The state of environmental health

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Transforming Nature Puts Human Well-Being at Risk

- Current mode of development degrades the Earth’s finite capacity to sustain human well-being
- Humans depend on the planet’s limited space and resources, yet societal advances also degrade Earth’s capacity to sustain human well-being
- Since the 1970s, the global economy has grown 5x, trade 10x, population and average prosperity 2x, but at the expense of extracting 3x natural resources. Yet still, 1.3 billion remain poor and 700 million go hungry
- 3/4 of land and 2/3 of oceans adversely impacted by humans. One million of world’s 8 million species of plants and animals are threatened by extinction
- We not on course to fulfill Paris Agreement
- Society is failing to meet most of its commitments to limit environmental damage
North and Central Asia no exception

- Progress is lacking on most of the environment-related goals across subregions.

- North and Central Asia needs to
  - Reverse negative trend on SDG 14 (and SDG 13)
  - Accelerate progress on SDG 15
North and Central Asia

2000  2020  Target 2030

14.1.1 Chlorophyll-a deviations
14.5.1 Protected marine areas

2000  2020  Target 2030

15.1.1 Forest area
15.1.2 Sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity
15.2.1 Sustainable forest management
15.4.1 Sites for mountain biodiversity
15.5.1 Red List Index
15.6.1 Frameworks to ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits from

Dashboard of expected achievement

GOAL 15

15.1 Terrestrial & freshwater ecosystems
15.2 Sustainable forests management
15.4 Conservation of mountain ecosystems
15.5 Loss of biodiversity
15.3 Desertification and land degradation
15.6 Utilization of genetic resource
15.7 Protected species trafficking
15.8 Invasive alien species
15.9 Biodiversity in national & local planning
15.a Resources for biodiversity & ecosystems
15.b Resources for forest management
15.c Protected species trafficking (global)

Legend key:
- Marker progress to achieve target
- Accelerate progress to achieve target
- Reverse trend to achieve target
- Cannot be measured
Achievement of the SDGs is threatened by escalating and mutually reinforcing environmental risks.

Changes in climate, land degradation, biodiversity loss and pollution impede progress of SDGs.

Costs of environmental risks run high. For example, damages from climate-related natural disasters costed US$155 billion in 2018 alone; land degradation negatively affects more than 3 billion people; and loss of pollinators threaten annual global crop output worth US$235-US$577 billion.

While burden of environmental decline is felt by all, the poor and vulnerable are disproportionately impacted.

Global impacts of climate change will be very high unless mitigation strategies are quickly implemented.
Biodiversity, health and climate change nexus

- Characterised by the linkages between intact natural ecosystems, human health and climate change
- Intact functioning ecosystems provide a variety of ecosystem services
- Health benefits such as disease regulation and pest control are such ecosystem services
- When natural ecosystems are converted to produce livestock and crops these ecosystems are broken down and contain significantly less species and certain ecosystem services collapse
- Climate change also drives changes affecting the natural habitats species live in as well as affecting people directly (e.g. higher temperatures)
- These modified environments create a higher risk of zoonosis as wildlife comes in to closer contact with domestic animals and in turn humans
Transforming Humankind’s Relationship with Nature is the Key to a Sustainable Future

Human knowledge, ingenuity, technology and cooperation can transform societies and economies and secure a sustainable future

• A system-wide transformation is required to achieve well-being for all - the interconnected nature of environmental issues requires a holistic response addressing all issues together

• Net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050; biodiversity conservation and restoration; reduction and management of chemicals/waste pollution

• The economic and financial systems can and should be transformed to lead and power the shift to sustainability

• Shift away from environmentally harmful subsidies and invest in low-carbon and sustainable solutions and technologies; internalize environmental and social costs

• Changing consumption practices are critical
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