



Statement by the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation to the leadership dialogues at the conference “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”

Background

Stockholm+50 is an international meeting convened by the United Nations General Assembly to be held in Stockholm, Sweden from 2-3 June 2022.¹ The conference will commemorate the 50 years since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which made the environment a pressing global issue for the first time.

Now, 50 years after that Stockholm meeting, the world faces a triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and waste and biodiversity loss. Humanity is operating outside the safe space of several planetary boundaries which is affecting current and future wellbeing. An unhealthy planet threatens human health, prosperity, equality and peace.

The meeting will comprise of the following three leadership dialogues:

- Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all²
- Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic³
- Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development in the context, of the Decade of Action⁴

The Stockholm+50 conference needs to deliver

It is imperative that world leaders show that they take science's alarming reports seriously by concrete action. Now is time for bold and ambitious action to protect and restore terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity, and address the direct and indirect drivers of changes in nature. The systems of production and consumption are driving the loss of biodiversity, climate change and pollution and need to be placed within the safe operating space of the planetary boundaries. Production, direct exploitation and processing of raw materials account for around half of the world's carbon dioxide emissions and over 90 percent of biodiversity loss and water shortages.

Although the focus on leadership, the political reality we face today is often the opposite. One recent example is the suggested reallocation of development aid in Sweden to carry the costs of receiving refugees due to Russia's war on Ukraine. Certainly, Sweden should welcome refugees but not covering the costs by reducing the budget of the already decided ODA and thereby putting one vulnerable and exposed group against another. Withdrawing from important contributions to climate action is the opposite of showing political leadership and not a way to counteract the triple planetary crisis nor to secure the wellbeing of people.

¹ UN resolution 75/280. International meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/280>

² Background paper LD1, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/K22/015/19/PDF/K2201519.pdf?OpenElement>

³ Background paper LD2, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/K22/012/44/PDF/K2201244.pdf?OpenElement>

⁴ Background paper LD3, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/K22/012/38/PDF/K2201238.pdf?OpenElement>



In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global community must act to build forward greener and more just. The global recovery offers a unique opportunity to address the unsustainable and unjust financial system and redirect financial flows to green and sustainable investments. This entails ending the financing of fossil fuels, harmful subsidies, and other kinds of environmentally damaging sectors currently supported.

The way food is being produced must be radically transformed; larger land and sea areas must be protected; run off pollution must be reduced; and sustainable production and consumption must be promoted. The importance of including different value systems and diverse interests and worldviews in formulating policies and actions is fundamental. This includes the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in governance, the reform and development of incentive structures and ensuring that biodiversity considerations are prioritised across all key sector planning.

Any outcome from the Meeting, including the recommendations from the Leadership dialogues, and the Report from the Meeting must respect and secure human rights and be based on Precautionary Principle, Polluter Pays Principle, principles of accountability, the right to access to information, the right to Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC), as well as the principles of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities. The historical debt of the linear economic system, with associated unsustainable and unjust natural resource exploitation and distribution of benefits by Western nations must be recognized. The same goes for emissions and climate impacts. Countries that have contributed the least, are the ones most severely impacted with increased water scarcity, malnutrition and food insecurity, poverty, increased conflicts, forced migration and outbreak of diseases.

Leadership dialogue 1, Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all

The recommendations following Leadership dialogue 1 should:

