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Compilation of Statements and Recommendations by Major Groups and Stakeholders for Consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its Fourth Session

Note by the Executive Director

Summary

The annex to this present note sets out statements, key messages and recommendations by major groups and stakeholders prepared during regional consultations held in preparation to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The statements, key messages and recommendations are reproduced as received, without formal editing.

Discussions at the regional consultations were structured according to regional priorities around the various themes of innovative solutions for environmental challenges, and sustainable consumption and production but also addressed issues of social justice, environmental protection, environmental rights and governance and implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of Europe

Tallinn, Estonia, 3-4 September 2018

Civil Society Statement from Europe for UNEA4: Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption Production

1.   Context

1.1 Our region's responsibility for overconsumption and planetary harm

Our region plays a fundamental role in generating and sustaining global inequality through its model of production and consumption. We have an economic model that is causing global environmental degradation, which takes a heavy toll on human and animal health and welfare, as well as on ecosystems, and which acts as a barrier to the attainment of sustainable development.

Humankind is currently using 1.7 Earths per year. We use more natural resources than the Earth can regenerate and emit more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than its systems can absorb. The extraction of primary materials has more than tripled in 40 years. The European region and its highly industrialized countries contribute massively to resource depletion and waste generation. A main challenge for our region is to consume substantially fewer natural resources. We also need to achieve an absolute decoupling of resource use and our economic activities.

Addressing this model will require more than technological innovation alone. It will require profound societal change, driven by targeted change and led by in-depth analyses of root causes. Innovation should utilise also the knowledge and experience of the societies as base for the transition. The economic and developmental diversity of our region also underscores the importance of grounding societal innovation on the knowledge and needs of local communities.

1.2 Progress in a challenging political environment

Global environmental challenges require coordinated global responses. Yet we continue to witness disruption to the international order as states pursue their own agendas at a cost to the planet and to us all. We have seen core principles of environmental protection undermined and widespread and ongoing failures to respect, protect and fulfil environmental human rights. Knowledge-based decision-making has been rejected in the face of political expediency, while political pressure and cuts in funding have reduced the space for civil society to perform its vital functions.

This year the global political climate makes UNEA's role more vital than ever. Although we welcome the steps that continue to be made towards achieving the ambition of an agenda setting forum for global environmental challenges, much remains to be done. This includes procedural initiatives, for example to ensure stronger coordination on the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But this also requires that UNEA set the global environmental agenda. We also urge states to use the Assembly to push forward meaningful initiatives on environmental rights defenders, environmental security and steps towards a global instrument on plastics.

1.3 The future of the UN Environment Assembly

The delivery of this agenda will require greater emphasis on the role of civil society organizations. It is not just states, international organizations or the private sector that will implement the outcomes. More than ever we need UNEA's outputs to be tailored towards those implementing them at the local level: civil society, including local authorities, grassroots organizations and individuals. These are the people who can build and sustain the societal change that people and planet require, yet UNEA does not do enough to translate and communicate its resolutions and decisions to a broader audience. Those local groups also require support to build its capacity to deliver change. Enhancing public participation will also provide more grassroots solutions for environmental challenges.

An agenda-setting Assembly must also ensure that its agenda is fully implemented. UNEA's resolutions should not just be the responsibility of UN Environment to implement: they are mainly the responsibility of its Member States. Commonly we see engagement during negotiations, then little in the way of follow up. Resolutions are left to UN Environment to implement, and few carry with them specific budgets for their delivery. It is critical that ownership is shared and that states demonstrate leadership, particularly where public and private stakeholders are also expected to play their part. We would prefer quality, not quantity, and for commitments to be properly funded and effectively delivered - an objective that is vital for UNEA's credibility. Where appropriate, this should include funds dedicated to building the capacity for their national and local implementation.

We urgently need a monitoring framework for the resolutions adopted by UNEA and we UNEA should also address methods to monitor the legal implementation of existing multilateral environmental agreements.

The increasing focus on business at UNEA and the change from a Science Policy Forum to a Science Policy Business Forum should be reversed to ensure that the forum prioritizes public, rather than private interests. UN Environment is uniquely positioned to promote the science-policy interface and the Forum is one of the mechanisms through which UN Environment can be a driving force in ensuring that the science-policy interface is strengthened globally for public interest.

In our consultation, we chose to interpret the final decision over UNEA-4's theme as proof of states' political investment in the Assembly and its outcomes. However, if it is to add value and contribute towards addressing the challenges we collectively face, the understanding of innovation and the approach to sustainable consumption and production require fresh thinking and action from governments; not just business as usual.

2.   SCP as leverage to systemic change

Sustainable consumption and production (SCP) is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For its realization we need a fundamental change of the production chain to make it sustainable and fair. Our current economic system is based on the unsustainable extractivism of natural resources, the exploitation of cheap labor and low environmental and social standards.

We urge governments to build on the progress already made under the 10 YFP on SCP and to reiterate their support for the programmes through national policy changes and the allocation of resources.

A wide range of instruments are necessary to achieve the transition towards sustainable consumption and production. These include financial and regulatory instruments, behavioral changes inspired through education and the promotion of sustainable lifestyles, a focus on well-being instead of GDP growth, redistribution of wealth, and the equitable sharing of environmental space. For that we need a new narrative on human well-being and economic development, which goes beyond the paradigm of infinite growth and

the promise that innovation and technology will allow us to decouple our high levels of consumption from resource use and environmental degradation.

Unsustainable production and consumption are the root cause of environmental degradation and environmental conflicts in our region and around the world, where local communities suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation, pollution, resource depletion or land-grabbing and dislocation. One example from our region has been the growth in mining activities in areas of Central Asia, the Balkans, Caucasus and within the EU itself, which is linked to the ever-expanding demand for raw materials. We have also seen other large-scale projects for agricultural, industrial and energy production lead to conflict and environmental degradation.

3.   Innovative solutions beyond technical fixes

Innovation is not just the design and production of new things, new products or new means of consumption. Technological or product innovation alone will not decouple us from the excessive resource use that breaches our planetary boundaries. Innovation is not a panacea or magic bullet. Nor will innovation alone lead to the social and economic changes that humanity desperately needs: comprehensive societal innovation that engages all stakeholders at all levels and which identifies and utilizes the best existing historical or cultural practices, as well as looking to the future. Even where innovation is limited to new technologies, it must not be restricted to new products, but must also address how they are produced, and their entire lifecycle.

Societal solutions must be built from the bottom up, making use of local and indigenous knowledge, and built through meaningful engagement and the development of trust. There are no easy solutions. Advocating novel solutions to environmental challenges should proceed on the basis of a simple test:

- Firstly, does the innovation do no harm to the environment, humans and animals, now and in the future? (precautionary principle)
- Secondly, does it benefit society as a whole, and not create or exacerbate inequalities?
- And finally, does the proposed approach already exist? If so, first apply transfer of technology to the groups needed, and/or upscale it via policy measures and/or financial in-vestments.

Furthermore, it is not enough just to identify and promote an idea without also addressing the societal conditions or infrastructure that it needs to flourish. We require holistic approaches, informed by and sympathetic to the local context, and not quick fixes and magical thinking.

4.   Other emerging issues and ongoing processes

4.1 The Global Pact for the Environment (GPE)

While we welcome the proposed Global Pact for the Environment, we view it as both a risk, and an opportunity. The norms and principles that form the bedrock of international environmental law have been hard fought. In line with the principle of non-regression, it is vital that these standards are not watered down to the lowest common denominator in a new and legally binding instrument. The global political climate is not conducive to the progressive codification of the law at present, and both UN Environment, and those states committed to the project should provide undertakings that they will fight any weakening of the norms that so many depend on. The process towards the Pact should be based on majority voting, and not the consensus model, even if this requires a longer road to universalization. Space for civil society in any process to-wards the Pact should be guaranteed and should mean meaningful procedural and substantive engagement throughout. We are ready to engage in negotiations towards the Pact and have high expectations for its outcome.

