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H.E. Mr. Siim Kiisler  
Minister of Environment of Estonia  
President of the UN Environment Assembly  
Tallinn, Estonia

Reference: R221-0766  
Your reference:  
Our reference: KOS  
Contact person: KOS  
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## **Reply to Call for Inputs for the Ministerial Declaration of the Fourth UN Environment Assembly**

Dear Minister

We refer to your letter on a proposed roadmap for a Ministerial Declaration of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4), dated 2 May 2018. In the request member states are asked to provide inputs with respect to key priorities within the agreed theme, and to make available possible elements and key messages in relation to the process of developing a ministerial declaration.

First of all, Switzerland considers it important to establish a practice of having a ministerial declaration at all UN Environment Assemblies in order to allow ministers to take the necessary high level strategic decisions on the most pressing issues of the environment.

We value the initiative by the UNEA president and welcome his leadership in elaborating a ministerial declaration for the UNEA-4. We also support the notion to make progress on the content of the ministerial declaration ahead of the UNEA-4. We appreciate the efforts of the UNEA President to conduct an open, clear, and transparent process to elaborate a ministerial outcome. Based on the experience of last year's UNEA, it was crucial to the success that member states had the chance to provide inputs, however, had not been given the opportunity to enter into formal negotiations of the details of the text.

Sound chemicals and waste management is a perfect area in the realm of sustainable consumption and production where the environmental, social and economic dimensions are equally addressed. Existing knowledge stemming from the chemicals and waste or green economy sectors, can be valuable for the Implementation Plan against pollution and for the ministerial declaration. Hubs for those sectors and others can be found in Geneva, serving as a basis to engage in the strategic partnerships the UNEA President is seeking for.

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Switzerland has been committed to and actively involved in the elaboration of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP (10YFP) from the very beginning. It was a great success that the 10YFP on SCP was adopted as one of the most concrete outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference. It contributes through its programs to a sustainable development and more specifically to a green economy. The UNEA President asks to identify key partnerships. We strongly believe that member states shall seek partnerships under the umbrella of the 10YFP, as it is in its essence a true multistakeholder network.

In terms of content, we value the following components to be included in the ministerial declaration:

- **Policy Guidance:** It is important that the United Nations Environment Programme fulfills its role as the authoritative voice in international environmental governance by providing overarching policy guidance, and by developing adequate international policies. This guidance is of particular relevance for the theme of the UNEA-4 as many areas in the broad realm of SCP lack a certain global political guidance;
- **Multilateral Environmental Agreements:** The United Nations Environment Programme in collaboration with the multilateral environmental agreements shall aim to facilitate, promote, monitor and secure the implementation of and compliance with the obligations under the conventions relevant to the theme of the UNEA-4;
- **Science-policy interface:** Including policy relevant information, through assessment processes such as the Global Environment Outlook, the Global Chemicals Outlook, or the Report by the International Resource Panel is key to decisions on future-oriented actions;
- **The 10YFP:** As the primary multistakeholder implementation mechanism of SCP, it is important to include a strong component in the ministerial declaration that speaks to the diversity of the work conducted under the 10YFP;
- **Green economy and sustainable finance:** The role of circular economy and resource efficiency must be strengthened in order to achieve international goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals and the Goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. It is further vital to recognize the importance of securing sustainable consumption and production patterns, and the fact that the financial sector has the power to accelerate the sustainable development of the world economy;
- **Extractive sectors:** The declaration has to recognize the significant challenges and contribution of mining to the SDGs and the need for further global policy action. It is key to stress the importance of strong and effective legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and practices. Moreover, globally accepted codes of conduct for mining and processing industries and continuous improvement of accountability and transparency in the mining sector are a prerequisite. The findings of the International Resources Panel on the governance of this sector need to be accounted for;
- **Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics:** Findings and policy recommendations resulting from the "Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastic Assessment" for the UNEA-3 and the work being conducted through the Ad-hoc Open-ended Expert Group can provide concrete measures geared towards the theme;
- **Chemicals and Waste:** Highlight the positive potential of sound chemicals and waste management throughout their life-cycle for sustainable consumption and production and sustainable development. Call to work for an ambitious and robust, comprehensive and coherent, effective and efficient regime post 2020. Underline the need for a synergetic, coherent, and complementary regime;

- **Sustainable Development Goals:** The United Nations Environment Programme has to deliver on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals. It shall make use of and build upon existing products and processes, indicators and data. That includes the formerly known Global Environmental Goals, now called the internationally-agreed environmental goals.

We support that the final outcome of the ministerial declaration is short and concise, based on scientific evidence, and political. Switzerland is deeply committed to continue strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme as the central pillar of the international environmental governance. In that respect, adopting a ministerial declaration is key. We fully support the process towards that goal.

Please accept, dear Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Federal Office for the Environment FOEN  
The Head of the International Affairs Division



Franz Perrez  
Ambassador

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