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**United Nations  
Environment Assembly of the  
United Nations Environment Programme**

**Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum**

**Sixteenth session**

Nairobi, 21 and 22 May 2016

**Report of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum  
on the work of its sixteenth session**

**I. Opening of the session**

1. The sixteenth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, on Saturday and Sunday, 21 and 22 May, 2016.

**II. Introductory session**

2. The Forum was opened at 9.10 a.m. on Saturday, 21 May 2016, by Ms. Susana Rivero Baughman, Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Adviser in the Office of the Secretary of Environment and Sustainability of the Government of Catalonia, who said that the present session provided a unique opportunity for major groups and stakeholders to discuss matters relating to the forthcoming second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, including the major themes of the session, the current status of negotiations on resolutions and other issues, and the expected outcomes.

3. Opening remarks were made by Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP; and Ms. Julia Pataki, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania.

4. Mr. Thiaw said that, in a sense, the Environment Assembly was a “parliament for the environment”, with the major groups and stakeholders acting as the “parliamentarians”, ensuring that action was taken on previous decisions, and helping to set the agenda for forthcoming decisions and proposed actions. Reflecting on the main theme of the second session of the Environment Assembly – “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” – he said that the Sustainable Development Goals represented a new, transformative, inclusive way of thinking whereby governments cooperated with all stakeholders to ensure the integration of the environmental dimension into all the aspects of social and economic development. He summarized the main themes and issues that would be discussed during the second session of the Environment Assembly, and the main draft resolutions that would be discussed. In closing, he urged the major groups and stakeholders to participate fully not only in the ministerial negotiations, but also in the many side events and parallel events that would be held during the session.

5. Ms. Pataki spoke of the importance of the full engagement of major groups and stakeholders in order to strengthen the Environment Assembly and ensure that the global authority on environment spoke with one strong voice. Every opinion was crucial in building partnerships to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. She said that an unprecedented number of draft resolutions on a wide range of issues and a draft final outcome document had been considered in the inter-sessional period for submission to the Environment Assembly at its second session. Discussions on the stakeholder engagement policy had been complex and difficult, and she expressed the hope that

outstanding issues thereon would be resolved by the end of the session. In closing, she emphasized the importance of the full involvement of the major groups and stakeholders in the Environment Assembly, including in multi-stakeholder dialogues and other discussions.

### **III. Session I: United Nations Environment Assembly: status of negotiations and expected outcome**

6. Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, UNEP, gave a presentation on the significance, structure and expected general outcome of the second session of the Environment Assembly. He presented a road map of the programme for the session and side events, highlighting the particular importance of the multi-stakeholder dialogue, and encouraged participants to provide feedback on ways of strengthening dialogue in preparation for the third session of the Environment Assembly. He also drew attention to arrangements for side events and parallel events, the Green Room and the Sustainable Development Expo.

7. Presentations were made by the chairs of the five groups that had carried out intersessional work on specific clusters of draft resolutions to be considered by the Environment Assembly at its second session. They provided updates on the status of the resolutions and the opportunities for the major groups and stakeholders to contribute to the discussions thereon. The five clusters and their chairs were as follows:

- (a) Cluster 1: Mr. Pedro Escosteguy Cardoso, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil;
- (b) Cluster 2: Mr. John Moreti, Vice-Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana;
- (c) Cluster 3: Corinna Enders, Rapporteur of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany;
- (d) Cluster 4: Mr. John Moreti;
- (e) Cluster 5: Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, Vice-Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan.

8. Subsequently, Ms. Rosemary Mukasa, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies, made a short presentation on other expected Environment Assembly outcomes of relevance to major groups and stakeholders. The outcome document of the high-level segment was of particular importance. There was general consensus on the need for a strong outcome document with a clear message, but it had not yet been decided whether it should take the form of a political negotiated document or a President's summary. Those in favour of a negotiated outcome said that such a text would carry more weight than a President's summary, increase ownership and improve the likelihood that the interests of Member States would be reflected, while those in favour of a President's summary highlighted the difficulty of reaching consensus in a short period, the need for genuine dialogue rather than divisive negotiations, the tendency for negotiated content to become watered down, and the lack of real evidence that one form was more effective than the other. In her capacity as the chair of the working group tasked by the Bureau of the Environment Assembly with looking at the issue, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives had prepared a draft outcome document based on input from Member States, which was available for consideration.

9. Ms. Mukasa also highlighted areas in which participants could have a particular influence on discussions. A recently submitted resolution on combating land degradation and desertification and sustainable management of rangelands had yet to be discussed and therefore represented an opportunity for input from the major groups and stakeholders. The same would apply to any other new resolutions submitted. The chair's summary of the high-level multi-stakeholder dialogue on "Restoring and sustaining healthy ecosystems for people and planet: partnerships to deliver on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda" would provide another notable opportunity for the major groups and stakeholders to ensure that their messages were reflected.

10. Mr. Alexander Juras, Chief, Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, UNEP, provided an update on the draft stakeholder engagement policy. The policy had been under discussion for more than three years, with the slow pace of progress in part attributable to the intergovernmental negotiation process. The objective of the policy was to achieve the effective engagement of civil society in the work of the governing bodies of UNEP, building on best practices in multilateral organizations. The general understanding was that the new policy should at least be as good as best practice, if not better. Noting that the text of the draft policy was available on the Environment Assembly portal as a pre-session document, he provided an overview of the document, noting that the elements still under discussion had been removed from the main text and were grouped in a table.

During the second session of the Environment Assembly, the incoming president was expected to call for the establishment of a working group of interested parties to further discuss the text of the draft policy and, it was to be hoped, reach consensus thereon.

11. In the ensuing discussion, a number of the questions and comments related to how best to influence the outcomes of the Environment Assembly session. Ms. Rijnhout responded that in addition to holding morning strategy meetings, the representatives would join working groups on issues that required particular attention. They could also indicate their interest in joining discussions on a specific resolution, organizing themselves to provide input to the discussions of working groups on resolutions where possible. With regard to how best to intervene in a cluster discussion, Mr. Laguna-Celis underscored that while decision-making within the Environment Assembly was essentially an intergovernmental process, the contribution of the major groups and stakeholders was appreciated and, in keeping with agreed practice, they would have a seat at all the open meetings of the Environment Assembly sessions, and would be given the floor at the discretion of the Chair. Regarding the proposal that representatives of major groups and stakeholders form a “task force” to follow the work of the working group on the stakeholder engagement policy and contribute thereto, he said that he would convey the proposal to both the incoming and outgoing presidents of the Environment Assembly.

