

The Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Manifesto

Developed for the UN Climate Action Summit 2019¹

14th August 2019

Climate is changing rapidly, undermining the security of current and future generations. Climate change and biodiversity collapse mean that our world is facing a double crisis. The threat to all countries is increasing and there is an urgent need to scale-up response efforts.

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) are a fundamental part of action for climate and biodiversity. Authoritative research² indicates that NBS can provide over one-third of the cost-effective climate mitigation needed between now and 2030 to stabilize warming to below 2 °C, achieving nature's mitigation potential of 10-12 gigatons of CO₂ per year³. Adequate investment in NBS will help reduce financial consequences of climate change, and contribute to the creation of new jobs, to livelihood resilience and to reducing people's poverty. NBS underpin the Sustainable Development Goals: they support vital ecosystem services, biodiversity, access to fresh water, improved livelihoods, healthy diets and food security from sustainable food systems.

NBS are an essential component of the overall global effort to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. They are a vital complement to decarbonisation, reducing climate change risks and establishing climate-resilient societies. They value harmony between people and nature, as well as ecological development and represent a holistic, people-centred response to climate change. They are effective, long-term, cost-efficient and globally scalable.

NBS are already being delivered, are visible and credible, and can be exponentially scaled-up if they are fully valued and receive proper investment. Action is needed now to ensure that they achieve their full potential. At present NBS only receive a small share of climate finance. Success depends on maximizing nature's contribution to climate action, with intensified NBS from now onwards. Indeed, there are many examples of best practices and many emerging initiatives are ready for extension and intensification.

To unlock nature's full potential in climate action, world leaders should do all within their power to ensure that nature's transformative potential is fully valued and realized in decision-making especially in relation to climate action. This includes governance processes that are designed to stop the destruction of nature and the damage caused by investments or incentives that contribute to environmental harm.

There is a need to recognize that NBS have an enormous potential which can be effectively realized through international and regional cooperation among States and with the participation and inclusion of all stakeholders, including youth, women, indigenous peoples and local communities.

Those who support the NBS Manifesto in the September 2019 Climate Action Summit acknowledge the important role of nature in climate action and commit to unlocking its full potential of nature through a range of actions.

¹ NBS for Climate Coalition co-leads China and New Zealand: nbs@mee.gov.cn; CCD@mfat.govt.nz; Facilitation team UNEP, CBD, 4SD nbs@4sd.info)

² <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/44/11645>

³ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/22070/EGR_2017.pdf

The following four areas are priorities for the members of the NBS coalition at the Summit:

- 1) Increasing and mainstreaming NBS within national governance, climate action and climate policy-related instruments, including Nationally Determined Contributions, Adaptation Communications, long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies, spatial planning, national development plans, business plans;
- 2) Enhancing regional and international co-operation, in ways that encourage ambition, transparency and environmental integrity and are supported by popular mobilization and campaigns, by forming synergies with regional and international development cooperation agendas and initiatives that help deliver on SDGs; this includes encouraging the establishment of a Group of Friends for NBS (GOF4NBS) following the September 2019 Climate Action Summit;
- 3) Generating the shifts needed in both domestic and international governance and finance to value nature and realize the potential of NBS; ensuring that financial mechanisms are supported with appropriate regulations that are enforced at the national and sub-national levels including promotion and adoption of green supply chains; avoidance of funding for deforestation and other activities that harm ecosystems; increased public and private funding for NBS investment; promoting green finance and innovative incentive measures to promote NBS;
- 4) Scaling-up NBS for mitigation, resilience and adaptation in key areas, ensuring people's livelihoods in the face of climate threats, including a) the conservation and restoration of forest and other terrestrial ecosystems, b) the conservation and restoration of freshwater resources as well as marine and ocean ecosystems, c) sustainable agriculture and food systems; and d) ensuring nature's systemic role in sustainable development in ways that end the loss of biodiversity and optimize nature's contribution to resilient livelihoods, green infrastructure, sustainable settlements and just rural transitions.

Bold action must be taken to conserve, restore and sustainably manage nature for climate mitigation and adaptation. The time to act is now. We will succeed by working together: reconnecting people and nature to implement the Paris Agreement effectively and secure a sustainable future for all – both now and for generations to come.
