

Inputs Switzerland on the Draft Outline of the Ministerial Declaration

Dear Ado,

We refer to the letter from H.E. Mr. Siim Kiisler dated 8 August 2018 in which he request written inputs for the draft outline of the Ministerial Declaration of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4). We want thank Estonia for the transparent and open communication on the subject and specifically for laying out a concrete roadmap towards elaborating the Ministerial Declaration.

In the draft outline document the vision is geared towards “developing partnerships” with respect to the theme. We believe that it is key that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UNEAs fulfil their role as the authoritative voice in international environmental governance by providing overarching policy guidance. This guidance is of particular relevance for the theme of the UNEA-4 as many areas in the broad realm of sustainable consumption and production lack a certain global political guidance and anchoring. In this regard, we would like to emphasize that the vision or goal of every ministerial declaration must entail that vital overarching policy guidance. Partnerships per se, can be one of the means for reaching the political goals initially set.

We believe that UNEP 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. Speaking of partnerships, we encourage to include and recognize the multilateral environmental agreements as key actors.

In general, we understand that the content of priorities or focus areas should overlap among the Background Report by the UNEP Executive Director, the concept for the theme on UNEA 4, and ultimately the ministerial outcome document. However, the draft outline for the latter provides us with another structure of priorities, whilst the concept for the theme for UNEA 4 already works with three agreed focus areas. We would like to suggest an attempt to further streamline the mentioned documents.

We support that the 6th Global Environmental Outlook and the Global Assessment of Natural Resources Use of the International Resource Panel will inform the political message from the Ministers. The sound management of chemicals and waste is rightly emphasized as being of crucial importance for the theme. We suggest that the Global Chemicals Outlook must also be mentioned in the outline and its results must ultimately feed into the ministerial outcome document, being another important source in the science-policy framework.

We support that under the “**main priority 1**” data are highlighted as key elements for the informed decision-making. We do need ways of generating new and more accurate data, however, it is also about effectively utilizing and optimizing existing data and products, and guaranteeing accessibility to data for the informed decision-making.

Switzerland fully supports the overall transition towards a circular economy. We appreciate the placing of the 10YFP and under “**main priority 2**” of the ministerial declaration. The 10YFP encloses a broad range of programmes that address namely the entire value chain from production to consumption in different sectors. The heading under main priority 2 does not, however, specifically mention the full spectrum of sustainable consumption and production (SCP), in particular the consumption part is not enough reflected. We recommend to specifically use the entirety of the SCP-concept under “main priority 2” by adding: “... *to accelerate the shift towards a sustainable consumption and production in order to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation.*”

We appreciate that the anticipated report of the International Resource Panel is highlighted. However, we miss the mentioning of the sustainable management of metal and mineral resources in the list of priorities (e.g. under “main priority 2”). In the Rio+20 Outcome Document, the international community already recognized the major contribution of metals and minerals in modern societies, and called upon governments and businesses to promote the continuous improvement of accountability and transparency.

Under “main priority 2” we suggest to reference the development of a global framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste instead of referring only to SAICM in order to emphasize the relevance of all the actors in the chemicals and waste cluster and as well the linkages between chemicals and waste.

We see some concerns regarding items under “**main priority 3**”. Many of those items listed could also be mentioned under “main priority 2”. Moreover, the “main priority 3” refers to the civil society or academia as the being the target, however, actions listed under that priority speak mainly towards the governments.

Thank you again for the possibility to provide inputs and to contribute to this important process.

Best regards,

Felix

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