



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

6 July 2015

Excellency,

I have the honour to transmit herewith a Summary of the key messages and proposals from the Interactive Dialogue on Harmony with Nature to commemorate International Mother Earth Day, which was held on 27 April 2015, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/224.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sam K. Kutesa', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Sam K. Kutesa

To All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

Interactive Dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature to commemorate International Mother Earth Day

27 April 2015

United Nations Headquarters, New York

President's Summary

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/224, the President of the General Assembly convened, on 27 April 2015, an Interactive Dialogue on Harmony with Nature to commemorate International Mother Earth Day under the theme: "Towards achieving sustainable development goals including addressing climate change in the post-2015 Development Agenda."

The following is a summary of the key messages and proposals from the interactive dialogue.

1. It was noted that harmful human activities, including unsustainable consumption and production patterns, have led to serious environmental impacts such as land degradation, desertification, loss of biodiversity and climate change. This has negatively affected the well-being of humanity and undermined the earth's capacity to sustain life.
2. Humankind is in disharmony with Nature, and should take actions not just to repair the damage that has been done to the natural system but also to restore a harmonious relationship. To this end, there is need to change the current anthropocentric worldview, to embrace a new non-anthropocentric or Earth-centred worldview. There is also need for an ethical and reciprocal relationship between humanity and nature in which the Earth should not be viewed simply as a source of resources for exploitation.
3. Panellists emphasized, in this regard, the importance of rely on a broad range of forms of knowledge, such as indigenous, investigative, political, empirical, emotional and spiritual knowledge.

4. The co-generation of knowledge, especially including indigenous knowledge is important as part of fostering a deeper understanding of humankind's relationship with Nature. It was also pointed out that the Earth-centred worldview has antecedents in indigenous philosophy but it is by no means linked to genetic identity.

5. It was stressed that unsustainable lifestyles should be changed, as constantly accelerating consumption is imposing a heavy cost to ecosystems, and is linked to climate change. The need to take into account environmental sustainability in the current economic paradigms and production patterns was highlighted. In this regard, science needs to be integrated with all other forms of knowledge including indigenous and traditional knowledge.

6. Alternative measures for progress in human development should be adopted which go beyond the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to include indicators on the health of the planet, among other variables. It was proposed that economic models that seek the commoditization of the natural world should not be accepted.

7. Many speakers stressed that a holistic approach towards achieving sustainable development in its social, economic and environmental dimensions is the best way to address environment degradation and climate change. In this regard, the importance of ensuring successful outcomes from the interlinked processes this year namely; the post-2015 development agenda to be adopted in September, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in July; and the Conference of the Parties (COP21) on Climate Change in December.

8. It is crucial that the post 2015 development agenda puts the wellbeing of both humankind and our planet at the center of sustainable development efforts. Harmony with Nature has already been incorporated into Sustainable Development Goal 12 that calls for the development of more sustainable production and consumption patterns.

9. The on-going negotiations under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change are an important step towards a global response to climate change and sustainable development in Harmony with Nature. The importance of ensuring that the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and respective capabilities is respected in those negotiations was highlighted.

10. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Islands Developing Countries (SIDs) and African countries were at a higher risk given the current patterns of climate change. SIDs called on the international community to switch to sustainable practices as a matter of survival rather than as an aspirational goal.

11. It was proposed that environmental legislation supporting a new and more sustainable paradigm is needed at country level. There were also calls for recognizing Nature's right to exist, thrive and evolve. It was noted that a number of countries have already adopted national or local legislations in this regard.

12. At the international level, the UN was called upon to exercise transformative leadership in promoting the rights of Nature, as it was in a better position to lead the world community to do so. It was stressed that in the promotion of sustainable development in harmony with nature, cooperation among countries should be promoted and South-South cooperation should be strengthened.

13. Efforts should be made to improve public awareness and education on sustainability, and to ensure broad participation of all stakeholders including governments, international organizations, private sector, academia and civil society.

14. The overarching message from the dialogue was the urgent need to take into account the importance of nurturing a harmonious relationship with Nature, if humankind's efforts to achieve sustainable development are to succeed.