

Joint Major Groups statement

1. Thank you. I am speaking on behalf of five Major Groups: Women, Children and Youth, Workers and Trade Unions, Indigenous Peoples and Science and Technology.

2. In 1995, when the Indigenous people of Ogoniland in the Niger Delta protested the oil spills on their land, their leader, Ken Saro-Wiwa, was murdered. Last Friday, the BBC reported that thousands of children from the same territory are dying from the impacts of oil spill by Shell. After decades of promises from oil companies, the pollution caused by them continues to destroy communities' health, food, water and livelihoods.

3. Indigenous peoples make up only 5% of the world's population but are protecting 80% of our forests and biodiversity. Because of this, Indigenous peoples and local communities find themselves increasingly displaced, attacked or killed when defending their land, territories and resources. They are displaced to make place for corporations who are protected by the state - and the military.

4. These extractive industries, large-scale infrastructure projects and monoculture plantations expansion are linked to killings of more than 200 human rights and environmental defenders around the world. Last week Elisa Badayos, a coordinator of the human rights group Karapatan was murdered in the Philippines while conducting a fact-finding mission on military violence.

5. The theme of UNEA-3, to beat pollution, cannot happen without systemic change. Pollution is no accident. Governments and business structured our economies towards mass production of plastics, consumption of fossil fuels, and use of pesticides and fertilisers in our agriculture. These companies must no longer be subsidised.

6. Companies responsible for the damages they have caused, must contribute to full clean up, and deliver compensation to affected communities, whether the impact is on health, on access to clean water, or on people's sources of livelihood.

7. Without concrete and immediate action, in a short span of time we will find that there is no source of food or water left on earth that does not contain residues of oil, plastic, or chemicals. Policies and solutions to this must be developed with the consultation of the scientific community, and states must increase research funding for sustainable, environmentally friendly alternatives and solutions.

8. A transition to sustainable and community-led economies are possible. We need a just transition, for workers and their families to access green and decent jobs, the right to social dialogue and universal social protection. Communities affected and displaced by pollution must have their rights respected, including free prior and informed consent. In this transition, agricultural practices that damage people's health and the environment are phased out and instead agroecology, small-scale farming and other sustainable practices are supported, where women's rights are fully respected.

9. Finally, the UNEA-2's resolution on education was limited to formal education, and here at UNEA-3 it is not being addressed at all. There is a need to strengthen educational systems that include traditional ecological knowledge and support intergenerational transmission, especially for marginalised communities whose way of life is changing because of pollution. We need a broad approach to 'education' that allows for the decolonization of environmental education and

is inclusive of non-formal education, and welcomes all groups, including indigenous peoples and person with disabilities.

Thank you