4.2 Treaty on Business and Human Rights

Voluntary measure and corporate social responsibility schemes have failed to provide a solution for the negative social and environmental impact of corporate behavior. Sustainable consumption and production can only be ensured if we strengthen the legal framework for corporate responsibility and accountability. We call on governments to enshrine mandatory due diligence to avoid the negative effects of business practices on human rights and the environment. In August 2018, a zero draft for a Legally binding instrument to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises was presented by a Human Rights Council working group. We call on governments to engage constructively in this process and to ensure that the international legal framework for corporate accountability is strengthened.

4.3 Environmental security

We welcome the leading roles that the EU and regional Member States continue to play in promoting environmental security themes at the UN Security Council and in their development and assistance policies. For countries affected, whether this is managing conflicts over resources, addressing the direct environmental damage caused by hostilities, or the collapse of the state's capacity for environmental governance and oversight, the consequences for people and ecosystems can be profound. Technological and policy innovation are vital for addressing environ-mental security. New tools and methodologies for the remote collection of environmental data in insecure settings are already informing humanitarian and environmental response, while innovative approaches to the sustainable and equitable management of natural resources offer potential for building and sustaining peace. UNEA has emerged as a leading forum for addressing the environmental dimensions of armed conflicts, and UNEA-4 is an opportunity to showcase innovative approaches for addressing the resilience and environmental security of communities.

4.4 Environmental defenders

In situations of environmental conflict, such as those over mining, the lives of environmental defenders are placed at risk. Nearly 200 environmental defenders were killed in 2017 - and the annual death toll has risen fourfold since civil society and the media began compiling data in 2002. Many more environmental defenders suffer from threats, defamation, strategic lawsuits against them or simply cuts in funding or restrictions on the receipt of funding. We welcome UNEP's recent efforts to support environmental defenders and call on governments to ensure the safety of those fighting to safeguard the environment and environmental rights, and to pro-vide an enabling environment for their activities.

Concretely, it is alarming that many countries are using different versions of "anti-terrorist legislation" (or anti-development) to prevent environmental organizations from accepting donations from abroad or even speaking up on behalf of the environment. UNEP should negotiate a resolution to discourage member states from enforcing this kind of legislation on environmental grounds.

Concrete proposals on:

I. Sustainable consumption and production

> **Key requests:**
>
> - Only products that can be safely and sustainably reused, repaired, recycled or composted, can be produced
> - True cost accounting in every part of the production chain

All kind of economic activities are using natural resources and/or are emitting waste or green-house gases (GHG). Fossil fuels are still the main base for any production and the main source of CO_2 emissions. As we have to deal with planetary boundaries, there is no escape from regulation of the use of those resources and limit as much as possible waste and GHG emissions. We need to make a transition from fossil fuels to renewables.

The following **instruments and principles** are needed to achieve sustainable production:

- Taking the 'good governance' principle seriously and ensuring comprehensive involvement of environmental authorities, stakeholders, and the scientific community
- Enforcing all the existing multilateral Environmental agreements and implementation of UNEA resolutions
- Implementing clear regulations, legal frameworks and rule of law, corporate and govern-mental accountability and transparency
- Implementing legal strategies to incentivize limiting the total environmental impact of our production system, such as Integrated and Extended Producers Responsibility schemes, by making the manufacturer responsible for the entire life-cycle of the product and especially for funding the take-back, recycling and final disposal
- Redefining the shareholder value law/regulation to avoid production based on 'maximize profit' and instead to promote production based on 'societal benefit and environmental benignity'
- Applying the precautionary principle. Regulation of the market: banning environmental damaging products in the market from entering it in the first place. If there is no proof of their compatibility with environmental regulation, "No data, no market"
- Internalizing social and environmental costs (at the source) and apply fair pricing
- Using financial instruments: tax shift from labor towards environmental use / global taxes such as the border adjustment tax to tax products from those countries that try to fight climate change
- Invest in Education for Sustainable Development programmes in regular and non-regular education
- Level playing field: high ambitions, no double standards between developed and developing countries

Moving towards a **Circular Economy** that must be toxic-free and fossil-free (absolute decoupling / from efficiency towards sufficiency) measured and enabled through:

- Energy
- Defined set of indicators should be enforced in their use
- Promoting the development of full and standardized life cycle analyses to assess environmental performance and develop a correspondent indicator of products, services and new technology developments; this should be facilitated through guidelines, training and public domain software
- Development of guidelines to develop a standardized 'Material flow analysis' that will consider a total material footprint, including notably extraction and related unused material
- Sector strategies associated with targets for resource productivity and circularity
- Reporting of enterprise level indicators (resource productivity and pollution intensity) as a tool for monitoring the environmental performance of enterprises
- Preferring products with certain safely recycled content over products from primary raw materials through procurement or other measures
- Avoiding exploiting geographic externalities: in weaker economies with weaker standards, lower labor costs should not be disproportionately burdened by environmental harm

- The circular economy cannot be used as rationale for externalizing costs of proper waste management by export to weaker economies for unsustainable or sham recycling
- Standardizing products, setting up basic/minimal environmental criteria for products, including information on the products and the implementation of the right to know
- Including mainstream resource efficiency and eco-innovation in national SME support strategies and programmes, including financing mechanisms

Maximizing the prevention of waste and hazardous characteristics:

- Truly promoting the waste hierarchy, starting with prevention (including through refuse and redesign), reduction, reuse, before recycling and recovery; and finally, when waste is unavoidable, responsible recycling and recovery
- Supporting the development of waste valorization - value-added creation of waste streams - starting with high-ranked valorization routes (such as high-end waste bio-based products like pharma products, biopolymers), disincentivizing lower-ranked routes such as landfilling and incineration
- There is a need for clear common definitions of waste and recycling practices of end of waste criteria (i.e. from the Basel Convention)
- Understand that 'wastes' as defined by the Basel Convention are 'resources' as a way to enable bio-economy strategy that reconciles food security with the sustainable use of renewable resources for industrial purposes, and to develop industrial ecology. For instance, manage biowaste to produce soil improvers, promote industrial symbiosis
- When waste is recycled, workers shall be protected from exposure to hazardous substances and recycled products shall be free from toxic substances

In particular, we have identified the following key sectors to implement sustainable production:

Energy

We need an energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy. The goal is to achieve a 100% **sustainably produced renewable and accessible energy** to each city and each business, without recurring to unsustainable types of biofuels and dangerous hydropower plants. This transition should go hand in hand with an **overall reduction** of energy use in absolute amounts, using energy quotas, and a **phase out of subsidies for fossil fuels** and nuclear energy. National plans for energy transition and energy management shall be put in place.

Electronics

The production of electronic products relies heavily on water, oil, chemicals and metals. Electronic products should be **designed** and produced to eliminate the human and environmental exposure to hazardous chemicals across the products' lifecycle. Additionally, all manufacturers should assume that at end-of-life all plastics will not be openly burned as is the common end fate in developing countries and avoid the use of halogens and harmful additives.

Countries shall implement clear regulations and incentives for eco-design, including individual producer responsibility (IPR), long term warranties, leasing/service models, and end-life-product responsibilities, in order to ensure a long life of products and combat planned obsolescence. For their realization we should consider incentives (such as tax or others) for business models based on sharing, reusing and repairing, such

as 0% VAT on repair work. Further repair should be a commercial and consumer right, with manufacturers required by law if necessary to make **repair** data and manuals available and avoid designs that are difficult to repair or recycle. Products should be designed to utilize post-consumer waste in the products.

When an electronic product is at the end of its life cycle, it should be recycled or disposed of in the country where it was used, in an **environmentally sound manner**, and not sent to developing countries via false claims of "repairability or recycling or bridging the digital divide".

The Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal and its Ban Amendment obligations and requirements must apply for all trans-boundary shipments unless the equipment is tested and first proven to be fully functional.

Chemicals

Countries need to prevent and minimize the adverse impacts of chemicals on human health and the environment across their lifecycle. This should be achieved by adopting and implementing legislations that **prohibit or control** chemicals **before** they are placed in the market, such as the REACH Regulation. Countries shall implement the **right to information** on hazardous sub-stances and wastes: information on chemicals shall be publicly available and accessible, enabling people to make informed choices.

As noted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Toxics, one worker dies every 15 seconds from exposure to toxic substances at work: countries and businesses shall protect workers and people's health by implementing strict control on **occupational exposure** or all toxic substances. Companies exposing their workers to toxic substances should be held accountable.

