



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 19 (g)

### Sustainable development: Harmony with Nature

#### Report of the Second Committee\*

*Rapporteur:* Mr. Diamane **Diome** (Senegal)

#### I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 19 (see [A/75/457](#), para. 3). Action on sub-item (g) was taken at the 5th meeting, on 18 November 2020. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary record.<sup>1</sup>

#### II. Consideration of draft resolutions [A/C.2/75/L.32](#) and [A/C.2/75/L.37](#)

2. At its 5th meeting, on 18 November 2020, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Harmony with Nature" ([A/C.2/75/L.37](#)), submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Rosemary O'Hehir (Australia), on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution [A/C.2/75/L.32](#).

3. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution [A/C.2/75/L.37](#) had no programme budget implications.

4. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution [A/C.2/75/L.37](#) (see para. 7).

5. Also at the 5th meeting, a statement was made by the representative of the United States of America.<sup>2</sup>

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution [A/C.2/75/L.37](#), draft resolution [A/C.2/75/L.32](#) was withdrawn by its sponsors.

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\* The report of the Committee on this item is being issued in 10 parts, under the symbols [A/75/457](#), [A/75/457/Add.1](#), [A/75/457/Add.2](#), [A/75/457/Add.3](#), [A/75/457/Add.4](#), [A/75/457/Add.5](#), [A/75/457/Add.6](#), [A/75/457/Add.7](#), [A/75/457/Add.8](#) and [A/75/457/Add.9](#).

<sup>1</sup> See [A/C.2/75/SR.5](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



### III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

#### Harmony with Nature

*The General Assembly,*

*Reaffirming* the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,<sup>1</sup> Agenda 21,<sup>2</sup> the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,<sup>3</sup> the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development<sup>4</sup> and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),<sup>5</sup>

*Recalling* its resolutions [64/196](#) of 21 December 2009, [65/164](#) of 20 December 2010, [66/204](#) of 22 December 2011, [67/214](#) of 21 December 2012, [68/216](#) of 20 December 2013, [69/224](#) of 19 December 2014, [70/208](#) of 22 December 2015, [71/232](#) of 21 December 2016, [72/223](#) of 20 December 2017, [73/235](#) of 20 December 2018 and [74/224](#) of 19 December 2019 on Harmony with Nature,

*Recalling also* its resolution [63/278](#) of 22 April 2009, by which it designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day, and recognizing its importance,

*Recalling further* the 1982 World Charter for Nature,<sup>6</sup>

*Noting* the Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Cochabamba from 20 to 22 April 2010,<sup>7</sup>

*Recognizing* that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that "Mother Earth" is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature or Mother Earth in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and expressing the conviction that, in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature,

*Recalling* the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",<sup>8</sup>

*Reaffirming* its resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest

<sup>1</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, annex II.

<sup>3</sup> Resolution [S-19/2](#), annex.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution [37/7](#), annex.

<sup>7</sup> See [A/64/777](#), annexes I and II.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution [66/288](#), annex.

global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

*Reaffirming also* its resolution [69/313](#) of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

*Reaffirming further* the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016,<sup>9</sup> and recognizing that its implementation can contribute to achieving environmental sustainability by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, including by adopting healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature,

*Reaffirming* the Paris Agreement,<sup>10</sup> and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>11</sup> that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

*Noting* the importance of nature-based solutions in aiming to achieve goals relating to climate change mitigation and adaptation,

*Noting with appreciation* the interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature convened by the President of the General Assembly under the overall theme “Mother Earth approach” in the implementation of education and climate action in harmony with nature, held on 22 April 2019, in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in harmony with nature, and noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development,

*Regretting* that the interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature to have been held during the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly had to be cancelled owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Noting with great concern* the threat to human health, safety and well-being caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the severe disruption to societies and economies and the devastating impact on lives and livelihoods, and that the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by the pandemic, reaffirming the ambition to get back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by designing sustainable and inclusive recovery strategies to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to help to reduce the risk of future shocks, and recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation,

*Recognizing* that a number of countries consider Mother Earth the source of all life and nourishment and that these countries consider Mother Earth and humankind to be a living community of interrelated and interdependent beings,

<sup>9</sup> Resolution [71/256](#), annex.

<sup>10</sup> Adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in [FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1](#), decision 1/CP.21.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

*Recalling* the interactive dialogue on living in harmony with nature held on the occasion of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancún, Mexico, from 4 to 17 December 2016,

*Noting* the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting also the importance for some of the concept of “climate justice”, when taking action to address climate change,

*Noting also* that, in promoting a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development in harmony with nature, Earth system science plays a significant role,

*Expressing concern* about documented environmental degradation, more frequent and intense natural disasters and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity, and recognizing the need to strengthen scientific knowledge on the effects of human activities on ecosystems, with the aim of promoting and ensuring an equitable, balanced and sustainable relationship with the Earth,

*Recognizing* the uneven availability of basic statistical data under the three dimensions of sustainable development and the need to improve their quality and quantity,

*Reaffirming* that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development and that all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio principles,