12. Addressing a question about the Environment Assembly’s role in the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, Ms. Rijnhout said that its role was to ensure that environmental issues were discussed. She expressed concern regarding a draft resolution proposed by the co-chairs of the High-level Political Forum on the clustering of the Sustainable Development Goals, as all the proposed clusters focused on poverty reduction and development, into which environmental aspects would be integrated. It was imperative, she said, that one of the clusters focus primarily on the environment.

13. Mr. Bashir Tarar, responding to a question on sand and dust storms, said that while it was not yet clear exactly how the issue would be addressed, its identification as an important issue and inclusion in the UNEP programme of work was a positive sign. Responding to a query about the consideration by the Environment Assembly of its cycle, he said that that was essentially a procedural concern, and explained briefly the issues surrounding a possible decision to move from holding sessions in even to odd years.

14. In response to a query regarding the synergies between Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the Sustainable Development Goals, Mr. Moreti recalled that sixth special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment had been held in Cairo in April 2016 and the outcomes of that meeting would inform the contribution of the African region to the Environment Assembly session. Furthermore, at its fourth retreat held in May 2016, the Executive Council of the African Union had addressed the connection between Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **IV. Session II: Multi-stakeholder interaction on the main themes of the second session of the Environment Assembly and the role of major groups and stakeholders in multi-stakeholder partnerships, policymaking and the application of the rule of law, in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals**

##### **A. Open dialogue with the Executive Director**

15. The dialogue was facilitated by Mr. Calvin James, co-chair of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee. Introducing the dialogue, Mr. James asked the Executive Director to respond to two questions that he said representatives of major groups and stakeholders had raised during the day, namely on the role the private sector should play in sustainable development and the role the Environment Assembly should play in the work of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

16. Responding to the first question, the Executive Director said that while the private sector was often understood to encompass only large companies and transnational corporations, it was much broader than that and included any actor outside the public sector and the not-for-profit arena; it included, for instance, small farmers and their organizations, which together could have a significant effect on the world’s land, water and energy resources. Given that the sustainable development agenda would require that countries reinvent their economies across sectors over the next four decades, requiring major investments, it was essential that the private sector be brought in as a partner, through engagement and public policy, in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on climate

change. By bringing the private sector into the conversation, the Environment Assembly could help create champions of the environment who would disseminate the Assembly's message to their constituencies.

17. With regard to corporate funding, UNEP held the view that it was neither realistic nor desirable to expect the corporate sector to cover shortfalls in government funding for the implementation of its programme of work, as UNEP was independent from individual, national and corporate interests. That did not mean, however, that it was not legitimate for UNEP to accept corporate funding in some cases, provided that there was sufficient transparency and accountability. Such instances included contributions made by actors in the financial sector to the secretariat of the UNEP Finance Initiative, from whose work they benefited; contributions made by a number of oil companies to the UNEP environmental assessment of Ogoniland, an independent report on oil contamination in the Niger delta; and company contributions to the en.lighten initiative, which was helping governments to phase out inefficient lighting.

18. The 2030 Agenda represented a remarkable breakthrough for the environment, as the environmental dimension of development was truly woven into the Sustainable Development Goals. Saying that it was no longer a question of mainstreaming the environment or the other dimensions of sustainable development into development planning, which could lead to any of those dimensions being side-lined, he encouraged participants to move beyond their desire to put the environment at the top of the agenda and to carefully study the High-level Political Forum and other processes in New York to ensure that they did not unravel the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. The challenge for the Environment Assembly, he said, was to articulate a strategy and an environmental agenda that would help to deliver on the Goals in an integrated manner. Major groups could help to ensure that Governments recognized the Assembly as the main political platform of the United Nations where the environmental agenda was set and shared with the High-level Political Forum, the General Assembly of the United Nations and other relevant bodies. He urged major groups and stakeholders to work on the substantive issues before the Assembly at its second session to help ensure that the Assembly pronounced itself in a clear, competent and authoritative manner.

19. Responding to comments, he said that while it was true that on a global scale environmental trends were going in the wrong direction, environmentalists had reason to celebrate, as after decades of being sidelined they were now recognized as legitimate players and the environment was positioned at the centre of development, in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, which was a stepping stone toward the decarbonization of the world economy to tackle an environmental change phenomenon. It was also important to recognize that underneath global and national statistics, a myriad of successful activities were being undertaken that had led to important breakthroughs in areas such as electricity generation from renewable sources, the protection of the ozone layer and the elimination of lead in fuels. Being an environmentalist in the present day required being strategic and realistic to address urgent and unprecedented challenges, such as how to make agriculture more sustainable in a world where, for instance, only twelve companies controlled the trade in seeds.

20. Responding to another comment, he said that goal-setting at the international level was an important part of tackling major environmental challenges, as international goals provided an overall structure to address such challenges. As the Global Environment Outlook process showed, however, different regions viewed environmental threats in different ways and the strategies being pursued to achieve specific goals could vary. The challenge for UNEP, as a global body, was to tell the world that humans were threatening and increasing pressure on global life systems as a whole, but this did not mean that no progress had been made over the last four decades in many parts of the world in areas such as air quality and reforestation.

21. In response to a question about the role of UNEP in protecting the health of the environment and local communities by ensuring that manufacturing companies pursued sound environmental practices and by monitoring the industrial use of hazardous chemicals and the conduct of environmental impact assessments, he said that national organizations and parliamentarians were the most effective allies in addressing individual cases that called for such activities, which UNEP had neither the mandate nor the capability to perform. In such situations, the strength and relevance of UNEP lay rather in producing the information, analysis and rationale needed to signal the risks posed by chemicals and waste to the environment and health with the aim of dispelling myths, challenging inertia and creating public pressure for change.

22. Concerning a question about private sector engagement going forward, he agreed that companies often focused primarily on growth at the expense of the environment and sustainable development. In determining whether the private sector was a force for good or bad, however, it was first essential to accept that its profit motive was not fundamentally illegitimate. Efforts to overcome

the problems that arose when that motive was pursued at all costs should therefore consist in working to forge an alliance with business leaders with a view to regulating markets so that profits were instead made from providing services or products, such as energy efficient lighting, that reduced or resolved problems rather than added to them. Indeed, the move towards the green economy involved recognizing that standards were the means through which to create successful markets without harming society and incurring the legal penalties prescribed in that event.

23. Welcoming a comment that the revised UNEP access-to-information policy was a considerable improvement on the interim version and a reflection of positive engagement with stakeholders, he said that UNEP had indeed sought to produce a policy that could not only be implemented with the available means but would also enable UNEP to honour its promises, resulting in a version that was now more in line with good international practice. During his 10-year tenure, moreover, UNEP had almost doubled the amount of its financial transactions by reinventing the way it did business while at the same time employing fewer staff. The UNEP Evaluation Office had also been peer reviewed as one of the best in the United Nations system; it had the lowest percentages allocated to it from the Environment Fund and consequently had no impact on the funding provided for implementation of the programme of work. He added that UNEP was open to further evolving its access-to-information policy.

