



Title of ISAP2021:

## The Decisive Decade:

**The Decisive Decade: Towards Integrated Solutions to Climate, Biodiversity and Other Planetary Challenges**

When the international community agreed upon the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, hopes ran high that countries would embrace the transformative changes required to protect the planet and its people. This unfortunately has not come to pass. In fact, some have observed that the world will achieve the SDGs by the 2070s or more than 40 years later than their planned 2030 end date. These predictions have underlined the urgent need to accelerate progress on the SDGs from now to 2030. Indeed, the world has entered what has been called the “decisive decade.”

In 2021, the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) International Forum on Sustainable Development in Asia Pacific (ISAP) will explore how the international community can take the bold steps for a decisively different decade. To do so, ISAP will focus on how decision makers from different countries and levels of decision making can take a more integrated approach to two sets of concerns under the SDGs: biodiversity and climate change. In the face of the COVID-19, many of the world’s decision makers have demonstrated the kind of commitment to tackle biodiversity and climate change that could inject momentum into the sustainability agenda more generally.

Part of the reason that there is a growing commitment is progress on international agreements. The parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) have drafted a “post-2020 global biodiversity framework” of goals, targets and milestones towards achieving the CBD’s vision of “living in harmony with nature” by 2050. This framework, which will be presented for approval at the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, is intended to guide actions at the national level, worldwide. The period 2021-2030 has, furthermore, been named the UN decade on ecosystem restoration, aiming to “prevent, halt and reverse the

degradation of ecosystems”, not only for nature’s own sake but also because of the key role nature plays in addressing poverty and combating climate change

The climate negotiations are also a source for cautious optimism. From 31 October to 12 November, the UNFCCC-COP26 will take place in Glasgow, UK after a one-year COVID-related postponement. Over this past year, the international community has been holding on-line conferences and other creative means to climate change measures. For example, at the Climate Ambition Summit 2020 held in December last year, 45 countries strengthened their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, and 24 countries stated their commitment to carbon neutrality. In addition, several countries declared that they would transition to carbon neutrality earlier than the target year set by the Paris Agreement. These moves to update NDCs and strengthen ambitious targets are set to continue as we head towards COP26.

In addition, Japan has also introduced some notable reforms over the last year. In October 2020, Former Prime Minister Suga declared “Japan will aim to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2050, that is, to realise a carbon-neutral, decarbonised society”. In April 2021, Japan’s 2030 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target was revised upwards from 26 to 46 percent by 2030 compared with 2013 levels, strengthening moves to realise carbon neutrality by 2050.

While signs of progress are encouraging, the most sustainable solutions to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss involve acting upon their interrelationships with each other and other SDGs. In short, if the decisive decade is to be a distinct turning point, then government agencies, the private sector, civil society, scientists and the public need more integrated approaches to biodiversity and climate change. ISAP will therefore provide a unique platform for a diverse group of speakers and attendees to offer their perspectives for integrated solutions.