and Regions Summit, including specific invitation to Ministers of Urbanization.

Business and Industry

- Including MSMEs in the outreach-translating what GEO for Business means to MSMEs.
- Develop a fundamental linkage between Science, Policy and MSMEs.
- Strengthen partnerships with MSMEs networks and develop mechanisms that would scope the needs of MSMEs in building capacity and scaling up responsible business.

Scientific and Technological Community

- Science and technology are fundamental in avoiding returning to an unsustainable way of production and consumption.
- Continued engagement in GEO and related processes, and the Science-Business-Policy Forums.
- The scientific and technological community has an important role to play in Stockholm +50 in connection with the Science-Policy Interface and the Green Recovery.

Farmers

- Adopt a human rights-based framework of governance and underlying accountability to improve resilience of food systems by strengthening local food systems, which implies improving the conditions of rural people, advancing genuine agrarian reform, and strengthening agroecological approaches anchored on principles of food sovereignty, and putting appropriate regulatory measures to protect farmers.
- Empower women farmers and strengthen extension services, particularly in the field of sustainable techniques such as organic agriculture and agroecology.
- UNEA-5 needs to send a clear message to the Food Systems Summit planned for 2021: failing to transform food systems towards agroecology, we will face further mass extinction of species, severe impacts of climate change, and increased hunger.