24. In response to another comment that major group representatives had not been invited to participate in or observe a meeting convened in New York by the Executive Director and the Director General of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) with environmental and sustainable development non-governmental organizations, he said that it was only natural for UNEP to seek dialogue with such large and well-funded organizations in a targeted effort to build links between their remarkable activities and its own work. To that end, it was critical for any Executive Director of UNEP to engage with different actors and endeavour to create appropriate connections. The meeting in question had not involved any hidden consultation; on the contrary, an uncensored summary of its proceedings was freely available on the Internet.

25. In response to a question about whether the 2030 Agenda would provide an opportunity for forging a genuine new partnership with faith-based organizations in the context of UNEP decision-making and programme implementation, he acknowledged that it was no easy task for those organizations to support a non-denominational institution operating under the principle of non-affiliation with any religion and he thanked them for doing so. The science and technology deployed in environmental matters was now clearly linked, however, with socio-cultural values and norms and with respect for life, creating in turn a link with the faith-based community. Regarding his experience of attending the second International Seminar on Environment, Religion and Culture recently held in Tehran, he said that the event had given rise to a profoundly inspiring dialogue that he hoped to see further evolved in the setting of the Environment Assembly. Intergovernmental bureaucracy was not yet fully enlightened about moving the issue forward, but there was nonetheless an enormous yearning for it to become part of the future thinking on environment.

26. With respect to a question on the role of innovation in the second session of the Environment Assembly and the future of UNEP, he said that innovation was viewed by the private sector as a competitive advantage and that it was also tied to the notion of not wishing to pursue a status quo. While rarely innovative, the intergovernmental process did achieve breakthroughs, yet multilateralism was too often defined by past frustrations and disappointments, with the United Nations serving as an arena for retribution sought by countries with grievances. The Assembly therefore provided an opportune forum for restoring public faith in multilateralism through leading by example and demonstrating that legitimate differences could be overcome in order to pave the way for innovation.

27. In that regard, he recalled that UNEP had benefited from the confidence placed in it by governments to experiment successfully with new approaches, catalyse innovation and drive forward its work in such areas as green finance, sustainable transport and energy and ecosystem-based adaptation, with business and civil society each playing their role. The Assembly was set to address some difficult issues, he said, and major groups were central to helping it to protect and build on its achievements. Notwithstanding the ongoing debate on the procedures for stakeholder engagement, the fundamental importance of major groups to the process of the Environment Assembly was universally recognized. He therefore urged their representatives to bear that truth in mind as they engaged in the process.

28. On behalf of the Major Groups Facilitating Committee, Mr. James expressed appreciation to the Executive Director for his work and the guidance he had provided during his 10 years in office.

## B. Parallel panel discussions

29. On the morning of Saturday, 21 May, parallel panel discussions were held on the following topics:
- (a) Means of implementation and mobilizing resources for sustainable investments;
  - (b) UNEP and Principle 10: access to information policy, stakeholder engagement policy, Bali guideline implementation guide.
30. On the afternoon of Saturday, 21 May, parallel panel discussions were held on the following topics:
- (a) How can multi-stakeholder partnerships strengthen and complement government implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda;
  - (b) Multiple pathways to sustainable development.
31. Thereafter parallel panel discussions on the following topics:
- (a) How can major groups' technical expertise and research, citizen science and indigenous knowledge contribute to advancing the monitoring of Sustainable Development Goal implementation, including in the context of the sixth edition of Global Environment Outlook;
  - (b) Healthy people, healthy environment.
32. More information on those discussions is available from <http://www.unep.org/civil-society/Portals/24105/documents/GMGSF/GMGSF16/GMGSF%20at%20UNEA%202.pdf>.

## V. Session III: major groups and stakeholders coordination and preparation for input to the Environment Assembly

33. Opening the session, Ms. Leida Rijnhout, Director of Global Policies and Sustainability, European Environmental Bureau, and co-chair of the UNEP Major Groups Facilitating Committee, sought volunteers to take part in and lead working groups to develop responses and inputs to the various clusters or drafting groups for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The object of the exercise, she said, was for the major groups and stakeholders to develop common, coordinated positions on the agenda items and draft resolutions to be considered by the Environment Assembly at its second session.
34. The working groups were structured according to the following clusters and main themes of interest:
- (a) Working group 1 on cluster 1, including the United Nations Environment Assembly and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, facilitator: Mr. Rodrigo Messias;
  - (b) Working group 2 on cluster 2, including sustainable consumption and production, chemicals and oceans: facilitator: Mr. Wali Haider;
  - (c) Working group 3 on cluster 4, including the rule of law, access to information, the Montevideo Programme and the stakeholder engagement policy, facilitator: Ms. Carole Excell;
  - (d) Working group 4 on cluster 5, including illegal trade, natural capital and conflicts: Mr. Doug Weir;
  - (e) Working group 5 on common statements for plenary and the Committee of the Whole, facilitator: Ms. Susanna Rivero.
35. The participants joined their selected working groups to develop their common positions and statements.
36. Following the working group discussions, the group rapporteurs reported back on the outcomes of the discussions, presenting information on the items they had discussed, conclusions reached, and recommendations for consideration by Member States during the Environment Assembly. Several groups provided inputs for possible inclusion in the common statements being developed by working group 5. A summary of the recommendations of the working groups is set out in annex I to the present report, without formal editing.
37. Subsequently, the Forum decided that a drafting team would combine the working group outputs into one document so that the text could be uniformly presented and further discussed with the objective of reaching consensus on the messages and recommendations that would be conveyed to the

Environment Assembly. The Forum further decided that the working groups would meet regularly and continue their deliberations during the second session in order to keep abreast of, and be responsive to, any developments or changes in the draft resolutions and policy positions arising during the course of the session. Mechanisms were established to ensure continued communication during the session between the members of the different working groups and between all the participants in the Forum.

38. The drafting team subsequently presented the proposed content of the outcome statement of the Forum. Following a short discussion, the representatives agreed on the content, and decided to form informal groups to finalize the wording of two versions of a statement based on the agreed content: a longer version containing the full content, including proposed amendments to the draft resolutions, which is set out in annex II to the present report, without formal editing, and an abridged version to serve as the statement to be delivered on behalf of the major groups and stakeholders during the opening session of the Environmental Assembly, which is set out in annex III to the present report, without formal editing.