- Address the drivers behind the loss of biodiversity and climate change, inter alia unsustainable and unjust management of natural resources, unsustainable food systems, unsustainable production and consumption cultures, unsustainable financial flows.
- Address the necessity of placing the material footprint of nations within planetary boundaries. The flow of virgin materials into the economy must be reduced. Products need to be designed for long life spans ensuring the use of durable materials and reparability. Circular economy strategies should be complemented with collaborative consumption models that further improve material resource efficiency.
- Respect the collective land and tenure rights of IPLCs, knowledge systems and conservation methods. To achieve the goal of protecting at least 30 percent of the world's land and water by 2030, the approach needs to change regarding how protection is designed and who qualifies as a conservationist.
- Entail a stronger commitment from business and industries, including the global food system, to take greater responsibility for biodiversity and climate. This includes ending harmful subsidies to chemical-intensive agriculture practices and industrial fisheries, while agriculture based on agro-ecological principles and low impact fisheries, with special attention to small scale artisanal fisheries, is promoted as well as recognise the value of wild food from natural forests, an important part of indigenous food systems.
- Place accountability where it belongs through endorsing the human rights and environmental due diligence in international legal frameworks of binding rules for corporations and the financial sector. The vulnerable situation of environmental defenders, and especially women, must be recognised and the global community must position itself against the growing abuse against environmental defenders and the prevailing impunity with which these acts are committed.



- Ensure, recognise and respect the principles of full and meaningful participation, justice and human rights for all. This includes the rights to lands, territories, waters, and resources that IPLCs have traditionally owned, occupied or used.
- Urge any investments in nature-based solutions to be based on functional and sustainable local solutions. These initiatives must respect human rights and include the knowledge-based management methods of IPLCs

Leadership dialogue 2, Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The recommendations following Leadership dialogue 2 should:

- Ensure that the economic recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic builds on the opportunity to redirect resources for a sustainable and just transition, which entails moving them from fossil fuels, harmful subsidies, environmentally damaging sectors, to instead support investments in low impact and small scale artisanal fisheries and aquaculture, safe circular economy, agroecology and organic farming, healthy natural forests, procurement models that promote sustainable practices/products, green chemistry, renewable energy production technologies, energy carriers and storage technologies.
- Secure adherence to global commitments, such as e.g., the Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Small scale Fisheries and the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure. Those are key instruments which builds upon the principles of human rights and gender equity and recognise women's participation all along the value chain, as well as the centrality of gender in other intersecting issues, for example human rights, wellbeing, food security, and climate change.
- Encourage all states to include and base innovations and solutions on all knowledge systems (indigenous and traditional, men, women, youth) and to further foster South-North knowledge exchange and cooperation.
- Ensure that environmental defenders, often threatened when criticising harmful business practices, are protected. International human rights and environmental due diligence requirements in the entire value chain of companies is crucial to ensure that affected people can get access to justice and hold companies accountable. It is particularly important to ensure IPLCs meaningful and safe participation in decision making processes when business practices have an impact on their livelihoods, and that their Free Prior and Informed Consent is respected.
- Support programs developed together with representatives of civil society, including from unions, women's rights groups and environmental defenders. A just transition depends on increased support to IPLCs women, children and young people along with implementation of measures against land and ocean grabbing, and gender mainstreaming in all support programs and subsidies.

Leadership dialogue 3, Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of Sustainable Development in the context, of the Decade of Action.

The recommendations following Leadership dialogue 3 should:

- Constitute a concrete and tangible step towards the shift to an economic model that serves the common good within planetary boundaries. This must also include endorsing the ambition of moving away from overexploitation of ecosystems. Overconsumption must be curbed.
- Ensure the prevention, halting and reversing of the degradation of ecosystems. Without reviving ecosystems, the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement cannot be achieved.



- Recommit to the scaling up of finance to ensure a just transition. This includes recalling already existing targets that are yet to be met, as well as call for measures to reduce the debt burdens of lower income countries that hinder their ability for a just transition.
- Call for coherent, agile and responsive governance systems. The planetary crisis and the need for a just transition is cross-sectoral and must be addressed with a whole-of-government approach. All action must be inclusive and coherent to both science and the rights and knowledge of all age groups, genders and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.
- Secure the reduction of all barriers to meaningful and safe civil society participation in consultation and decision-making processes. This includes ensuring both transparency and anti-corruption.
- Envision a global framework to coordinate environmental and human rights legislation, as well as setting the framework for an economy that works for both planet and people. A human rights-based approach must permeate all proposals for climate and environmental measures. Attention should be paid to the new human right to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment.