



REPÚBLICA DE COSTA RICA
Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía
Despacho del Ministro



Wednesday, April 5, 2017
DM-325-2017

Dear Minister,

The 2017 United Nations Environment Assembly will be held from 4 to 6 December 2017 in Nairobi. I invite you to save the date and start making your plans to attend this very important international event which will address the theme: **“Towards a Pollution Free Planet”**.

Pollution is one of the main obstacles for meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. Pollution is destroying our ecosystems and is hampering our prospects for long-term economic growth. Most importantly, pollution is reducing the prospects for humanity to live fulfilled lives in harmony with Nature. Our citizens are beginning to recognize the long-term ill effects of pollution and are asking us to take action.

It is my desire to see a pollution free planet. Therefore, as President of the Environment Assembly, supported by the members of the bureaux of the Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, who represent all regional and political groups, I am initiating a process to develop a Ministerial Declaration. My purpose is to strengthen the Assembly and provide a consensual political statement to support the resolutions – linked to the theme of the Assembly, global in focus and actionable – to be developed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the voluntary commitments from Member States and from other stakeholders including, local governments, private sector entities, civil society groups, indigenous peoples, and individuals.

With your support I look forward to a Declaration simple enough in language and content that an everyday person can read and understand; and yet strong enough, bold enough, and based on scientific evidence, to drive immediate, concrete, and progressive actions. It is my expectation that the Declaration supports the resolutions produced by the Assembly, and that these are all interlinked with the Sustainable Development Goals.

To this end, I hope to work with each of you in developing this outcome in a transparent and inclusive process of consultations involving member states processes to be concluded before the beginning of the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives in late November.

As of the start of April, I would like to open up the process to develop a Ministerial Declaration to inputs from all member states and stakeholders. I invite inputs including positions, priorities and considerations in relation to the Declaration, and its relevance to the Assembly.

I call upon regional Ministerial fora to provide inputs. I also invite regional and political groups to engage in the process and provide inputs. I further invite all interested stakeholders to submit their contributions to the Declaration process.

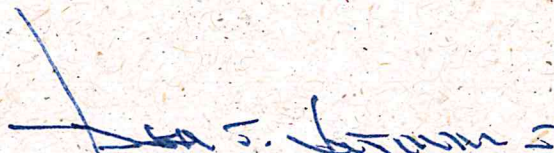
As a general indication, I would like to propose the following timeline towards the development of a draft Declaration.

- (a) By early June 2017: - Share with Member States and non-government partners the outline of the Declaration for review and comments, in readiness for further discussions during the second Preparatory Retreat for the Environment Assembly to be held in Costa Rica (9-10 June, 2017);
- (b) By late June 2017: - Circulate a draft of the Declaration for comments from Member States and stakeholder partners;
- (c) September-October 2017: - Informal consultations with regional and political groups, including the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi.

It is my great hope that through this transparent and inclusive process I can capture the thoughts of all parties, and ensure that all views have been expressed. The Declaration should reflect our global consensus on moving 'towards a pollution free planet' and the actions to defend this statement.

By the end of this process, I hope we are able to have a strongly political, actionable statement which can be put forward for adoption at the 2017 Environment Assembly. I look forward to receiving your initial inputs, through the UN Environment Programme Secretariat of Governing Bodies (email: unep.sgb@unep.org) by no later than Friday 5 May 2017.

Yours sincerely,



H.E. Dr. Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta

Minister of Environment and Energy of the Republic of Costa Rica
President of the UN Environment Assembly