## **VI. Session IV: future vision for the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum**

39. The session comprised a presentation by Mr. Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future, on options for the future of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, and a discussion moderated by Mr. Ken Mwathe, BirdLife International.

40. In his presentation on options for the future of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, Mr. Strandenaes. Recalling those who had made a historical contribution to the development of the concept of sustainable development, among them Ms. Rachel Carson, Ms. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Mr. Kofi Annan, Mr. Maurice Strong and Ms. Indira Ghandi, he outlined the portfolio of instruments and processes relevant to the 2030 Agenda, among them the Sustainable Development Goals, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Environment Assembly, emphasizing that it was important to view them as a whole and to consider how global, national and regional implementation reviews might complement the Global Sustainable Development Report.

41. Regarding the key question of what major groups and stakeholders wanted if their role in those processes was not to become irrelevant, he mentioned such elements as participation in agenda-setting; the content of and process for resolutions, reports, reviews and outcomes; and implementation and partnerships. As to their needs, he cited improved access to information, transparency, accountability, participation, lobbying, decision-shaping and impact. Concerning what those aspects meant in practice, whether they could be accomplished and, if so, whether the cycle of the Environment Assembly offered opportunities, he suggested that were the third session of the Assembly to be held in 2017 in order to align its cycle with that of High-level Political Forum, a meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, followed by a two-day meeting of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, could be held during the month of February in the first and third years of the cycle. The second year of the cycle would then serve as an “off-year”, providing an opportunity for major groups and stakeholders to organize, with full UNEP support, a global environment meeting in April or May and six regional environment meetings in September or October. Systems could then be coordinated by way of the two February meetings to be held the following year. Funding, he added, should be regarded as only a minor challenge in the event that such a cycle was adopted.

42. Highlighting the key issues to be addressed at the second session of the Assembly, he said that the draft resolutions to be presented for consideration had been divided into clusters in order to enhance understanding and he noted the importance of the policy on stakeholder engagement for all the major groups and stakeholders. As to the proposed medium-term strategy for the period 2018–2022, he noted that the various actors consulted with respect to its strategic focus and priority themes had included major groups and stakeholders, but that few of them had taken the opportunity to complete the online survey concerning those priority themes. He therefore urged a better response in the future and called on participants to familiarize themselves with the proposed strategy (UNEP/EA.2/15), which, he said, was well researched and highly informative about the future of UNEP and the role that major groups and stakeholders could play if they engaged in that future. The strategy also analysed the relationship between the identified priority themes and the Sustainable Development Goals, stating in paragraph 50 that UNEP would be adopting a more results-focused longer-term outcome planning approach aligned to the target date of the 2030 Agenda. Its acknowledgement that priorities and trends differed from region to region furthermore provided an opportunity for adjusting regional implementation, in contrast to the themes themselves, which could

not be changed. Concerning the High-level Political Forum due to convene for the first time in July 2016, he said that it aimed to achieve coherence through the overarching themes it proposed to address in the coming years on the basis of clusters associated with specific Sustainable Development Goals, namely, in 2017, ensuring food security on a safe planet by 2030; in 2018, making cities sustainable and building productive capacities; and in 2019, empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness.

43. Returning to the subject of meetings that might be held during off-years with a view to providing input to the work of the Assembly, he suggested that the proposed global environment meeting of major groups and stakeholders should be organized by their own construct and on the basis of their own rules of procedures, allowing for the participation of all such entities in the discussion of the development agenda. The strategic focus should be centred on, among others, the viewpoint of major groups, the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals, emerging issues, implementation, evaluation and follow-up. In addition to UNEP collaboration, such meetings should involve a partnership forum for the purpose of discussing and evaluating partnerships. Other inputs to be discussed should relate to capacity-building aimed at promoting understanding of UNEP, the High-level Political Forum and intergovernmental systems; finance, investment and green economy issues; reporting systems, notably in the context of the Global Environment Outlook reports; the science-policy interface; and multilateral environmental agreements. As to the proposed six regional environment meetings, he said that their organization, procedures and agenda should be the same as for the global environment meeting but that their strategic focus should instead be on implementation, review and emerging issues at the regional level. The timing of the global and regional meetings in terms of which should precede the other was a matter for further consideration, but the outputs from both sets of meetings, including their respective partnership forums, must be aligned for presentation at the following year's meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, which, he suggested, should set aside one half or one full day for that purpose, bearing in mind that non-governmental organizations implemented the highest proportion of the UNEP programme of work in the field and should consequently be involved in policymaking. The Assembly should likewise set aside one full day for an interactive discussion concerning that input, for which precedents had been already been set, including by the Commission on Sustainable Development and meetings held within the framework of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

44. He said that the UNEP secretariat would have an important part to play in ensuring continuity during the cycle. Any larger role for the major groups in implementation must be matched with a larger recognition reflected in the United Nations system for the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch through, inter alia, increased financial and human resources, institutional independence and its coordination of input from non-governmental organizations across the system. Indeed, the number of major groups and stakeholders working within the UNEP family was sizeable, potentially amounting to some 10,000.

45. As to challenges, he said that they lay in the commitment of major groups and stakeholders, and in turn UNEP and Member States, to take fully on board the changes entailed in a new cycle and the willingness to work and engage on a long-term basis, with serious and committed outreach and implementation, and raise the funds needed to that end. Other challenges included involvement in the 2030 Agenda, with a focus on the environmental dimension, policy, advocacy, outreach and implementation, and he urged particular attention to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, given its relationship to financing. Lastly, he stressed that it was important for major groups and stakeholders to respond to the opportunities provided by the UNEP programme of work, including by involving themselves in partnerships. In short, he said, the Sustainable Development Goals provided an unparalleled opportunity for progress and for the Assembly to play a unique role in creating a much better future.

46. Following the presentation by Mr. Strandenaes, Mr. Mwathe invited participants to first ask questions or make comments on the presentation, to then discuss how the engagement of civil society organizations with UNEP and the Environment Assembly might be strengthened at the regional level and whether major groups and stakeholders could use Nairobi-based organizations as a platform to engage with UNEP and its governing bodies on a more continuous basis.

