

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS (NBS) MESSAGING DOCUMENT

What and who is this document intended for?

The warming climate and the collapse of biodiversity are creating a planetary emergency. Now, more than ever, is the time to resist silver bullet thinking. Although we are all working on different pieces of the response, it is important to acknowledge that the world needs a broad range of solutions, working in concert, not conflict, to emerge from the emergency.

There's no more time for an "either/or" approach. We need to BOTH rapidly decarbonize the world's economy toward zero emissions AND halt the destruction of natural ecosystems, including tropical forests, while also taking steps to restore and sustainably manage landscapes. Doing one without the other puts the goals of the Paris Agreement out of reach, as well as jeopardizing sustainable development and global health.

Nature4Climate and its partners have been working for the past three years to ensure that the potential of nature based solutions are understood within the broader context of climate action and sustainable development. In other words, *combatting* narratives that propose them as an alternative or a silver bullet, and *promoting* narratives that present them as a critical piece of a broader response.

In the document below, we provide key messaging, soundbites, stats and quotes for nature-based solutions and natural climate solutions, which are mindful of the broader context of climate action, economic recovery and sustainable development.

We expect this document to be used primarily by those interested in shaping and refining their messages on nature-based solutions: governments, companies, NGOs and other stakeholders. However, we also hope this document will be useful to other members of the climate and development communities.

Regardless, our overarching goal is that all partners, where appropriate, reinforce the key message that we need to support **both actions that rapidly reduce emissions and the destruction of natural ecosystems, and which promote renewable alternatives and nature-based solutions.**

Key Messages

- The warming climate and the collapse of biodiversity are creating a *planetary emergency*.
- The world needs to take actions that rapidly *reduce* carbon emissions and the destruction of natural ecosystems, and which *promote* renewable alternatives and nature-based solutions.
- *Nature-based solutions* are actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural ecosystems, such as tropical forests, in ways that address a number of societal challenges, simultaneously providing benefits for human well-being and biodiversity.
- Solutions rooted in nature offer us some of the best ways for addressing the planetary emergency.

- However, there is no silver bullet for the planetary emergency.
- Nature-based solutions must be part of a *broad portfolio of solutions* that include dramatic reductions in emissions in our energy, transport, industry and building systems, as well as changes in agricultural practices and consumer habits.
- Solutions rooted in nature are an essential response to the climate threat. In this context, we refer to them as “natural climate solutions.”
- Natural climate solutions have the potential to provide a third of the solution to climate change by 2030 and are one of the most powerful ways for countries to enhance their national climate commitments in the lead up to COP26.
- Despite their value natural climate solutions receive only 11% of public climate finance.
- One the greatest benefits of nature-based solutions is their ability to *simultaneously address multiple challenges and deliver multiple benefits*.
 - While the most immediate priorities of COVID-19 responses have rightly been health and economic well-being, the crisis has also created a new appreciation for how our encroachment on nature poses significant risks.
 - There is more work to be done to help decision-makers recognize the significant benefits and opportunities that nature-based solutions can offer as part of their economic recovery plans to make it a nature-positive recovery
 - Nature-based solutions have the potential to create millions of jobs, lift a billion people out of poverty, and add trillions in productive growth to the global economy.
 - Nature-based solutions can provide clean water, clean air, protect against natural disasters, furnish life-saving medications and ensure long term food security. Science also tells us that reducing deforestation and biodiversity loss will decrease the likelihood of future pandemics.
 - Nature-based solutions can contribute to the resilience of millions of households that are already threatened by the effects of climate change and have the potential to avoid future damages from climate change.

Soundbites

- Natural climate solutions can provide a third of the climate solution.
- We cannot achieve 1.5°C without nature.
- We need to protect, restore and fund nature.
- There are no silver bullets. We must keep the fossil fuel in the ground and the trees standing.
- We can't save the planet without protecting forests - but we won't save the planet if that's all we do.

