



WORLD  
FORUM ON  
ECOSYSTEM  
GOVERNANCE

# **World Forum on Ecosystem Governance**

## **Hangzhou Declaration**

Narada Resort and Spa, Liangzhu

Hangzhou City, China

4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018

## Second World Forum on Ecosystem Governance

We, more than 290 experts and specialists from 33 countries and 12 international organizations, attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Forum on Ecosystem Governance (WFEG) in Hangzhou, “the capital of Eco-civilization”. The 2<sup>nd</sup> WFEG was hosted by the National Forestry and Grassland Administration (NFGA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Hangzhou Municipal Government. We shared experience and success stories in strengthening ecosystem governance in Hangzhou and reached consensus on issues and challenges concerning a). Natural Capital and Ecosystem Accounting; b). Ecosystem Governance in Urban-Rural Areas; and c). Ecosystem Governance and Public Engagement.

The objectives of the 2<sup>nd</sup> WFEG were to:

- Understand how important natural capital and ecosystem accounting is, particularly with respect to urban-rural linkages;
- Discuss how governments, the private sector, academia, media, and non-governmental organizations can promote natural capital accounting and ecosystem governance for sustainable development;
- Understand why ecosystem governance and the links between rural and urban areas are important for sustainable cities, sustainable development, and for socio-ecological systems; and
- Exchange views and agree on an action plan for international collaboration with respect to natural capital accounting, ecosystem governance and the importance of ecosystem services for sustainable cities.

**We recognize that** sustainable and equitable ecosystem governance is fundamental to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nature and wildlife are important for ensuring human well-being and sustainable development. This is the foundation to achieve sustainable development and address climate change, including adaptation and mitigation.

**We further recognize that** ecosystems are the basis and a prerequisite for human survival, sustainable development and the source of human health and happiness. Ecosystems provide food, water, oxygen and shelter for humans, but also underpin many dimensions of human well-being, both culturally and physically.

**We are aware** that global forests, wetlands, grasslands, oceans, farmland and urban and rural ecosystems face unprecedented pressures and challenges. There are 7.6 billion people in the world, of whom 55% or 4.18 billion are urban. By 2050, the world population will reach 9.7 billion, of whom 70% or 6.7 billion will be urban. Urban citizens depend, for the most part, on rurally produced ecosystem services. At present 25% of the world's land is used for food production. The world consumes over 4 trillion tons of water and 12.9 billion cubic meters of wood per year. About

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5 million hectares of forest disappear from the earth every year. Species extinction rates are hundreds, even thousands of times above the long-term rate of species turn-over. To implement improved ecosystem governance and promote a strong ecological civilization approach, we need to understand the nature of ecosystems and the ways to realize their values, improve management, lay a solid foundation for conserving the world's critical ecosystems, and achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals. **We solemnly declare to:**

## 1. Comprehensively Understand Values of Ecosystems

We fully appreciate the concept that “*Clear waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets*”, and understand the value of ecosystems and their multi-faceted contributions to sustainable development. To explore and establish a stronger understanding of ecosystem accounting, **we declare that we will:**

1. Integrate natural capital values into political, economic, financial and technical decision making – so that nations, especially at the national level, prioritize the importance of natural capital, including its services—not only their monetary values but also ecological, biological, ethical, cultural and aesthetic values;
2. Promote the System of Environmental Economic Accounting–Experimental Ecosystem Accounting (SEEA-EEA) and integrate this with other initiatives to develop a framework for ecosystem accounting (natural capital accounting), recognizing the need for its continued improvement;
3. Promote the standardization of accounting frameworks, methods and indicators;
4. Establish a natural capital and ecosystem accounting system to evaluate the state of ecosystems, and measure the effectiveness of ecosystem governance, including the quality and integrity of ecosystems;
5. Evaluate ecosystem restoration and conservation performance;
6. Recognize that natural capital and ecosystem accounting needs to involve all sectors—governments, the private sector and people;
7. Continue efforts to inform and create awareness so that all sectors and the global citizens understand the importance of natural capital and ecosystem services for better rural and urban planning, for sustainable economic production, and for environmental and cultural benefits, especially in urban areas; and
8. Make the case for how natural capital and ecosystem accounting can be mainstreamed in economic, social and governance indicators in decision making, and politically to ensure that natural capital and ecosystem accounting becomes a core component of sustainable development, fiscal planning and economic decision making.

## 2. Enhance Ecosystem Governance to Promote the Supply of Ecosystem Services

A country's *mountains, water, forests, crop lands, lakes and grasslands* form an ecosystem community of shared life, which determines the development space and carrying capacity of the

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resources and environment. To strengthen ecosystem governance, we need to enhance ecosystem health and sustainability, increase the supply of ecosystem goods and services, meet peoples' growing demands of ecological products from healthy ecosystems, and support economic, social and cultural development. **We declare to:**

1. Prioritize ecosystem governance as the background for political, economic, social, cultural and technological development. This should be part of priority areas of economic, social and ecological governance to achieve mainstreaming;
2. Strengthen ecosystem governance, by implementing the principles of ecosystem governance, and coordinate urban and rural development on nature-based solutions, to achieve more green (and blue), low-carbon, ecological sustainable production and lifestyle patterns;
3. Improve public ecological awareness by promoting social engagement in ecosystem governance, and establish mechanisms for all stakeholders to engage;
4. Establish ecosystem governance systems that embrace being government-led through policy support, embrace an enterprise-orientation, and actively involve social organizations and the public;
5. Integrate gender equality and mainstreaming needs as a central part of ecosystem governance; and
6. Understand and incorporate indigenous knowledge of ecosystem governance through programmes of research, awareness raising and education.

### 3. Enhance Sustainable Development and Urban-Rural Ecosystem Governance Through Innovation and Public Engagement

To address the challenges of global ecosystem governance, including climate change, land use conversion, and ecosystem degradation, we need to mobilize more resources in all areas of the human society. **We advocate to:**

1. Strengthen public participation through awareness building and educate urban residents so they understand their dependence on rural ecosystems, and promote the appreciation of urban green spaces to, for example, mitigate health problems;
2. Support integrated rural-urban planning and landscape management to reduce ecosystem degradation and risks of flooding;
3. Encourage cities to develop more "green lungs" to reduce pollution, and increase urban residents' exposure and accessibility to nature, especially for children and youth;
4. Strengthen innovation and explore ways to translate the "*green to gold*" concept, and accelerate sustainable development progress on *mountains, water, forests, crop lands, lakes and grasslands* management through technology, systems and innovation;

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5. Develop and strengthen ecological restoration through green technology and green industry, and pay attention to combining ecologically sustainable industrial development with regional development and rural revitalization;
6. Promote the integration of ecological governance in industry;
7. Make good use of successful experience of ecosystem governance, through communication and demonstration, to achieve ecological governance goals at regional levels; and
8. Strengthen international cooperation with respect to ecosystem governance, and adhere to multilateralism in ecosystem governance, establish and improve cooperation for mutual benefit, and contribute to developing novel approaches of ecosystem governance.