47. On the first issue, questions raised by participants included whether the inclusive process followed by the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals might offer lessons to strengthen the engagement of stakeholders in the High-level Political Forum; whether it would be beneficial to revitalize the Environment Liaison Centre International to facilitate the continuous engagement of civil society organizations with UNEP; whether the estimated number of civil society organizations engaging with UNEP would be refined to ensure it was accurate and useful to organize



the proposed global environmental meetings; how the current meeting could discuss ways in which civil society organizations might organize themselves with regard to specific themes and bring up priorities and concrete proposals to Governments during the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the high-level segment of the second session of the Environment Assembly; how the lessons learned in regional mechanisms or processes that enabled the ample participation of stakeholders, such as the Asia-Pacific Regional Civil Society Organization Engagement Mechanism and the Latin American and the Caribbean region process to develop a regional agreement on principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, could be helpful in other forums; and what were some of the incentives that led civil society organizations, including from Africa, to actively engage with the Environment Assembly.

48. One participant commended the focus by Mr. Strandenaes on the Sustainable Development Goals, around which the entire United Nations system was mobilizing, saying that it was essential that major groups and stakeholders establish and use much stronger links with the High-level Political Forum. He suggested that the space for civil society in the United Nations system was not actually shrinking, but that an increasing number of countries were repressing civil society organizations and thereby disrupting the work of United Nations entities; it was therefore important that major groups stand in solidarity with those organizations. Another participant asked whether the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum had ever considered raising its own funding, which would make it more independent from UNEP and enable major groups and stakeholders to set their own agenda and feed it into sessions of the Environment Assembly.

49. Responding to questions and comments raised, Mr. Strandenaes said that key lessons to be learned from the Open Working Group included the truly open nature of the process, the unity and prolonged engagement of major groups and civil society organizations in the process and the delivery by those groups and organizations of high-quality products that were relevant to the agenda and had prompted Governments to listen to them. He noted that estimating the number of civil society organizations engaged with UNEP was difficult but he would attempt to refine that number in the research paper that he expected to produce; that it was necessary that major groups organize around thematic clusters, with successful examples to be found in the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, and for those who intervened at meetings to be experts in the field, as had been the practice in the Commission on Sustainable Development; that there was a need for major groups and stakeholders to have a permanent presence in Nairobi, which perhaps could be achieved by revitalizing the Environment Liaison Centre International; and that it was essential that the most knowledgeable representatives engage with ministers during the multi-stakeholder dialogue of the second session of the Environment Assembly to demonstrate the worth of major groups.

50. Participants suggested ways of enhancing the engagement of civil society organizations with UNEP at the regional level, including by ensuring that elections of regional representatives were clear and transparent to guarantee their legitimacy; examining the regional representative election process to make it consistent across regions, bearing in mind that some regions had very few civil society organizations and thus had a smaller pool of organizations from which to elect their representatives; making sure that regional representatives were consulted on key issues to be addressed during Environment Assembly sessions and were able to manage thematic clusters at the regional level that they could then bring to global meetings; establishing formal frameworks and mechanisms at the national and regional levels to enable civil society organizations to engage with UNEP on a continuous basis rather than just during major events; establishing a focal point to engage with the Environment Assembly and a clear strategy or action plan with priorities that civil society organizations could work on; and setting up coalitions of non-governmental organizations to engage with the Environment Assembly modeled on, for instance, the European Environmental Bureau.

51. Mr. Alexander Juras, Chief of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, said that the issue of legitimacy of regional representatives was a problem that needed to be addressed, since only a handful of the organizations accredited to UNEP participated in the election of regional representatives, as was the very limited participation of civil society organizations in the work of UNEP. It was important that civil society organizations themselves address these issues by self-organizing, engaging in fundraising, ensuring that elections were conducted in a timely manner, and providing substantive inputs to UNEP and other relevant bodies. In response to a participant's suggestion that the UNEP national committees could be revitalized to facilitate the continued engagement of civil society organizations with UNEP, Mr. Juras said that that option should be examined carefully; 39 such committees existed but only one or two of them were active.

52. With reference to the role that Kenya-based civil society organizations could play in facilitating the engagement of non-resident organizations with UNEP, Mr. Juras said that civil society

organizations now had a unique opportunity to participate in the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP, which were held in Nairobi, stressing that important decisions were taken at those meetings, including on setting the agenda of Environment Assembly sessions. It was therefore crucial that major groups and stakeholders devise a mechanism to engage with the Committee, which could involve working with the many knowledgeable Kenya-based civil society organizations accredited to UNEP.

53. One participant said it was essential that Kenya-based organizations attend the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives that were open to civil society and be given a clear a mandate to engage with the Committee from other major groups and stakeholders so as to give legitimacy to their engagement, suggesting that the Asia-Pacific Regional Civil Society Organization Engagement Mechanism offered valuable lessons on how to achieve this. Another participant said that it was important that a formal mechanism for engagement be established so that Kenya-based organizations represented the views of all major groups and stakeholders thereby ensuring that UNEP was not flooded with Kenya-focused issues.

#### **How can the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum evolve into a strong global major groups and stakeholders platform?**

54. The discussion was facilitated by Ms. Alison Tate, International Trade Union Confederation, Belgium, from the workers and trade unions major group, and consisted of short presentations made by the panellists followed by a period of comments and questions from representatives. The panellists were Mr. Yunus Arikan, Local Governments for Sustainability, Germany; Mr. Mark Halle, Institute for Sustainable Development, Switzerland; Ms. Mirna Ines Fernández, World Association of Girl Scouts, Bolivia; Ms. Norine Kennedy, States Council for International Business, United States of America; Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, UNEP and Ms. Leida Rijnhout, European Environmental Bureau, Belgium.

55. In her introduction, Ms. Tate recalled that the previous discussion had established the notions behind good practice for civil society organizations. Building on that, the current discussion should focus on how to strengthen the work of the major groups and stakeholders and its impact and improve participation and influence within the United Nations and, more specifically, UNEP. For her, that meant that the discussion should highlight participation, transparency and accountability in relation to the group's efforts to advance its strategic issues and campaigns, both with national governments and at the United Nations, so that negotiators and representatives heard about the work being done and understood the issues.

56. Speaking as a representative of the local authorities major group, Mr. Arikan said that in a world that had become multi-polar, the United Nations was entering a new stage and would have to become multilateral, multi-stakeholder and multi-level, engaging all levels of government. A much more innovative approach was required to achieve what had not been achieved since 1992. In implementing the new sustainable development agenda, national governments could benefit from the experience acquired by the local authorities major group in implementing Agenda 21 at the local level since 1992, particularly in areas like biodiversity and climate change. The work done on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the World Urban Forum, for instance, could serve as a particular source of inspiration. In the new system, civil society organizations would also have to think outside the box, and be trusting, committed and more professional. Noting the recent proliferation of United Nations meetings, however, he called for an increase in both United Nations staff to deal with stakeholders and in stakeholders' capacity to support national governments.

