



# TOWARDS POST-2020 MOBILIZATION OF #15

## NO BUSINESS ON A DEAD PLANET – WHY ADOPTING AN AMBITIOUS POST-2020 GBF MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE

>>>>> MORE THAN 560 BUSINESSES ARE URGING GOVERNMENTS TO ADOPT POLICIES NOW TO REVERSE NATURE LOSS IN THIS DECADE

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**There will be no business on a dead planet—economic activity is inherently dependent on healthy ecosystems, their services, and related resources. Businesses are acting for nature, but political leadership is needed to speed up and scale up action if we are to reverse nature loss in this decade.**



**“THE SCIENCE ON NATURE LOSS IS TERRIFYING. NATURE UNDERPINS EVERYTHING ON THIS PLANET. AN AMBITIOUS POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK THAT BRINGS TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR PLANET IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL. BUSINESS SHOULD BE AT THE FORE OF CALLING FOR THIS CHANGE.”**

Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever

Nature is at a tipping point. More than 1 million species are threatened by extinction <sup>1</sup>, 75% of world’s land and 66% of the marine environment <sup>2</sup> are significantly altered by humans, and the temperature is expected to rise between 2.6°C and 3.9°C <sup>3</sup>.

The science is clear—the nature crisis must be tackled within this decade if we are to build a thriving future. The current pandemic highlights the interconnectedness of our global systems. The nature, climate, human health, and social inequality crises cannot be addressed in isolation.

Healthy societies, resilient economies and thriving businesses rely on nature. And while the natural resources that power businesses are under massive strain, the private sector is a major contributor to nature’s depletion. Consequently, forward-thinking businesses are starting to put nature higher up on their agendas.

But voluntary actions are not enough. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)’s COP 15 provides a unique opportunity for governments to adopt a framework to set the direction for businesses to scale up and speed up action to reverse nature loss.

# 1. THE BUSINESS CASE FOR NATURE: A HEALTHY PLANET FOR A RESILIENT AND THRIVING ECONOMY

Businesses depend on a healthy planet to provide a stable operating environment, healthy customers and workforces, and natural resources necessary for production—food, fibre, water, minerals, building materials and more. Nature also provides ecosystem services worth at least USD 125 trillion/year globally <sup>1</sup>, from which businesses benefit from at no cost, through waste decomposition, flood control, pollination of crops, water purification, carbon sequestration, climate regulation, etc.

These services yield significant value; it is estimated that USD 235–577 billion (5 to 8%) of current global crop production is directly attributable to animal pollination <sup>2</sup>, and that the supply of free water reached EUR 16 billion a year at European levels <sup>3</sup> for the consumption of economic sectors and households.

Losing nature means losing these services, creating extra costs for businesses. Between 1997 and 2011, it is estimated that land use change generated an economic loss of between USD 4.3 and 20.2 trillion/year <sup>4</sup>.

**Business risk grows.** The impacts of nature loss are becoming more than just projections. Businesses face a number of real risks due to nature loss—regulatory, market, reputational, and physical <sup>5</sup>. Impacts of nature degradation or loss are now showing up on business balance sheets. Just ask US utility firm PG&E, which accumulated billions of dollars in liabilities from wildfires in California in 2019.

Physical risks are also coming in the form of damage to facilities, disruption of supply chains, and availability of commodities. For example, 60% of coffee varieties face extinction due to disease and deforestation, threatening the future of coffee production. Mangrove forests, which provide critical coastal protection and flood prevention during tropical storms, have lost 35% of their original littoral cover, leaving seaside operations vulnerable to damage.

*Environmental risks now pose the top five risks to our global economy (WEF 2019).*

*The World Economic Forum's "Nature Risk Rising" report found that over half of the world's GDP—greater than USD 44 trillion in value—is at moderate or severe risk due to nature loss.*

*The estimated cost of land degradation is more than 10% of annual global gross product, and natural disasters caused by nature loss and climate change cost more than USD 300 billion per year (IPBES).*

**Business opportunities emerge.** Companies are developing innovative solutions that promote long-term viability of business models; cost savings; increases in operational efficiency; increased market shares; access to new markets, products, and services; predictable and stable supply chains; and better relationships with stakeholders and customers.

*According to the World Economic Forum report "The Future of Nature and Business", transitioning towards a sustainable economy could create 395 million jobs by 2030 and generate USD 10.1 trillion in business opportunities.*

*Shifting to sustainable agriculture could generate USD 2 trillion/year of economic benefits and millions of jobs mainly in the developing world. (BSDC)*

# 2. INCREASED BUSINESS LEADERSHIP: A NEW MOMENTUM ON NATURE

As the science becomes clearer, businesses are increasingly acting to mitigate risk and seize opportunities to invest in nature.

**Companies are partnering.** They are increasingly working together to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collective action, through platforms such as One Planet Business for Biodiversity (OP2B), which brings together over 20 companies driving transformative change in regenerative agriculture, and the Value Balancing Alliance, a collaboration between companies working to create a standard for monetising and disclosing impacts.