Countries should adopt and/or review and systematically update the Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers.

We call on countries to implement the existing conventions on chemicals and waste, and to constructively engage in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) beyond 2020 process. We also call on the phasing-out of hazardous pesticides.

Plastics

Despite the attention gathered by the 'plastics crisis', the global rate of the production of plastic is growing. Better waste management systems and recycling will not be sufficient to address plastic pollution. We call on countries to l**imit the use of single-use plastics and the overall production of plastics.** This can be achieved through measures such as: better regulation to phase out avoidable single-use products, minimization of packaging (through taxation) and promotion of products in bulk-packaging free, increase the recycling content on plastic products and con-sider include use of bio-based materials from waste resources (e.g. crop residues, avoiding land competition between food and crops for bioenergy/bioproducts), and environmentally safe re-cycling of unavoidable plastics when prevention and reuse cannot be implemented.

We call on countries to finally adopt a mandate for the creation of a new and effective multilateral framework on plastic pollution at UNEA-4.

We need new production and material solutions to avoid **microplastics** from wear and tear of car tires, paints, cosmetics and technical clothing.

In order to reduce plastic pollution, countries should control trade in plastics by placing plastics on Annex II of the Basel Convention requiring prior informed consent (PIC) prior to export.

Food and agriculture

Since intensive livestock systems contribute to many problems affecting health, food security, the environment and animal welfare, we need sustainable food systems. We need to promote production systems using **closed cycles** (circularity, agroecology, organic agriculture), and which **treat animals ethically**. The **polluter pays principle** shall be used for agricultural inputs to restore damaged eco-systems, a ban should be introduced on hazardous pesticides and fertilizers, as well as the termination of current subsidies for resource-depleting and environmentally damaging practices and products.

Our food systems should be made **resource-efficient,** thereby encouraging the reduction of meat and dairy consumption, using organic fertilizers (e.g. manure, other by-products), using bio-based products such as biopesticides, and using techniques such as crop rotation to promote nitrogen and carbon cycles. We call on countries to promote **small-scale production**, thereby improving the livelihoods of the rural population, food security and even economic development as opposed to industrial farming, environmentally damaging trade practices (such as live-stock fed by imported soy or palm causing deforestation, pollution of water, products containing unsustainably sourced palm oil) shall be eliminated, as well as subsidies for environmentally damaging production methods (like fertilizers).

Companies should **minimize the amount of packaging** used for the production of food and provide a clear and honest labelling with information about environmental footprint and method of production. In order to move to a sustainable agricultural model, **patents** on living organ-isms such as seeds **should be avoided** and instead there should be a promotion of seed exchange among farmers.

We call on countries to establish **independent training** and extension services for farmers and processors on sustainable production methods.

To ensure safe reuse of wastewater, **agricultural pollution of water sources has to be halted at source**, by fully closed cycles and transition to agro-ecological practices that exclude synthetic pesticides and fertilizer.

II. Societal innovation

> **Key request:**
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> - To unleash the potential of human interaction and creativity, governments must create the conditions for which social innovation can flourish within, removing the barriers that prevent the co-creation of new ideas that are designed, implemented and enforced by diverse and representative communities.

Societal innovation is the process of creating and implementing effective policy solutions that address the societal and systemic change we need to solve the environmental issues we are facing today. We believe that ahead of UNEA-4, greater emphasis should be placed on the deep, societal change that address the root causes of the problems. Societal change should be recognized as a key leverage for achieving sustainable lifestyles.

We believe that discussions so far ahead of UNEA-4 have focused too much on new technological innovation. Whilst this is extremely important, it will not transform on its own the economic systems. We must review the concept that innovation always needs to be forward thinking, full of creations and ideas towards a future society that do not exist today. Social innovation can and should include reviewing policies and cultural behaviors of the past. Whilst we need to address the profit-driven nature of societies, social innovation must focus on ending the mass over-pro-duction and depletion of natural resources.

We hope that one of the outcomes of UNEA-4 will include an agreement from member states on the importance of creating and facilitating an enabling environment needed for societal innovation to flourish. These include but are not limited to:

- Enshrining environmental safeguarding throughout all public procurement processes across all levels of governance, from supranational to the local. As well as traditional procurement for goods and services, this must also include public procurement decisions on public planning, development and infrastructure decisions. Initiatives, products, ideas and organizations which enforce higher sustainable practices must be prioritized within this procurement evolution
- Ensuring that individuals can access environmental data and information throughout the whole production chain. This is a key factor for social innovation and a necessary tool for empowering citizens. Governments must be bold and promote awareness on the products and goods that have the biggest negative impacts on our environment, such as the intensive factory farming of livestock
- Citizen education is an important tool for social innovation that must be recognized by governments. Education plays a critical role in providing the skills needed for citizens to effectively empower themselves to lead on finding and supporting new ideas for the protection of our environment
- Governments must continue to introduce more incentives that promote and encourage sustainable practices from the bottom up. Public policies should be introduced through-out all levels of governance which encourage the consumption and production of goods/ services that are more sustainable and ethical
- Access to funding and resources must also be shared equally throughout society. For social innovation to flourish, a level playing field must be created for sustainable businesses and citizens' initiatives of all sizes wishing to access funding and upscale their initiatives
- Acknowledging the fact that we all have a responsibility to change our consumption and production, shifting from our current 'throwaway' culture towards more circular economies and acknowledging that these responsibilities differ depending on the role we play within society. To facilitate social innovation that is multi-stakeholder and cohesive, clear guidance and support should be given to all actors on their responsibilities within society and how they can take the necessary steps to act more sustainably - including individuals, small and medium businesses, local municipalities, community groups, multinational corporations and national governmental departments

III. UN Environment's corporate partnerships

Key request:

- It is important that UN Environment put strong focus on sustainable social-ecological initiatives coming from the field. Cooperating with small and medium enterprises, start-ups and civil society organizations will provide a huge leverage for achieving social innovation that will lead to sustainable lifestyles

There is little transparency on UNEP's partnerships with the private sector. The list of partnership agreements is not easily accessible to the governments or civil society. For example, rumours have been heard that UNEP has spent lots of money on paying a global car company (Volvo oceans race) and has a partnership with Coca Cola - one of the biggest contributors to plastic-bottle pollution worldwide. Neither Volvo nor Coca Cola are an example of positive sustainable development action. Corporations are aimed at maximizing profit for their share-holders. Since the United Nations' aim is to work for people and planet, let's keep that focus clear.

Large corporations have been evading taxes and not paying for the environmental harm caused by their production. Instead of providing such corporations with the benefit of positive marketing by 'partnering' with UNEP, there should be a policy to hold corporations accountable for damage done and stop tax evasion.

Therefore, UNEP should only engage in honest partnerships and first and foremost:

- **Demonstrate** where a proposed or existing partnership adds value and is not incoherent as measured against the 2030 Agenda; and show that the UN values espoused by the partnership are communicated and internalized
- **Promote** a holistic approach to SDG implementation, and safeguards against collaboration that advances a particular goal at the expense of another - for example, partnerships that reduce CO2 emissions, but increase toxic emissions, should not be eligible
- **Focus** on innovative, truly environmentally sustainable, socially responsible start-ups including initiatives by NGOs and local groups that need the partnership with UNEP to be of benefit to people and planet

We recommend that UNEP partnerships should be based on principles including:

- Ambitious transformative and clear goals
- Transparency and full disclosure of investor relations
- Truly environmentally and socially sustainable objectives
- Fair power relations between partners

Unequal distribution of political power is often problematic in partnerships, e.g. between global corporations and small businesses. Less financially powerful partners need to be given an advantage point and need support from by UNEP e.g. in creating larger groups and supporting financially intermediate organisations such as EREK network (European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre).