57. Ms. Kennedy, speaking on behalf of the business and industry major group, outlined her vision of a platform that could strengthen the Forum. The main challenge was to be responsive to United Nations sustainability outcomes, which would involve many aspects above and beyond the normal advocacy role of civil society organizations, such as implementation, tracking reporting and accountability, raising the ambition of governments and ensuring that governments involved stakeholders in their work. Fundamentally, civil society organizations needed to ensure that their work was meaningful and added value for member States and United Nations institutions. Thus, as highlighted in the previous discussion, the platform should reflect and advance the agreements of 2015, be flexible to further developments, engage stakeholders more substantively and build continuous improvement. For the major groups and stakeholders, it should also provide ongoing visibility; accommodate diverse activities and functions; have supporting infrastructure, including the increased United Nations and stakeholder capacity; and allow stakeholders to work together in big or small gatherings, as single or multi-stakeholder constituencies or in thematic groups. It would have to be recognized by governments to attract the needed resources and have the supporting infrastructure needed to truly work and be sustainable. Learning from experience in other United Nations forums,

the business and industry major group was contemplating building its own interface, which could be accommodated on the platform alongside similar distinct interfaces for other constituencies, allowing the groups to work both on their own and together in a multi-stakeholder way. She urged the major groups to be proactive and develop a proposal for a platform.

58. Ms. Fernández, speaking on behalf of the children and youth and women major groups, said that those groups envisioned the platform as an interactive website with online discussions using web-based tools, smart-phone technology and social media. The platforms should also extend to work on the ground, in schools and volunteer groups, and to dialogue with people outside non-governmental organizations. She, too, called for capacity building to allow representatives to participate fully and meaningfully in United Nations processes, particularly women, young people and indigenous peoples, who still had what she described as “tokenistic” representation at meetings. She also called for outside voices to be brought into the process, and provided examples of spontaneous, often unfunded civil society protests around the globe. In her closing remarks, she stressed that engaging was more about empowering than asking for an opinion, and urged representatives to adopt the practices of existing organizations that already had experience engaging civil society, such as Plant for the Planet, the Scout Movement and the World Association of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

59. Representing the non-governmental organizations major group, Ms. Rijnhout echoed the importance of bridging from outside to inside the process and delivering substance, which, she said, required knowledge of the process, a long-term vision and full-time dedication. The major groups were well suited to the task, with twenty years of experience to draw on. The Commission on Sustainable Development provided a good example of best practice for the participation modality for the major groups: the nine major groups had organized themselves and had had an entire year to prepare through communication with their constituencies. The “nine or none” principle, whereby each group had its own seat and spoke for itself, was also important. She cautioned that UNEP was pushing back on that principle, almost always asking the nine groups to have a single position, which was both difficult to achieve and discounted the groups’ diversity. Worse yet, the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, under the slogan “be inclusive”, had created a mechanism that allowed individuals to request the floor and make a statement on behalf of civil society, a practice that she characterized as “false democracy”, with no connection to national processes or regional dynamics and thus no lasting impact.

60. Repeating Mr. Arikan’s call for “outside the box” thinking and offering what he called a contrasting opinion, Mr. Halle said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda represented a fundamental change whose implications were still not fully grasped, and that the major groups should focus on helping UNEP deliver on its role in implementing the agenda. While implementation was commonly assumed to be the task of governments assisted by the United Nations, with civil society assuring that the United Nations was properly equipped to play its role, civil society needed to look closely at what type of action best advanced the Agenda given the unprecedented complexity of the tasks and challenges involved. A focus on the United Nations process might not be the most effective approach: it was slow and expensive, placing great weight on often small, underfunded civil society organizations, and discounted the fact that the environmental aspects of the 2030 Agenda would mainly be delivered in areas outside the UNEP direct mandate: policy frameworks, the rules governing financial and capital markets, trade policy, tax policy and, more generally, policy alignment. The Forum should try to understand and debate the new world and new set of challenges, and its members should facilitate the effective participation of their constituencies in UNEP and its mandate to ensure that UNEP played an effective role in the complex game of delivering the 2030 Agenda. The Forum had a very important role as an interlocutor between a very broad group of stakeholders and the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Environment Assembly, and rather than seeking to influence outcome documents, it should broker actions, facilitate stakeholder access to the countries through the various forums and promote and stimulate the creation of a wide range of new partnerships for the delivery of the Agenda. It should also view the failure of governments to advance the agenda toward the 2030 targets as unacceptable and shift tactics as necessary, even considering disruptive action, divestment campaigns, and other forms of activism. An issue of *Perspectives* entitled “UNEP and Civil Society: An Exchange” contained a fuller discussion of such ideas.

61. Mr. Laguna-Celis pledged the UNEP secretariat’s support for the evolution of Forum and challenged the global major groups and stakeholders to make the best use of their time at sessions of the Forum by preparing well in advance. Lauding the use of virtual instruments, he drew attention to MyUNEA.org and urged participants to use it as an economical tool for hosting regional consultations, for shaping the global thematic report for the third session of the Environment Assembly, and even for disruptive action. While the linkages between the regional consultations and the major groups and stakeholders forums might not always be explicit, the secretariat was available

to provide the needed tools and support. He also spoke about creating a strong linkage with the Forum to make sessions of the Environment Assembly less of an event and more of a process. In closing, he recalled the concept, launched the previous day by the Executive Director and welcomed by the major groups, of an umbrella structure that allowed for a bottom-up approach. That meant acknowledging the major groups but also creating a broader coalition within the environmental movement to implement the environmental agenda.

62. During the discussion that followed the panellists' presentations, several participants offered examples of good practices used by their organizations and suggestions that could help strengthen the impact of Forum, including enhancing accountability, including through an accounting framework consisting of critical milestones agreed upon with UNEP, to ensure that the issues brought from the local level to the global level were addressed and local organizations delivered on their mandates; knowing and generally abiding by the rules but also pushing for change; participating effectively in the work of the conventions, where possible; creating a system to ensure that constituency organizations were legitimate (e.g., non-profit, registered); providing for endorsement by existing member organizations to verify that new groups were actually working at the local and national levels to ensure their outreach; communicating with the secretariat on an ongoing basis; and fostering positive activism.

63. Participants also stressed the need for a financially independent platform owned and organized by the major groups; a bottom-up approach; involvement of the major groups in setting the agenda; support for outreach into the constituencies and feedback from the constituencies, particularly to overcome language barriers; a North-South balance in representation; a strong link to the social movements on the ground; and engagement with other actors to influence political processes outside the United Nations.

