

Science for biodiversity: The role of IPBES

Statement delivered by UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen

I am delighted to speak on behalf of the four partners - UNEP; UNDP; FAO and UNESCO – at the opening of IPBES-9. This year has been hugely significant for nature so far. But the job is unfortunately nowhere near done.

In February, the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly committed to strengthening actions for nature to overcome the triple planetary crisis. The crisis of climate change. The crisis of nature and biodiversity loss. The crisis of pollution and waste.

The UNEP@50 political declaration in Nairobi welcomed the findings of the IPBES and recognized the importance of science for effective action and policy making on biodiversity. At the same time, the declaration stressed the urgent need to halt and reverse the decline of biodiversity and the importance of mainstreaming biodiversity to revitalize economies, boost livelihoods, and end poverty. Four UNEA resolutions on nature covered issues from biodiversity and health to nature-based solutions.

The decision to establish a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste and pollution will give the third prong of the triple planetary crisis its own scientific body. And we saw a milestone moment with the resolution to create, by 2024, an international legally binding agreement on plastic pollution. Stockholm+50 then showed that the world is ready to transform our economies so that they contribute to a healthy planet, and so human well-being, peace and prosperity.

Finally, the fourth Open-ended Working Group on the Global Biodiversity Framework just concluded in Nairobi. We had hoped for more progress and it is clear that there is more work to be done because we have to conclude on an ambitious plan for biodiversity when we meet at COP 15, hosted by Canada, but presided by China later this year. IPBES tells us that a greater sense of urgency is needed.

These moments underscore the critical role of IPBES in delivering science for policy and action on biodiversity. IPBES has given us the knowledge we need. I also welcome new insights: on the sustainable use of wild species and the values assessment.

But there lie ahead many opportunities for IPBES to make an even greater impact.

IPBES can strengthen the science-policy interface – by finding a workable balance between assessments, and their dissemination and uptake in real world decision-making

IPBES can examine how best to use global assessments to support national and local action – because this is needed for biodiversity.

IPBES has a growing role to play in delivering robust underpinnings for businesses to prosper in harmony with nature. I am encouraged by the discussions on IPBES's contribution to demonstrating how businesses depend on and impact nature. IPBES has a clear role to play in supporting the Task Force on Nature-related Financial Disclosures.

And finally, in years to come, IPBES will need to contribute to global stocktakes of progress on the new Global Biodiversity Framework – essentially holding us to account.

Friends, the four UN partners are committed to supporting IPBES and biodiversity.

UNEP is proud to host the Secretariat of IPBES, and of the technical support provided by our specialist biodiversity centre, UNEP-WCMC.

UNDP supports IPBES's capacity-building rolling plan, including engaging indigenous peoples and local communities.

FAO fosters sustainable agricultural development and provides authors and data to IPBES assessments.

UNESCO supports the UN common approach to biodiversity and chairs an Issue Management Group on biodiversity with UNEP and UNDP.

And the four agencies work together on major initiatives such as the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.

We at the four agencies look forward to working ever closer with you, and wish you a productive ninth session.

Thank you.