4th meeting  
of the United Nations Environment Assembly  
11-15 March 2019

Closing statement  
on behalf of the EU and its MS

- Mister President, distinguished colleagues; it is my privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement

- This Assembly was overshadowed by the tragic accident of the flight carrying many of our colleagues to this meeting. And today we also extend our condolences to the New Zealand delegation and mourn with them the loss of many lives.

- All of us represented at the fourth session of the UN Environmental Assembly have worked hard to achieve an ambitious and forward looking result. And we think we have succeeded. It is therefore with great pleasure that we welcome the outcome of this assembly.

- We welcome the engagement of all Member States in discussing solutions for the environmental challenges that our planet is facing.
That proves that the highest environment authority sets the global environmental agenda and that UNEP maintains its underpinning science-policy foundation.

- This significant engagement and the positive results would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the UNEA President, Mister Siim Kiisler, the chair of the Committee of the Whole Ambassador Coimbra from Brazil and the Bureau of the Assembly as well as the facilitators. We also welcome the preparatory process led by the Committee of Permanent Representatives and efficiently supported by the UNEP Secretariat. Great thanks to the Acting Executive Director, Ms Joyce Msuya. We also extend a very warm welcome to the incoming Executive Director, Ms Inger Andersen. We are looking forward to working with her.

- The most prominent success of UNEA-4 is the Ministerial Declaration. It presents a compromise between various levels of ambitions of Member States, nevertheless, it clearly indicates the direction in which our development needs to evolve to ensure a sustainable future. The Declaration includes very important statements and commitments that will guide our work in the multilateral system and actions at national and regional level, not least with regard to the topical issue of single use plastics.

- Along the same lines, we are largely happy with the overall balance of the package of resolutions we have negotiated over the
last days. The EU and its Member States believe that we have agreed on an important set of approaches, commitments and innovative solutions that will advance us in our work on important topics as women and the environment, sound management of chemicals and waste, sustainable consumption and production, more resource efficiency and circularity and fewer unnecessary products such as certain single use plastic products.

- We welcome the review process initiated at this UNEA and we look forward to work with other Member States to improve efficiency and effectiveness of UNEA and its subsidiary bodies.

- It will remain a major disappointment that it was impossible to agree on the resolution proposed by the EU and its Member States on Deforestation from agriculture commodity supply chains. Despite efforts and untiring engagement, it proved impossible to convince some Member States to address this burning global challenge also at this assembly. The EU and its Member States will continue engaging beyond UNEA-4 to ensure that this threat to our environment is fully addressed.

- We remain committed to 2030 Agenda, agreed multilateral cooperation and international environmental governance and will not agree to any back-sliding in this regard.

- We would like to thank all with whom we worked hand in hand for the past ten days. We have been encouraged by the tremendous opportunities to discuss and exchange views, including through
dialogues with political leaders and stakeholders, various side
events and bilateral meetings. We invite all partners to join us to
work with us to develop future initiatives and actions building on
the achievements of this Assembly.

• Last but not least, the EU and its Member States would like to
congratulate the newly elected President of UNEA5, Mr Ola
Elvestuen and the new UNEA Bureau and we wish you every
success in guiding us towards the next session of the Assembly.