At UNEA-4 positive partnership development activities could include:

- Matchmaking for innovative social environmental start-ups/initiatives
- Focusing on socially responsible start-ups and local businesses that are in-line with SDGs. At UNEA-4, extend the EXPO and great matchmaking marketplace to bring start-ups in connection with impact investment funds
- Showcasing best practice and examples from previous existing partnerships. For instance, the global beauty brand The Body Shop, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, has partnered with the campaigning NGO Cruelty Free International, recognising the collective skills and experiences both bring to the partnership. The result is an **8 million signature petition** calling for an end to cosmetics animal testing. This indicates that consumers worldwide are increasingly aware about their sustainable purchasing collective power

- Focusing on start-ups and initiatives on SCP themes relevant to the negotiations, for ex-ample local start-ups that produce alternatives to:
    - single-use plastics such as non-plastic bags and packaging (so that SUP ones could be banned) such as
    - menstrual/absorbant products which are reusable and reduce plastic waste
- Focusing on problem statements e.g. sourcing zero waste solutions (i.e. organize a hackathon to look at solutions).
- Directing funding to increase the ability to lobby. Funds should be directed through funding pool with independent decision-making body will help to reduce greenwashing and influence on policy decisions by corporations

Local partnerships embedded in local best practices could include:

- Using existing initiatives (10YFP SCP / One Planet Network, innovation labs, Blue Economy, Civil Society initiatives etc.) to ensure environmental sustainability
- Local green public procurement - lead by example. e.g. No plastics, no asbestos, no pesticides
- Local innovation funds for groups, start-ups (more flexible) - combination of innovative labs, private sector, NGO funding to very local practical solutions (i.e. local landfills, recycle plants, businesses). This should also be done in developing countries (e.g. currently Nordic impacts funds go to Nordic start-ups in developing countries)

4. Environmental Issues facing EECCA countries

Civil society organizations in the EECCA region endorse all proposals written above but want to express their special concern on the low level of governance in their countries and especially with regards to environmental management. Insufficient levels of development of democracy predetermines a high level of corruption, pressure of oligarchs, insufficiently effective environ-mental management and weak implementation of international environmental conventions.

They also worry about loss of respect for human rights and civil society activity in the region, the weakening of "normal" NGOs in favour of "project" NGOs, the strengthening of GoNGOs by the states to neutralize or ignore the impact of 'normal' NGOs, the introduction of new regulatory rules creating obstacles in environmental rights protection and a lack of reaction by the authorities on public signals on violation of environmental rights. We call on UNEP to make an analysis of the situation in EECCA related to environmental rights and environmental civil society in general.

- We call on UNEA to formulate the principle of integrating basic human interests into the making of any decisions and documents. Citizens and their environment should be at the centre of all changes and the measure of any process
- We urge UNEA to take a strong role in the dialogue between the countries that are part of the One Belt, One Round (Silk Road) initiative - between China and the EECCA region - to ensure that sustainable production and the diffusion of green technologies are central to this initiative and do not lead to environmental harm. The Silk Road activities in the EECCA / European region should be in line with the environmental conventions under UNEP and UNECE to which Parties have ratified. Civil Society organizations should be more strongly involved in this dialogue. Asian Investment Bank and other international financial institutions should work on transparency and sustainable development principles
- There is a need to support the national statistical committees of the EECCA region in the development and implementation of statistical indicators and data collection systems

- UNEA-4 should encourage Governments to give high priority to continuing education and public education for sustainable development (ESD), in particular on sustainable production and consumption issue. We express our concern about the decline in ESD activities in the EECCA region and therefore call upon UNEA to organize a platform for inter-sectoral dialogue (with the participation of the Ministers of the Environment, Edu-cation, Economics, Education) for the EECCA region to develop targets and tools for their achievement
- We underline the particularities of ecosystems of the extreme regions (vulnerable and non-self-restorative ecosystems like mountains, deserts and arctic zones). This subject has been repeatedly mentioned in the documents of the UN or UNEP. Nevertheless, these regions have not become an object of special policy in the UNEP programs. Special attention should be paid to the land-locked mountain countries. Mountains are the areas where water resources are formed and areas of rich diversity of valuable and endemic cultivated plants, including habitats of wild relatives of cultivated plants. To create favorable conditions for the preservation of local varieties is of high importance. In this regard, the pro-motion of indigenous knowledge and traditional sustainable lifestyles is of importance. Mountains are often rich in minerals, including metal ores. The governments mostly are not complying with environmental requirements related to mining activities. As a result, subsoil exploitation has an extremely negative impact on the environment – biodiversity, air, soil, water resources, and also on human health, and not only in mountain ranges, but also in regions located lower in height
- To revise "green" approach towards hydropower infrastructure
- The region required extra support to improve CSOs capacity building and engagement related to UNEA-4
- UNEP offices on EECCA countries (Moscow, Almaty….) should be more proactive in co-operating with NGOs and develop grants programmes to support NGOs activity related to UNEA/UNEP activities

UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of Africa

Nairobi, Kenya, 15-16 September 2018

African Major Groups and Stakeholders Statement to the United Nations Environment Assembly

Preamble

Recalling the Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session titled *towards a pollution-free planet* that aimed to prevent, mitigate and manage the pollution of air, land and soil, freshwater and oceans;

Concerned about the inadequate implementation of previous UNEA declarations and resolutions;

Noting that member states should adopt integrated approaches and coordination of efforts for all sectors, in collaboration with major groups and stakeholders, for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Recognizing that appropriate policies, laws and political will are vital to ensure stakeholders' equitable participation, capacity-building of the citizenry, gender and ecological justice

The nexus between Innovative solutions and Social Justice

We, the Major Groups and other Stakeholders in the Africa Region;

- Call upon member states to ensure that proposed innovative solutions and technologies will promote social justice in line with SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequality) and 16 (Peace and Justice)
- Encourage member states to put into place concrete measures that will help in identifying the social consequences of new innovative solutions prior to their implementation
- Call upon member states to ensure that workers, women, people with disabilities, young people and all other vulnerable groups who will be negatively impacted by new innovations are provided safety nets through inclusion of the principle of just transition in all programs and initiatives

Innovative Solutions to Food Security and Hunger Eradication

We, the Major Groups and other Stakeholders in the Africa Region;

- Call upon member states to link and strengthen agriculture policies to land tenure systems, land use planning, farmer cooperatives, farmer extension and advisory services and adopt policies that allow small scale farmers to get easy access to farm land. Also, member states should integrate policies for national food security such policies on export, energy, water, seed, post-harvest wastage, health of soils and organic methods, such as agro-ecology
- Urge member states to offer financial incentives including improved access to banking and financial institutions, through low interests' loans, village savings and start-up capital to encourage investment in transformative technologies including ICT

- Urge member states to develop standards of crops and animal welfare and systems to support market policies for the transportation of animals and crops produce including certification and to build capacities for value addition
- Implement existing innovative solutions (including best practices and case studies) that have proved to be working as best environment-friendly but are not adequately implemented such as agro-ecology
- Encourage government to promote and invest in action research, conservation of forest resources for supporting rain-fed agriculture, direct food supply and improve access of non-timber forest products as alternative sources of food to feed burgeoning population
- Resist industrial agriculture and monocultures, and the corporate takeover of our food systems and embrace agro-ecology, seed biodiversity, and support for small scale farmers

Life-Cycle Approaches to Resource Efficiency, Energy, Chemicals and Waste Management

- We call upon member states to ensure integration of informal sector such as waste gatherers into formal policies and laws; monitor and promote the principles of extended producer responsibility; and encourage take-back schemes combined with financial incentives to encourage recycling programs at national level; maximizing the prevention of waste across the value chain
- We call upon member states to integrate sound waste management practices in school curricula and education policies in general to encourage change of public attitude right from the lower level
- Urge member states to support the establishment of a new global legal framework for plastic pollution. We acknowledge the banning of single-use plastic bags in some member state countries as a big step but we express our concern on lack of enforcement of most of these bans
- Further urge leaders of the member states at all levels (local, provincial, and national government) to elevate air pollution control to a high priority within their agenda; integrate pollution control into development planning; actively engage in pollution monitoring, health surveillance, transparent reporting, planning and prioritization; and link prevention of pollution with commitments to advance the SDGs to slow the pace of climate change, and to control non-communicable diseases. Air pollution has been identified to be responsible for nine million premature deaths, sixteen percent of all deaths globally and is linked to inefficient waste management practices such as open burning

Business Development for Sustainable Development

- Urge all member states to implement innovative solutions that address existing social and environmental problems which provide co-benefits such as zero waste solutions – including waste reduction, redesign, composting, biogas, producer responsibility, consumption transformation, and recycling – could be implemented today, using existing innovations, with immediate results with multiple benefits from addressing job creating, mitigation of air pollution, energy security and mitigating climate change.
- Further urge all member states to respect and protect the human rights of environmental defenders and the roles of civil society who act as watchdogs, create checks and balances, and act to promote government and business balances business profit with environmental stewardship.

