

Draft Ministerial Declaration
UNEA - 4
Inputs from Chile

The Ministry of the Environment of Chile wishes to refer to the communication sent on behalf of H.E. Mr. Siim Kiisler, President of the UN Environment Assembly and Minister of Environment of Estonia, on 21 October 2018, inviting to provide inputs and suggestions for the Draft Ministerial Declaration of the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA – 4).

We congratulate the initiative on the proposal of this Zero Draft, as a relevant step in order to continue a participative drafting process for all stakeholders.

We reaffirm our commitment in working on a consensual basis that will lead to the approval of a Ministerial Declaration during UNEA-4 by all parties, as a contribution for the international environmental agenda on the subject of innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production.

We would like to comment on this draft and suggest some remarks in key matters:

1. General comments

As a political declaration, we suggest that the language and form of the document should be written to appeal to all public, with an inclusive approach to reach decision makers, private sector, civil society and academia. On its current form, the document relies on elements that are known to specialists on the area, but that may not be of knowledge of other stakeholders. This is particularly clear on its first sections.

The document should at least consider a general to particular approach, starting with the relevance of the chosen subject, priorities and means of achieving these objectives clearly divided. This would make the document more attractive to non-specialists, reaching the public and communicating the importance of this discussion in a more effective way. A shorter extension should be considered to enhance its communicational impact.

2. Vision and introductory section

On paragraph one, it is stated: *“We recognise that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting responsible patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development*

are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development". We believe that the importance of the environmental pillar of sustainable development should be recognized clearly in this paragraph, highlighted in a similar way as "economic and social development". The relevance of environmental protection should be stated in this paragraph, and responsible consumption and production as a way of achieving environmental protection objectives.

On this subject, Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals should be mentioned, and the recognition of the equal relevance of its three pillars as an addition.

Differences between the paragraphs referring to recognitions and objectives and the means to achieve them should be clearly separated for better understanding of this declaration. In this case, paragraph 2 and 5 referring to environmental information and GEO should be located on the last parts of this section, with a clear statement that these elements are ways of achieving environmental objectives.

3. Main priority 1

In line with the comments on last section, we believe that access and development of environmental data is a mean to achieve environmental objectives, and as such it should be located in priority 3.

On the propositions of letters a) and f), on the development of a global environmental data strategy, action plan and a the request of the Executive Director to establish a dedicated program for building environmental data capacity, we would like to ask how these proposals will dialogue between each other and how they will relate to existing initiatives, in particular UNEP Live, GEO and SDG reporting.

On letter c), we ask on the objective on having a list of different sources of environmental data and analysis, if they are covering all possibilities of data access and how these new technologies relate to environmental protection. The content of this point is very technical, and its inclusion in a political declaration should be further analyzed. At least, a statement on the relation of new technologies and environmental protection should be considered on this point.

In the case of the deadlines proposed on letters a) and e), we would like to ask if they refer to an ex ante analysis on their feasibility, especially considering that this will be a multilateral declaration and its commitments will have to be implemented by all members.

4. Main priority 2

We consider that sustainable and efficient resource management to decarbonize, detoxify, decouple and enhance ecosystem resilience should be main priority 1, as it contains clear environmental protection objectives, and the other priorities are means to achieve the goals established in this part. We also support the clear mention of the life cycle perspective and achieving a resource efficient and circular economy.

On letter c), we propose to add “and adaptation” at the end of the paragraph.

On letter h), we are not sure if it would be possible to reach an agreement on a percentage or reuse and recycling of waste, given its multilateral and political nature. We suggest that a general commitment to improve recycling policies may be stated, through an extended producer responsibility approach and recognizing the relevance of the polluter pays principle.

On letter j), we welcome mentioning the development of initiatives to phasing out single-use plastics. We suggest mentioning the introduction of economic incentives to upscale or recycle plastic bottles, not committing to the introduction of economic incentives. Also, economic incentives for recycling plastics should cover all products, and not only bottles.

On letter l), we ask if it is possible to achieve an agreement on the total sustainable public procurements, and the ways that are considered to measure this goal. We propose establishing voluntary commitments for sustainable public procurements and assessment criteria, as an alternative of agreeing on percentages of total sustainable public procurements.

5. Main priority 3

We propose to add as letter a): “We recognize the key role of the environmental education and awareness to achieve the change of behavior and adoption of new habits needed for a sustainable consumption and production”.

We believe that the engagement with all stakeholders is a relevant mean to achieve decoupling of economic growth and environmental degradation, and it should be located in priority 2. We support the mentions to environmental education and raising awareness on sustainable consumption and production and the relevance of the participation of all stakeholders to reach the proposed goals.