**Companies are committing.** Business for Nature knows of at least 530 businesses that have already made commitments to help reverse nature loss by halting deforestation, reducing plastic production, replenishing water sources, protecting oceans, converting to sustainable agriculture practices, and more, across ten platforms <sup>6</sup>. These platforms include:

**+ International:** The New York Forest Declaration aims to end deforestation by 2030, and is endorsed by over 50 of the world's biggest companies.

**+ Regional:** 65 companies have committed to reversing nature loss through the Act4Nature initiative, amplified and developed with Act4Nature International <sup>7</sup>.

**+ Sectoral:** The Fashion Pact unites over 60 fashion and textile brands to commit in three areas: stopping global warming, restoring biodiversity, and protecting the oceans.

**Companies are acting.** For transformative change to occur, businesses must do more than commit to change in the future—they must act in ambitious and meaningful ways to reduce their negative impact on the planet. That is why over 1,200 companies <sup>8</sup> already

Research by BlackRock established a correlation between corporate sustainability, performance and resilience, showing that sustainable companies performed better in the first half of 2020 than others.

<sup>1</sup> <https://cutt.ly/cfGYaJl>

<sup>2</sup> <https://cutt.ly/TfGYfUO>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cutt.ly/EfGYk44>

<sup>4</sup> <https://cutt.ly/TfGYEel>

<sup>5</sup> <https://cutt.ly/qfGYOne>

<sup>6</sup> For a full list of the commitment platforms, see: <https://www.businessfornature.org/commit>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.act4nature.com>

Cover page infographics: Business call to action available here with full list of signatories: <https://cutt.ly/6fKQArK>



Farmer transplanting rice, Southeast Asia.

tackle the drivers of nature loss, on land and at sea, in ways that reduce their negative impact on nature, invest in protecting and restoring it, and innovate and scale up products and technologies with lower environmental impacts.

**NATURA & CO'S COMMITMENT TO LIFE IN BRAZIL** <sup>10</sup>

Cosmetics giant Natura & Co is expanding Amazon protection, committing to end deforestation by 2025 and to deliver on the 1.5 degree climate goal ahead of the UN commitment, making gains on packaging and formula circularity, and setting science-based targets for biodiversity.

**SUEZ'S ECOLOGICALLY INSPIRED APPROACH TO WASTEWATER TREATMENT IN CHINA** <sup>11</sup>

Utility company SUEZ is tackling the issue of micropollutants by installing artificial wetlands, "Zone Libellule" (Dragonfly Zone) downstream of wastewater treatment plants. They support critical biodiversity and help remove remaining micropollutants following traditional treatment. The largest industrial Zone Libellule opened in China in 2018.

**PATAGONIA PROVISIONS COMMITMENT TO REGENERATIVE AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE** <sup>12</sup>

By switching from industrial agriculture to regenerative organic (RO) farming techniques, Patagonia Provisions seeks to restore soil diversity and increase stored carbon. Patagonia Provisions uses elements of RO farming including crop rotation, intercropping, composting and cover cropping while avoiding harmful pesticides, fertilisers, and tilling that negatively impact soil microbial communities.

This call to action aims to give policymakers the courage and comfort to adopt an ambitious post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) that sets the world on track to reverse nature loss by 2030.

**"WE SEE SUSTAINABILITY NOT MERELY AS ACTION ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY BUT AS A STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE AND ARE SHIFTING FOCUS FROM BUSINESS EFFICIENCY ALONE TOWARDS INNOVATION THAT CREATES SUSTAINABLE VALUE."**

Shinta W. Kamdani, CEO of Sintesa Group

**POST-2020 GBF – THE OPPORTUNITY TO SET THE DIRECTION FOR BUSINESS**

The fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP15) will be a key moment to help chart an ambitious path forward to address the various ongoing environmental crises. Governments have the responsibility to adopt a post-2020 GBF that includes a clear and concise roadmap on how the world will protect, restore, and sustainably use our natural resources.

We need to make nature front and centre in all government and business decision-making. The private sector has the responsibility to co-lead this transformation, and the GBF's objectives cannot be achieved without the sector's meaningful and constructive contribution in designing and implementing the framework. Businesses play a critical role beyond committing and acting within their direct sphere of influence: They are a source of investment, a driver of innovation and technological development, and a key engine of economic prosperity and employment. The GBF should recognise businesses as a key player and encourage parties to stop subsidising harmful practices and instead reward companies that protect or enhance biodiversity.