Biological Diversity

- Call upon all member states to honor their pledges to the Convention Biological Diversity (CBD) Trust Fund.

- Encourage the member states to strengthen work with UN Environment other relevant partners to support implementation of programmes to combat desertification, land degradation, Climate Change and enhance ecosystem restoration.
- Further encourage our governments to utilize the reports of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Global Land Degradation Assessment and take action on recommendations contained in the reports.
- Urge Member States to undertake national ecosystem assessments so as to ascertain the state of biodiversity and ecosystem services and contribution of nature-based services to socio-economic development.
- We call upon environment ministers to make deliberate and continuous efforts to coordinate with and involve ministers from other sectors in the identification and implementation of priorities for mainstreaming of biodiversity into key sectors.

Implementation of the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals

- Urge all member states to implement all elements of the Paris Agreement, through the developed work programme, in an ambitious manner and to the best available scientific knowledge mostly notably the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on 1.5 Degrees Celsius.
- Encourage Developed Country member state should fulfil their mitigation and climate finance commitments and ensure they communicate, provide and report on their actions and support to developing countries.
- Call upon all member states to support the implementation of UNFCCC Gender Action Plan through capacity building of female and youth negotiators. Also, ensure operationalization of local communities and indigenous peoples' platform with a developed work plan.
- Encourage member states that have not conducted national reviews on progress of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to do so whilst involving major groups and stakeholders.
- Further urge member states to create enabling environment and provide incentives to realize the positive transformative potential by strengthen or establishing national statistical systems and autonomous statistics office to identify and address data gaps facing policymakers and implementers; promoting innovative domestic resource mobilization and efficient its use; ensure a just energy transition from fossil fuels towards renewable energy; and promoting good governance, respect for human rights, justice and rule of law. Also, promoting and scaling-up of local and indigenous innovations and technologies; and facilitating access to compatible and environment-friendly technologies.

UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of Latin America and the Caribbean[1]

Buenos Aires, Argentina, 8 October 2018

Statement and key messages from Major Groups and Stakeholders of Latin America and the Caribbean for the Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly

From LACEMOS [2]we affirm the importance of creating spaces for participation and increase the scope of decision-making for the Major Groups and stakeholders of the civil society of each region; we invite the parties to join efforts towards the effective and inclusive participation that civil society is aiming to have, with no regression.

We celebrate and highlight the efforts and leadership role of Costa Rica in the Third United Nations Environment Assembly as well as of Argentina in the Forum of Ministers of the Environment in 2018, and of the UN Environment Programme's Latin American and Caribbean Office, where together we are creating spaces and paths for the active collaboration of civil society in decision-making processes and implementation of the environmental agendas in the region.

We are committed to play a leading role as actors and agents of change, and from the LACEMOS platform, we manage a collaborative pathway of regional engagement and participation, by preparing a plan of action on the way to UNEA- 4, based on:

a) Consultations on the UNEA 4 themes[3];
b) Regional mobilization for the Environment Day and Oceans Day, promoting the outcomes of UNEA 3 and moving forward towards UNEA 4;
c) Local and national consultation dialogues for UNEA 4;
d) Virtual Consultation on Sustainable Production and Consumption; and
e) Regional Consultative Meeting held in October 2018 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

We emphasize that this statement is the result of the voices, perspectives and needs collected through the above-mentioned process, and we request that the final report on regional participation scheduled to be published in February prior to UNEA4, be incorporated in the contributions of the Main Groups and Stakeholders of Latin America and the Caribbean for the UN Environment.

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[1] UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of Latin America and the Caribbean Spanish Version

[2] LACEMOS (Latin America and the Caribbean Engagement Mechanism) is a platform and mechanism that aims to link civil society within the different decision-making spaces at the local, national, regional and international levels. It is formed by non-governmental organizations accredited or not to UN Environment and includes other actors such as activists, academia, environmental human rights defenders as well as representatives of the Major Groups and Stakeholders in countries of the region. For more information: www.lacemos.org

[3] In the consultation that counted with 34 collaborators from 14 countries in the region, the selected topic was education for sustainable development,

Voices of the Region on Sustainable Production and Consumption

We believe that in order to achieve sustainable production and consumption, it is necessary to work on transforming current patterns as a fundamental axis to achieve a sustainable production and consumption model allowing us to live in balance and harmony with Mother Earth, restoring the health and integrity of ecosystems, while developing plans, programs and systems to achieve the SDGs 1 and 2 (Put an end to poverty and end Hunger) by stopping the loss of diversity biological diversity, promoting food security, without neglecting the environmental axis of the SDGs.

We invite the United Nations member states, to join efforts for the development of plans programs and public policies aimed at promoting the development of sustainable production and consumption initiatives, through the efficient management of shared natural resources, eliminating toxic and pollutant waste and guaranteeing the active participation of civil society in decision-making. It is also necessary to urge industries, businesses and consumers to recycle and reduce waste.

On the other hand, we make an urgent call to invest resources in the scientific/technological sector for the promotion of research aimed at creating sustainable production systems making use of recent technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, blockchain and creating new technologies; and we highlight the need to assist developing countries to achieve sustainable consumption patterns by 2030 through the exchange of technologies and cooperation programs.

There is a need for initiatives and campaigns aimed at promoting the change of current patterns of consumption and production, and to promote sustainable lifestyles making use of environmental education for sustainable development in all stages of capacity building and training.

OTHER THEMES OF RELEVANCE FOR THE REGION

We see with concern that the countries of the world implement the 2030 Agenda focused on economic development leaving aside the environmental pillar, and therefore we emphasize the importance of addressing the 2030 agenda and the SDGs as a whole, whose transversal axes are all equally necessary and deserve attention for the correct implementation of the 2030 agenda. We cannot talk about development or well-being leaving aside the protection of the environment.

We believe that it is essential to accelerate the commitments and decisions for the protection of the oceans, with special emphasis on the process of acidification and pollution; considering its vital contribution to the balance of global climate, its relevance as a way of life and its status as habitat for many species. In this context, progress must be made towards the full implementation and promotion of synergies between the Conventions of Rotterdam, Stockholm, Basel and Minamata.

In the area of Human Rights and Environmental Governance, by virtue of the role that civil society organizations play in the region to achieve sustainable development, and in view of the growing vulnerability they face, globally we celebrate the initiative (UN Environment's Environmental Defenders Policy), as well as the attention dedicated to the topic in relevant media, to raise awareness and expand dissemination in this area.

At the regional level we celebrate the progress made through the adoption of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Access to Justice on Environmental matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Escazú Agreement, and we ask the governments:

a. To provide a clear message to citizens through the signature, ratification and prompt implementation of the treaty, with the consequent adaptation of their domestic regulations.
b. To establish mechanisms for the effective protection of environmental defenders, including the guarantee of the right to fight for a dignified life and a sustainable society, as well as the elimination of all types of persecution or violence to which the leaders and representatives of civil society and other relevant community actors are repeatedly subjected to.

Bearing in mind paragraph 8 numeral "k"[4] of Decision X/33 of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, we highlight the importance of enhancing international cooperation in the administration of special natural areas, and promoting integrated management with an ecosystem approach, based on experiences like the Mesoamerican, Caribbean, Amazonian and Andean corridors.

Based on article 14, numeral "a" of the Convention on Biological Diversity, we ask parties to establish appropriate procedures to request environmental impact assessments of the proposed projects that may have adverse effects on the biological diversity with a view to avoiding or minimizing them, as well as ensuring participation of civil society and stakeholders in such procedures, especially when the project is located in areas considered as natural reserves or with large Biological Diversity.

We consider it necessary that the regional cooperation program for biodiversity links civil society as a partner in the actions of each programmed plan and the resources that are requested are granted. We also call for the existing plans to serve as an example or model to be followed so that civil society can action:

- CLMEPlus (2015-2020) Strategic actions program for large marine ecosystems of the Caribbean and the continental shelf of northern Brazil. (https://clmeplus.org/)
- Amazonian biodiversity plans.