Quotes

'Nature is angry. And we fool ourselves if we think we can fool nature. Because nature always strikes back. And around the world, nature is striking back with fury.' — António Guterres, UN Secretary General

‘The biggest barrier is a very dangerous mental hangover that investing in nature-based solutions is by definition cheating - by definition “greenwashing”. The fact is that as a planet we need both emissions reductions on the energy side and nature-based solutions. Just as we have a right and a left hand, we need both energy reactions and nature-based solutions.’ —Christiana Figueres, former UNFCCC Executive Secretary, and co-founder of Global Optimism

‘While the loss of nature may seem far away it connects all of us and causes disruption and hardship. We are facing the first pandemic of the century, but perhaps not the last in our lifetime’. — Elizabeth Mrema, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 2020

‘The Covid-19 highlights the close relationship between the health of ecosystems and the health of mankind. Financing to halt deforestation is one of the best investments humanity can make.’ — Mr Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway

‘Conserving nature is not just a moral issue but is also a question of survival for all of us. we must place sustainability at the core of our societies and economies.’ — Mr Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya

‘The high-productivity economies of the future will be those that make the most of artificial intelligence and the technologies of the fourth industrial revolution, while also protecting and enhancing natural capital, such as ecosystems, biodiverse habitats, clean air and water, productive soils, and a stable climate.’ — Lord Stern and Joseph Stiglitz

‘Restoration is not a silver bullet. There is no silver bullet. It is just one of a huge portfolio of solutions that we so desperately need. And this view of trees as an easy way out is such a tempting perspective, but it is a real threat to the climate change movement and to the ecosystems that still remain.’ —Thomas Crowther, ecosystem ecology professor

Key Stats

- Almost a quarter of global carbon emissions are generated from agriculture, deforestation and other forms of land use, with the global loss of tropical forests contributing 10% of annual emissions.
- Deploying natural climate solutions at scale could save more than 11 gigatonnes of CO₂ carbon dioxide every year.
- To reverse the decline in biodiversity by 2030, we need to spend between US\$ 722-967 billion each year over the next ten years. That puts the biodiversity financing gap at an average US\$ 711 billion or between US\$ 598-824 billion per year.
- Nature-based solutions receive only 3-8% of public climate finance.
- The World Economic Forum estimates that nature provides \$125 trillion in assets to humanity, but more than half of global GDP (\$44 trillion) is potentially threatened by biodiversity loss.

Message Breakdown

Nature for Climate

- Solutions rooted in nature are also an essential response to the climate threat. In this context, we refer to them as “natural climate solutions.”
- There is no way we can limit warming to 1.5°C (or 2°C for that matter) without natural climate solutions. Emission reductions alone – while critically important – cannot achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- It is not “either, or.” It is “both, and.” Increasing ambition means committing BOTH to an energy transition AND greater investment in natural climate solutions.
- Natural climate solutions have the potential to provide around ***a third of the solution to climate change*** by 2030 and are one of the most powerful ways for countries to enhance their national climate commitments in the lead up to COP26.
- NCS are cost-effective. With supporting policy and investment, NCS can be delivered in an affordable way, in every country, across all landscapes.
- NCS are viable and immediate climate solutions. They are ready to deploy now, without the need for expensive or unproven technologies.
- NCS are globally scalable. They can be implemented immediately in [every single country](#), and most of these solutions (c.70%) involve no change to existing land use or land ownership.
- NCS are politically attractive. They do not come at the cost of other development priorities. They can be rolled out in ways that combat land degradation, put healthy and nutritious food on peoples’ tables, deliver economic benefits, create jobs in rural communities and build resilience to climate change, all at the same time.
- Despite their value they are not fully understood or funded:
 - Natural climate solutions receive less than 8% of public climate finance, up from 3% in 2018. While this increase is welcome, it is still deeply insufficient.
 - There are far too many financial incentives that are encouraging deforestation and unsustainable land use.
 - Forty times more finance is flowing into these activities than is going to green finance.
 - To deliver the full potential of NCS, we need to properly value the benefits they provide, and then there needs to be a significant transformation in existing flows of domestic and international finance, as well as the generation of new sources of finance.

