

UNEP intervention APFSD

Sustainable and resilient recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific

Thursday March 25, 2021

APFSD plenary session ESCAP guidance: 2-minute verbal intervention

Speaking points for Dechen Tsering, UNEP Regional Director and Representative

- Thank you chair,
- Many of the Asia Pacific Ministers noted at the recent UN Environment Assembly held in February 2021, the pandemic is both a threat and an opportunity. It exposes our vulnerability, undermines the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals but green recovery mechanisms provide an opportunity to transform our relations with nature and heal our planet.
- Our region depends on natural resources for jobs, livelihood, health and well-being. We need to invest much more in green energy and green transport, energy efficiency, natural capital, and green research and development. Through the recovery packages, we must align our economies with the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and international processes that target healthy biodiversity.
- The health of nature and humans are inextricably linked. The pandemic demonstrates the consequences of the harm we have done to nature. The UNEP Synthesis Report “Making Peace with Nature”, launched by the UN Secretary-General during the last UN Environment Assembly, elaborates on

how we can overcome the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.

Carefully designed and ambitious natural capital investments have the potential to benefit biodiversity, reduce pollution, and enhance ecosystem sustainability. We therefore encourage high level and active participation of this region in the upcoming 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity that will be held in Kunming, China, on 11-24 October 2021.

- At this year's UN Environment Assembly, Ministers also highlighted that regional approaches are needed for a green recovery. The 4th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, now scheduled for 5-8 October 2021 in Suwon, hosted by the Republic of Korea, will provide a space to review and identify green actions to achieve the SDGs in the context of Covid-19 recovery.