The recent report issued by the IPCC highlights the urgent need for Governments to raise their commitments and cooperation among countries, in order to achieve mechanisms of adaptation, mitigation and resilience according to the particularities of Latin America and the Caribbean. On the other hand, the accelerated impacts of climate change will bring many inhabitants of our region to levels of vulnerability that will force them to involuntary displacements and that will lead to the emergence of climate refugees. For these reasons, we call for efforts to be strengthened and actions on adaptation, mitigation and resilience to be implemented.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

We affirm that timely, inclusive and informed citizen participation is one of the main means of implementation of international agreements and national public policies, and therefore the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) from the States and with support from the UN Environment

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[4] **Biological Diversity and Climate Change** - **Ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation**
(k) In accordance with national capacities and circumstances, integrate ecosystem-based approaches for adaptation into relevant strategies, including adaptation strategies and plans, national action plans to combat desertification, national biodiversity strategies and action plans, poverty reduction strategies, disaster risk reduction strategies and sustainable land management strategies;

and the entire United Nations system, such as UNESCO and the Global Plan of Action for ESD is strongly required.

We call on the international financial system to promote circular economies with levels of indebtedness that do not put the States and their citizens at risk.

We ratify the importance of resolutions and decisions of the UNEA- 4 as instruments to accelerate and deepen the implementation and fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda without leaving the environmental axis behind, promoting international and regional cooperation through broad schemes of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

Finally, we ratify our continuous commitment and cooperation as an active civil society for the development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda considering each of its axes as an essential part to achieve the SDGs.

UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of West Asia[5]

Amman, Jordan, 25-26 November 2018

Statement of the West Asia Regional Consultation Meeting of Major Groups and Stakeholders in preparation for the fourth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA- 4) of the United Nations Environment (UNEP) and the seventeen Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-17)

Introduction:

West Asia region coupled with its endowment of oil resources and other factors has made the region the scene of armed conflicts and rivalries that have swept the region and had serious impacts on the population and the environment including fossil fuel pollution. Water Scarcity, high employments rate, Air, water and soil pollutions, man and animal being killed, and numerous health effects are examples of many impacts caused by armed conflicts in the region. West Asia also has one of the world's largest oil and natural gas reserves. Hence, we need transition energy from fossil fuels to renewable energy. Our goal is to take the required measures to identify and assess potential economic, social and policy measures and human interventions that can be implemented to reduce anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) & pollution in different sectors at the national level mainly in the areas suffering from environmental disasters, building well-functioning local democracy which needs a strong and functioning civil society that has the resources to provide strong voices, and that is given the opportunity to participate in arenas where real decisions are made and introduce smart strategies to achieve sustainable green energy, housing, transport, building, agriculture and waste accessible to everyone as we are already suffering from the adverse impacts of climate change & pollution on vulnerable communities and the environment around them.

These impacts will only worsen & deteriorate without urgent actions, including transparent & partnership-based inventory, ambitious mitigation, adaptation, adequate finance, technological support, capacity building.

We, the participants of Civil Society Major Groups and Stakeholders representatives of West Asia agreed on the Following:

- We urge West Asia governments to declare the vulnerable areas in these states as environmentally deteriorated areas & mitigate the environmental, social, health & development impacts & avoid installing more class "A" & "B" projects in these areas.
- We urge governments & business to raise awareness on sustainable consumption patterns& change the lifestyles & implement the sustainable production guidelines for the manufacturers.
- We urge governments & business to raise awareness on sustainable consumption patterns& change the lifestyles & implement the sustainable production guidelines for the manufacturers.
- We urge Governments to mandate private business to adopt a mitigation hierarchy and respect human rights to anticipate and avoid, or where avoidance is not possible, minimize pollution & GHG emission levels in vulnerable degraded areas to reduce risks and impacts on workers, affected communities & the environment.

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[5] UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of West Asia Arabic Version

- We urge governments to request business to refrain from using coal, used oil, waste & used tires as sources of energy in the cement & industrial plants.
- We urge Government to assure that clients reduce pollution into the design of products, associated production processes, reducing or eliminating the use of toxic and hazardous raw materials & /or adopting an alternative production process to get "Cleaner Production" and "Resource Efficiency."
- We Urge governments, UN, international donors & business to assure that financial funds earned by governments be coordinated to integrate climate change adaptation with disaster risk reduction, resilience building and sustainable development strategies to reduce poverty and suffering & spent on real mitigation & adaptation measures & enhancing awareness of climate change that is related to the vulnerable communities, their degraded environment & to enhance the sustainable development of these areas & address the needs of vulnerable communities & refrain from giving it to the polluters who should pay for their GHG emissions & pollution "polluter pays" principle.
- We urge governments to encourage and support using the life cycle approach to support sustainable production not only through the final product but throughout its entire life cycle, with a sustainable value chain and encourage the production and importing of durable products.
- We urge governments to mandate businesses to avoid the generation of hazardous waste materials & avoid dumping their toxic wastes in areas & deteriorating the pollution of neighborhood air.
- We call on governments to support sustainable agriculture and social innovation to change consumers habits of unsustainable food consumption, food waste and the use of pesticides is of great importance to realize Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) in West Asia and globally.
- We urge governments to adopt good governance which is key to reforestation/biodiversity & habitat loss prevention as well as to integrate organic agriculture and food to meet the mounting demands and reverse ecosystems degradation.
- We urge governments to shift towards an innovative and sustainable transportation and use unleaded fuels internationally accepted technologies in West Asia, use of environmentally friendly/cost effective traditional ways of transportation when possible in West Asia.
- We urge governments to build upon and enhance citizen science engagement and work with relevant stakeholders in the assessment, monitoring and development of policies, embracing the opportunities of building the capacity of grass roots organizations in support of sustainable development and recognize citizen education as a tool for social innovation.
- Urge the governments to promote and provide means for adequate engagement with MGS on environmental & sustainable development issues that potentially affect them & not to confiscate their rights to participate in the formulation of decisions of direct concern to environment and development and not to deny their right of access to means of redress.
- We urge the UN to introduce and adopt some MRV neutral credible accredited mechanisms that will assure that all states do comply with their international responsibilities set in the treaties and/or protocols they signed & ratified and not violating environmental-related human rights.
- We urge governments to engage MGS in the whole phases of climate change combat actions, pollution protection & sustainable development actions, plans & committees.
- We urge governments and corporations to conduct comprehensive full-scale ESIA or SEA if the proposed project's area houses many projects involving specifically identified physical elements, aspects and facilities that are likely to generate potentially significant adverse environmental and social risks and impacts with the engagement of real representatives of the local affected communities and stakeholders and get their free prior and informed consent (FPIC).

- We urge governments to assure that businesses do commit to or set science-based emission reduction targets (SBT), which are aligned with the Paris Agreement goal to limit global warming to well below 2°C.
- We urge governments to implement the preventative nature deterrent and corrective policy known as the environmental and social mitigation & monitoring program (ESMMP) by a neutral accredited party with engagement of real representatives of local affected communities & stakeholders throughout the lifecycle of the project.
- We urge governments to set up a reasonable technical measurement system including accredited laboratories & qualified technical staff to measure & monitor the sources of GHG emissions & pollution & to take the required corrective actions prior to environmental deterioration with engagement of MGS & support the implementation of an MRV system of GHG inventory &pollution.
- We urge governments to implement proper management such as, rules, regulations, environment assessment and hierarchy policy for zero waste management, reduction, segregation, treatment, reuse, recycle and compost of waste as necessary. In addition to reduce dependence on chemicals, encourage sustainable chemistry Innovations and encourage green innovative solutions for chemical treatment.
- We urge governments with engagement of MGS to build a Climate Change Strategy & incorporated mix of policy instruments, including voluntary action, strategic investment, government regulations and market measures, enhance the national/international action on mitigation of climate change, adopt capacity-building on climate change, pollution & SDGs.
- We urge the governments to make the national & regional media transparent, open & accessible to MGS & environmental defenders& work on capacity building of specialized environmental media.
- We demand from governments Develop a strategic national Communication Plan (part of the roadmap) to raise awareness, create a knowledge repository, ensure coherent messaging and advocacy, connect communication platforms, and mobilize broad support.
- We urge governments to reduce dependence on fossil fuel till it's completely phased out in West Asia and switch to renewable energies to protect resources (Land, water, Marine).
- We urge governments to use economic instruments to promote green enterprises through financial support either from government or private sector for an innovative solution, technology transfer and sharing the best practice to change peoples' lives.
- We urge governments to invest in the educational system with innovative educational methods that instill sustainability ethics and lifestyles in future generation, invest in Education for sustainable development programs and to launch environmentally-sound waste management practices to change public behavior from lower level.
- We call governments in West Asia not only to reduce plastic pollution but to ban single use plastic products as soon as possible.

UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of Asia and the Pacific

Marina Bay, Singapore, 23 January 2019

Reclaiming Peoples Solutions: Addressing Systemic Challenges in Environmental Protection and Sustainable Consumption and Production

We, more than 90 CSOs from Asia Pacific representing small farmers, indigenous peoples, urban poor, people with disabilities, women, youth, workers, NGOs, science and technology, among others gathered at Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre, Singapore, discuss key systemic issues and barriers and people's innovations in addressing environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production.

We advance our unified positions to be recognized and addressed in the Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and in the 4th UN Environmental Assembly.

Overview
The dominant paradigm of consumption and production continue to devastate and worsen the situation of the environment and the people. This can be seen in the crises in food, climate, reduced biodiversity, depleted natural resources, increasing violation of people's rights and inequality.

The corporate drive for profit is fueling intensified plunders of resources as seen in the massive land grabbing for industrial plantations, and control of water and seeds resulting to hunger, malnutrition and use of pesticides and fertilizers that contaminate land, water and air.

The aggressive extraction of mineral and oil resources by big transnational corporations (TNCs) is further worsening the export-oriented nature of economies in the global south, as well as worsening conditions of local ecosystems and communities.

There are also critical issues; environmental governance in particular, the lack of state safeguards and protection measures for the environment and communities from large-scale technological fixes being financed by transnational corporations. Also, the increasing demand for energy is driving intensified use of scarce resources and extraction of minerals to meet large-scale consumption demands.

These different forms of corporate capture legitimized by States exacerbate the destruction of the environment, hunger and poverty, and inequalities.

Our demand for development justice
The Asia Pacific civil society's development justice approach to Sustainable Consumption and Production involves both environmental sustainability and social justice as part of its core objectives. Every stage of the consumption and production cycles should be guided by ecosystem approaches—that minimize the carbon footprint to the extent possible. This includes establishing systems that also reduce consumption and production to the extent possible. This puts at the center the needs of the poor and marginalized, and for them

to have access and control over their resources, and what is produced as much as how it is produced and consumed.

Additionally, our idea of innovative solutions to environmental challenges broadly includes social innovations, local innovations, indigenous and traditional knowledge systems, time-tested technologies and appropriate practices that matter most to people's lives and contribute to the achievement of SDGs and for SCP as a mode of operation.

Key issues in relation to the focus issues under the theme of Sustainable Consumption and Production of UNEA-4 which are on food security, renewable energy, land resource management and biodiversity:

Corporate agriculture and land grabbing are undermining food security

The Asia Pacific region faces major challenges in food and agricultural production. These have been worsened by agricultural liberalization which resulted in policy support and financing for export-oriented production and corporate agriculture. These include the expansion of palm oil plantations in several countries which is causing air and land pollution, displacements, destruction of sustainable livelihoods and hunger for poor communities. Government policies, including seed laws, laws supporting land conversion and forest laws have supported corporations at the expense of the people. The resulting loss of traditional seeds disempower women, indigenous peoples, farmers and local communities. These policy developments are destroying the sources of livelihoods of small-scale food producers and their communities, resulting to hunger and forced migration. Climate change and disasters aggravate poverty, misery and even suicide rates in rural communities.

Challenges to sustainable land resource management: Extractive industries

We stress the need for SCP standards to be applied on extractive, agro-chemical, large-scale agriculture and logging industries. Over-extraction of resources for profit are destroying people's sources of livelihood, their access to natural resources and proliferates intergenerational inequity that basically undermine people's collective rights. Communities affected by mine disasters continue to suffer the negative impacts to their health and local ecosystems. Workers are exposed to physical and chemical hazards in these industries that compromise their safety and health. Women and children are the most vulnerable to these changes in the environment.

Dirty energy, the climate crisis and disasters: the shift to renewable energy

The "business-as-usual" trend in energy industries and fossil fuel subsidies by governments continues to worsen the climate crisis. Investments in coal is increasing contrary to the demand for divestment and the need to respond to the worsening climate conditions impacting island-states, low-lying countries and resulting to disasters in the global south. Dependency on coal is also resource-intensive, unsustainable and waste generating.

Chemicals and waste

Production and use of chemicals is shifting to developing and transition countries, which is leading to increased use of pesticides, herbicides, products and processes containing hazardous chemicals, including those that disrupt reproduction, cause birth defects and persist in the environment and human bodies increasing the burden of disease and causing irreversible damage.

Many governments and communities in developing countries struggle with poor waste management and services creating dirty landfills and polluted environments generated largely by multinational corporations. Poor national legislation, insufficient information on environmental and health impacts, lack of funding, and poor technological and human resources result in disproportionate impacts on developing and transition countries.

Environmental Governance
There is a major gap in enforcement of environmental laws, or the lack of it, in most countries in the region. Corporate projects and investments that are mostly endorsed by states often disregard people's rights and deliberately exclude communities, grassroots movements and civil society from deliberations and decision making such as in relation to corporate-introduced technologies that may have potential impacts on the environment and society.

A compounding challenge is the lack of political commitment and concrete action from governments to support and operationalize lip service to peoples' participation in environmental governance.

Human rights violations: undermining the meaningful participation and innovations of civil society
The region has among the highest number of killed environmental defenders with 256 from 2011 to 2017, and many unreported human rights violations. These defenders are those standing up against encroachment of their lands and grabbing of their resources by big transnational corporations that is oftentimes facilitated by states. The increasing military presence backed by corporate funding and investments in resource-rich and rural areas is an indicator of state priorities and this has major negative impacts to the communities and people's collective rights. The increasing rate of killings, harassments and threats being experienced by environment and human rights defenders should alarm states and should be the center of discussion in the achievement of the sustainable development goals.

People's Solutions and Community Innovations
People and community solutions are innovations and appropriate technologies that protect the environment, promote sustainability, community ownership, social solidarity and mutuality and based on development justice. Innovative solutions that make a difference in people's lives are often not technological but social innovations, linked with traditional practices and based on indigenous and local knowledge systems. This is the case in sustainable consumption and production that is rooted in the way people lived and societies developed. Any technological solution, no matter how innovative, that are not consistent with the values of people and communities vis-à-vis natural resources would not bring sustainability. Thus, dimensions of environment, economy and society, the three pillars of sustainable development, are all taken into account in people's solutions and community innovations towards sustainable consumption and production.

There is an urgent need to shift to safe, clean, sustainable, accessible, affordable and renewable sources of energy that will serve community and local needs particularly of those left behind.

Indigenous, traditional knowledge and peoples' innovations contribute to building community resilience and response to environmental challenges. Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) should be guaranteed in relation their right to their lands, territories and resources, as well as the requirement for the development of renewable energy that affects them.

Women play an important role as innovators providing solutions to environmental problems. They are crucial in seed saving and through the years have developed knowledge systems in seed selection, breeding and conservation.

Just transition of the workforce with the creation of decent and green jobs, as confirmed by the Paris Agreement and reiterated by global and regional commitments, provides a shift towards climate resilient economies and societies. The people can benefit fairly from economic gains from Climate Action through inclusive government policies anchored on respect for human and workers' rights, including ratification of internationally recognized labor standards, implementation of universal social protection, and promotion of skill education and training.

Organizing and strengthening movements along with building capacity and tools is also key in developing local and community innovations. These community innovations can promote the concept of SCP.

Enacting policies on SCP would require stronger environmental and safeguard measures. Equitable compensation and support to those adversely affected by industries should be a priority. Likewise, protectionist measures against foreign and large-scale industries in resource-rich countries in the region must be established and its control, use and management should be people-centered.

