

United States Response to UNEA Bureau President Siim Kiissler's Request For Comments on the Draft Outline of a Ministerial Declaration

The United States appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Outline for a UNEA-4 Ministerial Declaration. We continue to be concerned that negotiating such a Declaration could divert valuable time and resources at the Assembly and urge the Bureau to consider a non-negotiated outcome document, such as a Chair's Summary, which could reflect the vision and products of UNEA-4.

Without prejudice to that position, we offer the following comments:

The United States thanks the President for producing a well-balanced outline with articulate messages on data transparency, comparability, and accountability; innovation; and public participation/engagement.

Main Priority 1: Regarding the call to establish monitoring systems, since many such systems already exist it is important to emphasize strengthening existing monitoring and increasing access to data, in addition to establishing monitoring where it is currently needed and non-existent.

Main Priority 2: We agree with Canada that the term "circular economy" may not be sufficiently transparent, and may be too specific, limiting options to one among several approaches to resource efficiency. We suggest giving greater emphasis to the latter, as an internationally recognized term. In addition, we note "non-toxic materials" is not a defined term and should be replaced with language that reflects what we understand to be the goal of SAICM beyond 2020 - to protect human health and the environment through better management of chemicals and wastes. Finally, rather than maximizing the benefits of solid waste management, we should be committing to develop and improve solid waste management.

Main Priority 3: The term "sustainable lifestyles" is vague; this point could instead refer to the promotion of "a wider uptake of innovative, sustainable approaches in education." We also suggest supporting the creation of innovative business opportunities "for a greener economy," rather than limiting innovations to infrastructure. Finally, the call for citizens to be engaged should refer to their local environments, rather than being limited to urban environments.