*Noting* that in recent years there have been many initiatives on sustainable development governance, including policy documents on living well in harmony with nature,

*Noting also* the adoption and the opening for signature, at United Nations Headquarters, of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, the first binding agreement of its kind, and encouraging its early entry into force as a contribution to sustainable development,

*Recognizing* that many ancient civilizations, indigenous peoples and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

*Recognizing also* that the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities can support social well-being and sustainable livelihoods and therefore contribute to global efforts and initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals,

*Noting* that some countries are discussing the possibility of considering a declaration on the protection of nature, based on their legislation, policy and educational perspectives,

*Noting also* that, in a number of countries, both formal and informal educational activities on the rights of Nature or Mother Earth have arisen in the professional and public spheres in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and encouraging a holistic approach to education and public awareness for sustainable development in its three dimensions,

*Recognizing* the work undertaken by civil society, academia, scientists, local communities and indigenous peoples with regard to signalling the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts, along with those of Governments and private

sector organizations, to devise more sustainable models and methods for production and consumption,

*Noting* the work of the experts of the Harmony with Nature Knowledge Network, who are collaborating on important activities in order to support the United Nations with the goal of ensuring that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature, as set out in target 12.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals,

*Considering* that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

*Reiterating* the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature;<sup>12</sup>

2. *Invites* Member States to consider existing studies and, as appropriate, the findings and recommendations of the reports of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature,<sup>13</sup> of the experts' summary report of the first virtual dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, addressing Earth jurisprudence,<sup>14</sup> and of the interactive dialogues of the Assembly on Harmony with Nature in the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through harmony with nature;

3. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to convene, at the seventy-sixth session of the Assembly, an interactive dialogue, to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2022, with the participation of Member States, the United Nations system, independent experts and other relevant stakeholders, to discuss the relationship between harmony with nature and the protection of biological diversity, and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in the context of sustainable development;

4. *Encourages* the experts of the Harmony with Nature Knowledge Network to carry out a study of the evolution of regional, local and national initiatives on the protection of Mother Earth, as applicable, to be considered by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the present resolution;

5. *Decides* to continue to observe International Mother Earth Day annually on 22 April, requests the Secretary-General to provide continuing support, and encourages Member States to observe the International Day at the national level;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the agreement between the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat,<sup>15</sup> invites Member States to contribute to the earmarked activities related to Harmony with Nature under the trust fund of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, aiming, inter alia, at the participation of independent experts in the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature,

<sup>12</sup> A/75/266.

<sup>13</sup> A/65/314, A/66/302, A/67/317, A/68/325, A/68/325/Corr.1, A/69/322, A/70/268, A/72/175, A/73/221, A/74/236 and A/75/266.

<sup>14</sup> See A/71/266.

<sup>15</sup> Available at [www.harmonywithnatureun.org/trustFund](http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/trustFund).

and invites relevant stakeholders to contribute to the earmarked activities related to Harmony with Nature;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to use the website on Harmony with Nature, managed by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to gather information and contributions on ideas and activities to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature and to advance the integration of interdisciplinary scientific work, including success stories on the use of traditional knowledge and on existing national legislation;

8. *Calls for* holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development, in its three dimensions, that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystems;

9. *Invites* States, as appropriate:

(a) To further build up a knowledge network in order to advance a holistic conceptualization of sustainable development in its three dimensions to identify different approaches that reflect the drivers and values of and actions aimed at living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information to achieve sustainable development, and to facilitate support for and recognition of the fundamental interconnections between humankind and nature;

(b) To promote harmony with nature, exemplified by indigenous peoples, among others, to learn from their cultures the protection of nature, and to support and promote efforts being made at the local, national, regional and global levels, taking into account, inter alia, the best practices and advances made in the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform;

10. *Recognizes* that protecting and conserving ecosystems and avoiding harmful practices against animals, plants, microorganisms and non-living environments contributes to the coexistence of humankind in harmony with nature, and invites the Secretary-General to address these issues in his report on the implementation of the present resolution;

11. *Encourages* all countries to develop and strengthen the quality and quantity of basic national statistical data on the three dimensions of sustainable development, and invites the international community and the pertinent bodies of the United Nations system to support the efforts of developing countries by providing capacity-building and technical assistance;

12. *Recognizes* the need for broader and multidimensional measures of sustainable development, to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard notes the ongoing work of the Statistical Commission on a work programme to develop broader measures of progress and to conduct a technical review of existing efforts in this area;<sup>16</sup>

13. *Reaffirms* the commitment at the very heart of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind and commit to taking more tangible steps to support people in vulnerable situations and the most vulnerable countries and to reach the furthest behind first;

14. *Recognizes* that the well-being of humanity depends on the health and integrity of nature, and calls upon the international community to consider the

<sup>16</sup> *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 4 (E/2013/24)*, chap. I, sect. C, decision 44/114.

COVID-19 recovery as a unique opportunity to build back better towards more sustainable and inclusive economies and societies in harmony with nature;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-seventh session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-seventh session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, the sub-item entitled “Harmony with Nature”.

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