64. Two of the panellists responded to some of the comments and questions raised. The representative of the secretariat clarified the modalities of participation by the major groups and stakeholders in the Environment Assembly discussions, and then addressed a comment on language barriers, noting that interpretation was expensive and had not been broadly used when offered at previous major groups and stakeholders forum sessions. He also agreed that pushing the rules was often what led to new rules. In response to the question of when disruptive action might be called for, Mr. Halle said that the major groups should constantly review their many possible roles, including cooperative, supportive, whistle-blowing, informative, capacity-building and disruptive, and even their role as participants in the United Nations process, to determine the best mix for achieving their goals.

## **VII. Closing session**

65. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the sixteenth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum was declared closed at 6.15 p.m. on Sunday, 22 May 2016.

## Annex I

### Summary of recommendations – outcome of the GMGSF (21-22 of May 2016)

#### Working Group 1: (related to Cluster/drafting group 1)

##### Role of UNEA and UNEP in Agenda 2030

- Member States to provide UNEA and UNEP with a strong mandate in delivering, reporting, reviewing and monitoring of the environmental dimension of the Agenda 2030.
- UNEA should align with HLPF meetings cycle, and be coherent with its programme;
- UNEA should also consider and encourage the alignment of these efforts through regional environmental ministers forum;
- UNEA should also take into consideration regional development strategies, based on local and bottom-up experiences, for example the Africa 2063 Agenda
- UNEP should promote an efficient science-policy interface on the environmental dimension of Agenda 2030

##### Inputs for HLPF, especially 2016 – “Ensuring that no one is left behind”

- Recognize the importance of the universal, integrated, and indivisible nature of this agenda;
- Ensuring that no one is left behind is also about not leaving the environmental dimension behind, UNEP and its MGS;
- UNEA should adopt and deliver strong message to HLPF on its share of responsibility and capacity to contribute;
- Member States to provide UNEA and UNEP with a mandate to review and monitor the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, suggest guidelines and convey the findings and recommendations of these reviews yearly to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).
- Call on Environment Ministers to ensure policy coherence between Conventions and institutions, both at the national and international levels;
- UNEP to provide input to Global Sustainable Development Report - GSDR and Secretary General SDG progress report.

##### Strengthening the environmental dimension across future HLPF

- Raise ambitious: rights-based approach – right to healthy environment, gender and closing the inequality gap. We urge for fundamental principles for civil engagement;
- Call on Environment Ministers to safeguard the environmental dimension in national actions and strategies for implementation, follow-up and review;

We would like to raise our concern about the weak review process and dilution of the environmental dimension as originally expressed in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We are worried about the draft resolution the co- chairs of HLPF presented, where they propose to cluster the review of the SDGs over 3 year periods. Our concerns are that review of goals only once every 3 years for 8 days is not enough, and that the proposed titles for the clusters are not balanced and too focused on development challenges, where effort is indeed done to integrate the environmental challenges. But we would strongly urge you to aim at a continued review making use of existing UN review processes and consider a year of review where the state of the environment is the main focus, though with integrating the development challenges (access to soil, energy, clean water, inequality etc.).

- 2017: Ensuring food security on a healthy and safe planet ~~by 2030~~
- 2018: Proposal: Making cities sustainable and resilient, and building ~~productive capacities~~ social and physical infrastructure

##### Regarding the Paris agreement, we call for:

- A clear roadmap on fulfilment of financial goal/commitment of US \$ 100b per year by 2020;
- Messages implementation of the forest

- Clear strategy on how to reach the 1.5°C goal?
- CBDR language in the resolution
- Human rights at the core of implementation
- Legally-binding enforcement
- Using the language and outcome from Bonn to link and include the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Ratification of the Agreement as soon as possible
- UNEP and UNFCCC to coordinate the implementation

## **Working Group 2 (related to cluster/drafting group 2)**

### **Overarching messages**

- There is a paramount need for meaningful participation of stakeholders in decision-making and implementation of these issues
- Overall, the political priority of chemical safety is low, including at the national level. UNEA2 should request the Executive Director to support efforts to raise the political priority of chemical safety at all levels, including the national level
- UNEA2 should reinforce the urgent need to eliminate lead paint globally
- There should be an active shift towards sustainable consumption and production – not just promotion
- There is an important role of developed countries to take the lead in sustainable consumption and production
- UNEP should be cautious on promoting market based solutions.
- UNEP should promote communities' knowledge and wisdom to ensure sustainable solutions to all issues
- UNEP should help developing countries for pesticide/ chemicals/ biocides reduction and regulations
- UNEP should promote sustainable agriculture production system in line with environmentally and socially acceptable methods.
- UNEP should ensure substantial language in the text i.e encourage, affirms, ensure
- There is a need for a legally-binding instrument concerning marine plastic debris
- Stress that prevention is key to long-term success in combating marine pollution
- Need for creating an effective after-use plastics economy on the basis of developing a circular economy
- Need to update London Protocol in relation to marine pollution

## **Working Group 3 (related to Cluster 4 and SEP)**

### **Stakeholder Engagement Policy**

We welcome the efforts and proposal of UNEA President on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy. We have reached this point through much compromise and good faith negotiations, but future work is needed to meet Para 88 (h) of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. At this time, the President's proposal is our bottom line. Further weakening the policy, such as with a silent veto to accreditation (otherwise termed a no-objection principle), would be unacceptable and result in our rejection of the entire policy.

### **Regarding Montevideo Program**

The working group on Montevideo raised concerns about the lack of reference to Principle 10 on access to information, public participation and access to justice in the resolution. It suggested that references to existing UNEP GC and UNEA resolutions be incorporated in the L.21 resolution to ensure that the priority is maintained. It also welcomed the new initiative of UNEP with UNDP and UNITAR to support implementation of the new UNEP guide on implementation of P10. Further, the group also discussed the relationship of the Montevideo Program with other related work on rule of law in enforcing wildlife crime and suggested language to link the two to ensure consistency.

### **Regarding Environmental Human Rights Defenders**

The risks posed to environmental defenders are staggering; on average two people are killed every week defending their land, forests and waterways against threats from corporate and state interests. We call upon Member States to protect those who put their lives on the line for the environment. Propose a resolution at UNEA-3 on the protection of environmental human rights defenders in environmental conflicts caused some extractive activities, big infrastructure projects and landgrabbing.