Nature for Health and Safety

- Healthy ecosystems can provide clean water, clean air, protect against natural disasters, furnish life-saving medications and ensure long term food security.
- Protecting natural ecosystems will in all likelihood reduce risks of new zoonotic diseases spreading to humans, mitigating the risk of another pandemic like COVID-19.
- But forests and other natural ecosystems can also improve local and regional air quality. For example, at a cost of an average of \$4 per urban resident, trees could help cool cities while reducing life-threatening, and costly air pollution.

- Urban greening strategies have been found to reduce mortality rates under projected average warm season and heat wave conditions in 2050 by approximately 50%.
- Many of the drugs used today for health care and disease prevention were discovered from plant sources. Between 25-50% of pharmaceutical products are derived from genetic resources; and 70% drugs used for cancer treatment are natural or synthetic products inspired by nature.
- Nature-based solutions will contribute to the resilience of millions of households that are already threatened by the effects of climate change and have the potential to avoid more than \$3.7 trillion in damages from climate change.

Nature for Prosperity and a Nature-Positive Recovery

- Nature underpins human prosperity and economic growth. It's critical to properly value the full range of benefits that natural ecosystems offer, and the role they play in building sustainable economies and communities.
- Investing in nature-based solutions is about investing in people, jobs and the economy.
- The benefits derived from biodiversity and ecosystem services are considerable, but are systematically undervalued or unvalued in day-to-day decisions, market prices and economic accounting. Conventional accounting approaches and measures of economic performance (such as GDP) provide only a limited picture of an economy's health, and generally, overlook the costs of ecosystem degradation. If properly counted, the global public goods benefits from forests would be in the order of trillions.
- More than half of global GDP – \$42tn – depends on high-functioning biodiversity.
- Forest resources support the livelihoods of more than 1.5 billion people around the world. Forests are home to 350 million people around the world, while 60 million indigenous peoples almost wholly depend on them for their livelihoods.
- A systemic transformation to a nature-friendly economy could create 395 million jobs and deliver \$10.1 trillion of economic value by 2030.
- Large-scale ecosystem restoration efforts, usually supported by government programs, have enormous potential to create jobs, perhaps as many as 40 jobs for every \$1 million invested.
- Evidence from the 2009-2010 stimulus showed that every million dollars invested in ecosystem restoration created 10 times as many jobs as investments in the coal or nuclear sector.
- In 2020, some governments are incorporating nature-based jobs as part of their recovery packages but there is potential for every government to include measures that would lead to more '[nature-based hires](#)'. For example, in Pakistan during the COVID-19 crisis, millions of labourers have been made unemployed leading the government to announce a scheme to redeploy them in reforestation work as part of the country's 10 Billion Tree Tsunami program, creating an estimated 63,000 jobs.

Integrate nature into climate solutions

- Nature's transformative power should be valued and incorporated into all levels of decision-making, especially concerning climate action.

- Governments should increase and mainstream nature-based solutions in policy-related instruments such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans, long-term low emission development plans and national development plans in ways that promote ambition, transparency and environmental integrity.
- This will send strong signals to the private sector and generate demand for finance.

Ramp up and align finance for nature-based solutions

- Governments must lead the shifts needed in domestic and international finance to realise the potential of nature-based solutions for both adaptation and mitigation.
- This includes defunding deforestation; providing new public and private funds to invest in nature-based solutions; shifting subsidy regimes to reward nature-based solutions; committing to and facilitating results-based payments for mitigation; facilitating finance for green infrastructure; and, ensuring deforestation-free supply chains.
- There are far too many financial incentives that are encouraging deforestation and unsustainable land use.
- Forty times more finance is flowing into these activities than is going to green finance.
- The financial community requires more data, tools and best practice guidance on how to evaluate risks associated with deforestation and unsustainable land use.
- Commercial banks, development banks, multilateral finance institutions, asset owners and managers, governments (incl. regulators) must commit to defunding deforestation.
- By 2025, if companies are not reporting on their compliance with ‘no deforestation, no peat exploitation’, capital must be reallocated to agricultural commodities production, processing and trade that will not contribute to deforestation and unsustainable land use.