We need parties to adopt a post-2020 GBF that:

**1. Has a global goal to reverse nature loss by 2030.** Businesses need governments to provide direction and urgency at the highest political level. Global goals and implementable targets informed by science are a must to set the direction for businesses' positive action. This would help to simplify the complex nature agenda and provide clarity on what we are all striving for. Long-term certainty is of utmost importance to invest in changing business models. These targets should be relevant and translatable from global to local levels. A group of leading conservation, science, and business organisations are proposing such a global goal for nature: "Zero net loss of nature from 2020, net positive by 2030, and full recovery by 2050". This should be underpinned by specific targets that:

- a) significantly reduce production and consumption footprints;

**3. A POST-2020 GBF TO ACCELERATE ACTION**

**A business call for policy ambition.** Businesses cannot solve these challenges in isolation, and political leadership is needed to spur more business action. Only ambitious and transformative policies will deliver the change necessary and create a level playing field so that all businesses are required to do their part to safeguard nature for future generations. By aligning policy frameworks and harnessing economic and financial systems, governments can make a substantial difference in biodiversity protection and sustainable use and help accelerate business positive action for nature around the world.

Amidst the 75th UN General Assembly declaration's call for multilateral engagement to protect our planet and the UN Biodiversity Summit, more than 560 companies released a call to action, "Nature Is Everyone's Business". <sup>8</sup>

Representing 54 countries from all sectors and over USD 4 trillion in combined annual revenue, these companies made the following appeal:

*"Nature is everyone's business. Healthy societies, resilient economies, and thriving businesses rely on nature. Governments must adopt policies now to reverse nature loss in this decade. Together let's protect, restore, and sustainably use our natural resources."*

<sup>8</sup> Based on research conducted by Business for Nature, PwC, and the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership.

<sup>9</sup> <https://cutt.ly/EfGONbe>

<sup>10</sup> <https://cutt.ly/3fKnZSN>

<sup>11</sup> <https://cutt.ly/mfKnVd2>

<sup>12</sup> <https://cutt.ly/bfKSbHr>



From coastal erosion to the decline of natural renewable resources such as fisheries and forests, WWF evaluates that the cost to business of continued biodiversity depletion could be as much as GBP 8 trillion over the next 30 years.

- b) halt and reverse the loss of habitat and species and restore their resilience;
- c) conserve ecosystem services;
- d) protect natural areas, appropriately respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities;
- e) introduce nature back into man-made environments.

These goals and targets should be supported by an implementation and ratchet mechanism informed by science to increase positive business action.

**2. Develops an integrated approach to the NBSAPs and NDCs and mainstreams nature**

Climate change, nature loss and social inequalities need to be tackled together to achieve a just transition. Policy coherence is vital to break silos and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. An integrated approach to National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that recognises their synergies, co-benefits, and trade-offs should be pursued. Coming hand in hand with mainstreaming biodiversity into all relevant policies, ministries, and finance regulators’ mandates, the above strategies will successfully address the major drivers of nature loss.

**3. Supports the integration of nature in all decision-making to go beyond short-term profit and GDP**

The GBF should reflect the need to value and embed nature in all decision-making and disclosure, as well as the role of natural capital assessments and accounting. This valuation may be qualitative, quantitative, or monetary, recognising that nature’s intrinsic values cannot be fully captured in economic terms. Standardised frameworks and metrics are needed. The EU project to develop Environmental Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (E-GAAP) or the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosure (TNFD) are best practices that would benefit the community as a whole if developed and adapted globally.

**4. Commits to reform subsidies and incentive mechanisms to finance a just transformation**

Through the GBF, governments should commit to review, disclose, and shift away from direct and indirect subsidies and tax policies that incentivise the degradation and over-exploitation of nature. The focus should be on ‘redirecting’ rather than ‘eliminating’ harmful subsidies and redirecting

subsidies towards sustainable use, resilience, restoration, and circularity. This is a crucial element in changing the rules of the business game. The framework should also promote the rapid development and implementation of innovative financial solutions such as green financing, large public funds, and blended finance schemes.

**5. Creates an enabling environment for all stakeholders to act**

The GBF should identify the private sector as a key partner that can deliver solutions for nature. This would create a positive feedback loop between policy ambition and positive business action.

Multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral platforms as well as joint action plans, in particular for high-impact sectors, will be instrumental in reaching these goals. They should include an approach with non-party commitments within of a public-private plan to reverse nature loss.

**“WE BELIEVE THAT THE TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE NEEDED TO REVERSE NATURE LOSS, CLIMATE CHANGE, AND INEQUALITY CANNOT BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT PROPER INCENTIVES AND FINANCIAL MECHANISMS.”**

Wiebe Draijer, CEO of Rabobank

Forward-thinking businesses are starting to change the way they operate. But this is still the exception rather than the norm. Nature action must become the new normal.

Political leadership is needed now to:

- + **Transform** our economic and financial systems in a way that places nature at the heart of global decision-making;
- + **Create** a level playing field and stable operating environment for business;
- + **Unlock** further business opportunities and innovation, such as accelerating the uptake of nature-based solutions.

Financial performance is irrelevant on a dead planet. Governments should ensure that collectively we can build a Building Back Better programme to make way for healthy societies, resilient economies, and thriving businesses.

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