### **Working Group 4 (related to cluster/drafting group 5)**

#### **Illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products**

- Preamble paragraph 3: Keep original text. We oppose mixing legal and illegal trade
- Operative part paragraph 1: remove “ensure sustainable use and”

#### **Sustainable and optimal management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication**

We are proposing that member states consider the use of natural patrimony/heritage. We recognise that many developing and least developed countries are heavily dependent on the contribution of natural patrimony/heritage in their national economies. Civil society, however, is deeply concerned on the use of the concept of ‘natural capital’ as a framework in conservation and development of natural patrimony/heritage. The use of ‘capital’ to describe the value of natural patrimony/heritage dangerously limits it to economic and financial valuation, which are not necessarily consistent with sustainable use. The concept of ‘natural resources’ also leaves developing countries vulnerable to exploitation and implies infinite use without responsibility and obligation to safeguard and nurture for future generations. These concepts fail to capture the intrinsic value of natural patrimony/heritage and the invaluable contribution of indigenous peoples and local communities in the conservation, development and sustainable use of natural heritage.

We believe that there are elements to which we cannot attach a monetary value. We need to recognise the responsibility of people to protect, conserve and restore ecosystems and natural patrimony/heritage, not just to exploit.

#### **Mainstreaming of biodiversity for well-being**

- Paragraph 5: retain Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and Aichi Biodiversity Target
- Paragraph 8:
  - Stress the importance of this and welcome the work of the CBD over the last 20 years
  - Propose to add ‘water’ as a sector
  - Lack of references to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and women that are intimately connected to protection and preservation of biodiversity

#### **Combating desertification, land degradation and sustainable management of rangelands**

Recognising and upscaling the contributions of civil society and local communities and the role of indigenous knowledge in combating desertification

#### **Protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict**

- UNEP needs a mandate to work effectively throughout the conflict cycle
- Legal protection of the environment during conflict needs to be strengthened, based on principles of human rights and international environmental law
- Needs stronger implementation of existing law in protecting the environment in relation armed conflict

#### **Field based environmental assessment of the effects after the November 2012 and July and August 2014 wars on the Gaza strip**

- Support Morocco’s Gaza resolution
- Call for UNEP to do more post-conflict environmental assessments for countries where UNEP has not yet studied and monitoring the environment during conflicts

## Annex II

# MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS OPENING STATEMENT UNEA-2 Nairobi, 23 May 2016

Madame President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Major Groups and Stakeholders are strongly committed to an ambitious and effective UNEA. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum is an essential part of the UNEA process.

We invite Member States to review the compilation of statements and recommendations by Major Groups and Stakeholders for consideration by UNEA-2, that contains the results of the Regional Consultation Meetings (UNEP/EA.2/INF/7).

We welcome the efforts and proposal of UNEA President on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy. We have reached this point through much compromise and good faith negotiations, but future work is needed to fulfill Para 88 (h) of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. At this time, the President's proposal is our bottom line. Further weakening the policy, such as with a silent veto on accreditation (a "no-objection" principle), would be unacceptable and result in our rejection of the entire policy.

2015 was a remarkable year for global sustainability decisions and commitments. UNEA-2 is a great opportunity to take bold decisions to continue this political momentum. It should set the stage for delivering the full and effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda up holding the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities. We must make sure that no one is left behind, including persons with disabilities who also have a significant stake in the 2030 Agenda and its implementation.

UNEA is the leading environmental authority in the UN with UNEP as its executive institution. UNEA-2 should advance global policy coherence and complementarity within the UN system and beyond, including implementation at the national and regional levels.

Effective follow up mechanisms for monitoring, transparency and accountability are essential in delivering on the environmental agenda and MG&S play a critical role in all three areas.

We would echo ED Steiner's words that "There is no UNEA without Major Groups and Stakeholders." We look forward to playing a greater role to play in the future. We reiterate our commitment to contribute to the UNEA process and are up to the challenge. We intend to continue and further strengthen this positive relationship with Member States and the new Executive Director.

The Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum focused on these specific issues:

- the need to mobilize domestic resources, while addressing systemic failures including illicit financial flows, taxation BEPS (base erosion and profit shifting), bribery and corruption, and evaluate the physical and policy impact.
- while acknowledging UNEP's efforts to promote Principle 10 globally and appreciating the improvements to and increased awareness of the Access to Information Policy, we call for external review of UNEP's performance on Access to Information and on Stakeholder Engagement in the light of paragraph 88 of the Future We Want document.
- developing multi-stakeholder partnerships that are accountable, transparent, equitable and effective. UNEA-2 provides an important opportunity to catalyze, strengthen and propose new multi-stakeholder partnerships. UNEP will require appropriate institutional infrastructure to do this working in cooperation with the Major Groups and Stakeholders.
- recognizing the contribution of Major Groups and Stakeholders, civil society organizations and local communities to developing different pathways to sustainable development. These should be people-centered and based on the principles of human rights; respect planetary boundaries; embody the right to sustainable living; a Just Transition; encourage citizen participation; ensure accountability and transparency; and reflect the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) .
- emphasizing that UNEA decisions and policy outcomes must be based on sound, evidence-based science (such as is reflected in GEO 6), incorporating normal science along with citizen science, indigenous local knowledge and grey literature. This is critical in both the implementation and monitoring of the 2015 commitments as well as decisions taken at UNEA-2.



- making health and environment UNEA's core priority since this relationship underpins all social and economic development. We call on UNEA to embed this in every resolution.

We have further concerns that UNEA-2 resolutions must reflect the advancements made on the different MEASs on gender equality and women's rights.

The risks posed to environmental defenders are staggering; on average two people are killed every week defending their land, forests and waterways. We call upon Member States to protect those who put their lives on the line for the environment. We request all delegates to UNEA-2 to stand for a minute of silence to honor the ultimate sacrifice of those who have been killed.

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## Annex III

### MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS OPENING STATEMENT UNEA-2 (Abridged version) Nairobi, 23 May 2016

Thank you Chair.

Madame President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am Yugratna Srivastava from India from Children and Youth Major group on behalf of Major Groups and stakeholders.

We are strongly committed to an ambitious and effective UNEA. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum is an essential part of the UNEA process.

A longer version of this statement including the issues and outcomes of our discussion will be posted on the UNEA portal. We also invite Member States to review the compilation of statements and recommendations by Major Groups and Stakeholders for consideration by UNEA-2, that contains the results of the Regional Consultation Meetings (UNEP/EA.2/INF/7).

We welcome the efforts and proposal of UNEA President on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy. We have reached this point through much compromise and good faith negotiations, but future work is needed to fulfill Para 88 (h) of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. At this time, the President's proposal is our bottom line. Further weakening the policy, such as with a silent veto on accreditation (a "no-objection" principle), would be unacceptable and result in our rejection of the entire policy.

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We would echo ED Steiner's words that "There is no UNEA without Major Groups and Stakeholders." We look forward to playing a greater role to play in the future. We reiterate our commitment to contribute to the UNEA process and are up to the challenge. We intend to continue and further strengthen this positive relationship with Member States and the new Executive Director.

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Thank you.

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