NBS and Food

- At least a quarter of global GHG emissions come from net land use change and agriculture, driven by food systems that operate beyond planetary boundaries and deplete natural systems. Regenerative and resilient food and land use systems could play an immediate and fundamental role in climate drawdown and getting the world to net zero emissions in line with the Paris Agreement.
- A diversity of pathways, solutions and innovations exist for a successful transformation to net zero emissions. We need a thriving natural world and healthy ecosystems to grow nutritious food as well as to absorb carbon emissions. Nature provides drought and flood prevention, supports biodiversity, helps prevent uncontrolled fires, and more. We must integrate innovation, solutions and systems thinking across nature, food, and climate, and deliver these through policies and practices that promote and uphold human, animal, and ecological health.
- Women, smallholder farmers, vulnerable populations, and poor and marginalized communities, carry an uneven burden of climate change. Along with communities that depend on the land, and natural and rural environments, such as ranchers, foresters, and Indigenous peoples, they must be put at the centre of just transitions. From access to land and resources such as finance and technology, and more, these diverse communities must be guaranteed fair and equal access and protections in the race to zero.

Align investment with NBS

- Current levels of climate finance are not commensurate with the scale of the challenges and opportunities of nature-based solutions.
- The current suite of finance and investment vehicles does not adequately address the specific needs and circumstances of many countries.
- Both governments and the private sector must increase or establish new streams of finance to support the implementation of NBS.

Shift subsidy regimes to support NBS

- Worldwide roughly \$500 billion dollars' worth of agricultural subsidies are perpetuating unsustainable food and land use systems, which are leading to environmental degradation, poor nutrition, and income inequality.
- Governments must reduce or eliminate subsidies that are not aligned with science-based or net-zero targets.
- Governments must redirect the financial subsidies that contribute to agriculture-based drivers of deforestation and unsustainable land use into sustainable and regenerative agriculture and land use.
- Governments must remove or reduce financial subsidies in the fossil-fuel sector – and redirect increased revenues into nature-based solutions.

Commit to and facilitate results-based payments for mitigation

- Low levels of demand has prevented the full potential of REDD+, as recognized in the Paris Agreement, from being realised.
- Governments must increase the allocation of public sector climate finance for results-based payments under REDD+ - or similar payments for environmental services - following UNFCCC rules and guidance, and best practices.
- Governments should establish principles and conditions under which hard-to-abate sectors can finance nature-based solutions in parallel to aggressive decarbonisation of their emissions.

Facilitate finance for green infrastructure in urban areas

- Despite the mounting evidence of the value of green infrastructure in urban areas, access to finance for such non-traditional solutions currently represents a barrier to their implementation.
- Insurance companies should recognise the risk-reduction benefits of green infrastructure in the pricing and structure of their insurance products.
- We should also establish new or expand existing project preparation facilities to assist cities and infrastructure service providers to design and package NBS as bankable projects.

Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities

- Protecting forests and other natural ecosystems will preserve the livelihoods, heritage and safety nets of poor and vulnerable people who live in and off the forests, including many indigenous peoples' groups.
- Improving land tenure for indigenous and local communities is proving to be one of the most effective ways to reduce deforestation, increase reforestation and improve forest management.
- 17 percent of the total carbon stored in the world's forests is managed by indigenous peoples and local communities. As global forest cover declines, securing indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights to land and recognising them as forest stewards are essential to mitigating climate change and protecting biodiversity.