

WAN Statement on the UNEA Theme

We note the growing support for a UNEA5 theme of nature-based solutions (NBS), as way of sharing successful approaches and solutions. But – whatever theme is chosen - we strongly feel that the focus should be on the urgently-needed transformational change stressed in the recent IPBES report and other flagship reports. In particular, it is vital that the root causes and direct and indirect drivers of climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are addressed.

We are very concerned that unless the NBS theme scope is extremely well-defined, and the structure and format of the UNEA effectively designed, there is a strong possibility of hi-jacking for green-washing, “business as usual”, the commodification of nature for big business (instead of equitable, people and nature-centred solutions), band-aid solutions and techno-fixes.

We therefore suggest that – if chosen - NBS should be clarified and defined as a tool for achieving transformative and systemic change. With a clear focus on planetary survival and restoration.

UNEA 5 should work for evidence-based action, and aim for the acceleration of the bold policies and practices needed to achieve the global goals for the climate, biodiversity and sustainable development.

We further suggest that if NBS is chosen, it is clearly in Africa’s interest that this explicitly includes both the blue planet and the food-water-energy nexus in its scope.