Key messages and Recommendations

Sustainable Consumption and Production
1. People's rights and welfare should be at the center of innovations and Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and must be recognized and advanced. An enabling environment must be provided to develop and advance peoples and grassroots innovations and alternatives as responses to environmental challenges and unsustainable lifestyles.
2. It is proven that in food production, agroecology as a practice, a science and a social movement is known to improve soils, protect health and the environment, improve livelihoods, and increase household income. Agroecology also harnesses traditional and indigenous knowledge systems supported by people's science and builds community unity.
3. Social enterprises are recommended to be mainstreamed, not only as a model for doing business but also as a best practice for sustainable consumption and production. These put forward poor communities and marginalized sectors to become key economic players based on principles of care, cooperation, solidarity, fair trade, participation and satisfaction of basic needs. This model has a strong focus on the human dimension, from territorial to local level, on the need to reduce wealth in order to diminish poverty, on fair redistribution, co-responsibility and the ethics of equality.
4. Policies in national and regional level supporting local and community innovations can be strategic, as such in governance of natural resources and community-based resource development. Participatory and community action researches on the issues surrounding sustainable consumption and production will provide evidence-based solutions and should be supported.
5. Renewable energy projects, particularly large-scale wind farms and solar farms as climate actions should respond to the needs of communities and should respect their rights and access to resources, should not result to further extraction of resources and should be consistent with SCP principles.

Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges

6. Recognition of indigenous and traditional knowledge and peoples' innovations contribution to building community resilience and response to environmental challenges.
7. Recognition and promotion of the role of women in providing innovative solutions to environmental problems and SCP.
8. Other innovations include community-initiated micro-grids from solar power that are environmentally sound and socially acceptable; as well as community developed water wells that preserves water for use in irrigation and livestock.
9. An enabling environment to promote peoples' solutions and innovations through legal framework, policy support and programs.
10. Policies and regulatory standards to address corporate-driven interests and technological fixes that cause and further aggravate environmental problems and undermine peoples' rights and responses.
11. For member states to collaborate, identify and develop gender responsive plans and actions, including gender responsive indicators and putting in place a robust monitoring system. Women are not Plan B and should not always be seen as a mere vulnerable sector but more as agents of change.

Ecosystems and biodiversity management and protection

12. Assert and protect public control over natural resources and prioritize cultivation of nutritious food for local consumption.
13. Provide an enabling policy environment for farmers including land to the landless, genuine agrarian reform, access to productive resources including seeds, participation in policy-making and policy coherence at the national and international levels.
14. Strengthen and promote agro-ecology through appropriate laws, policy and programs. Protect local, indigenous and traditional knowledge in agriculture and create markets for traditional and heirloom produce.
15. Advance good governance with increased accountability and transparency, removing all anti-people policies to protect natural resources.
16. Member states should mainstream biodiversity protection and enhancement across sectors and engage indigenous people and ensure the protection of their rights to land, resources, establish accountability mechanism to ensure compliance to human rights, social and environmental safeguards.
17. Call on member states to actively participate in the intergovernmental working group on the elaboration of legally-binding treaty on TNCs and other businesses with respect to human rights.

Resource Efficiency, chemicals and waste

18. Bring back focus on mitigation and reduction of energy use in industrialized countries.
19. Just transition should involve the recalibration of existing fossil fuel infrastructures by reducing their emissions while reskilling workers towards green and decent jobs. Governments should not give licenses to new fossil fuel projects.
20. Prohibit transboundary movement of the hazardous waste particularly e-waste and plastic waste that may contain mercury, lead, and other hazardous chemicals.
21. Support a new legally binding instrument to combat marine plastic pollution and for a resolution for a treaty to be adopted at UNEA-4. Support the initiative "Stop Plastic Pollution", particularly steps towards

banning or phasing out single use of plastic and micro-plastics by 2025. Environmental governance (including geoengineering governance).

22. Ensure and enable peoples' participation in environmental governance at the national, regional and global levels and address the barriers to effective participation.

23. Ensure and promote transparency and access to information as a fundamental prerequisite to meaningful peoples' participation in environmental governance. Information on evidences and scientific basis for and against a technology/proposal, as well as on existing alternatives, must be provided to enable robust deliberations and informed decision-making. Assumptions of evidences and scenarios need to be made accessible and transparent for interrogation by broader society.

24. Integrate assessment in environmental governance to ensure flexibility, dynamism and responsiveness by providing foresight on new and emerging technologies and developments and their potential impacts on the environment and people.

25. Ensure participation of civil society, grassroots movements and other stakeholders in assessing new and emerging technologies as a key component of environmental governance. Due importance should be given to capturing the interpretation of evidences by different actors and enabling broad participation in societal deliberation on technologies.

26. Provide mechanisms for equitable, effective and inclusive participation of civil society based on recognition of existing inequalities and the need to level the playing field.

27. Environmental governance should also include governance of research and ensuring peoples' participation in defining the direction and priorities of research on technologies that would benefit society and those who are left behind.

28. Give due importance to data and data management in ensuring transparent, inclusive and evidence-based environmental governance.

29. Lastly, we urge member states and the private sector to ensure the safety of environmental defenders and to provide an enabling environment for their legitimate activities for the planet and the people.

UN Environment regional consultation with major groups and stakeholders of North America

Report of the North America Major Groups and Stakeholders Regional Consultations in Preparation for the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4)- February 2019

The following report presents the outcome of two distributed virtual consultations in preparation for the fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the themes of Innovations to Address the Challenges of Food Waste and Single-Use Plastics in North America. The report was compiled by MIT Solve and UN Environment and the recommendations are those of participants which were not limited to Major Groups accredited to UN Environment.

The UN Environment North America Office hosted two **distributed virtual consultations** in preparation for the fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly on the themes of *Innovations to Address the Challenges of Food Waste* and *Single-Use Plastics in the Region* on January 22 and February 5, 2019 respectively.

The goal of this new approach was to enable a broad range of geographically dispersed stakeholders from across the region to participate and provide inputs into the Assembly, while decreasing overall carbon emissions associated with related travel. This consultation model was particularly appropriate for the North American region due to the large land mass of Canada and the United States and its diverse ecosystems and populations. The distributed virtual consultations model increased access to the assembly process and enhanced stakeholder participation.

The Distributed Consultations Model

Each of the two-hour consultations connected 10 to 13 physical and virtual hubs across North America into a single virtual platform, enabling us to connect different hubs. Each hub hosted a group of up to 20 participants, allowing us to connect 187 participants. An additional "virtual" hub of 20 participants was created for each of the consultations and moderated by its own facilitator. These were created to accommodate organizations that were not in close physical proximity to any of the hubs.

All the hubs connected into a virtual "plenary" at the beginning of the consultation for introductions and background presentations. The hubs subsequently split into groups for localized discussions on the topics, moderated by a facilitator and a note taker. All hubs reconnected into a virtual "plenary" both in the middle and at the end of the session to report back key points of discussions and recommendations. The virtual "plenary" was facilitated by the Lead Technical Facilitator, who called upon each hub to report back and moderated conversations between hubs.

The consultations were powered by MIT Solve using WebEx Room, a technology widely accessible to the public and easy to use.

Our Partners

Our partners, MIT Solve, the National Council for Science and the Environment (NCSE), the United Nations Association of Canada (UNA Canada) and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability, played a key role in gathering a wide range of stakeholders, building on their large networks. They were instrumental in identifying and securing host organizations for the hubs and identifying facilitators. The second set of partners were the organizations which hosted the physical hubs (see below).

Part 1 - The North America Major Groups and Stakeholders Regional Consultation on Innovations to Address the Challenges of Food Waste in the Region, January 22, 2019

The distributed regional consultation on Innovations to Address Food Waste gathered 80 participants from seven major groups and other stakeholders, spread across nine 'hubs' throughout the US and Canada, and a tenth hub made up entirely of virtual participants:

US Hubs:
1. Boston, Massachusetts hosted by MIT
2. Des Moines, Iowa hosted by ICLEI
3. Irvine, California hosted by University of California at Irvine
4. Washington, D.C. hosted by World Food Organization (FAO)
5. Fairfax, Virginia hosted by George Mason University

Canadian Hubs:
1. Calgary, Alberta hosted by Cisco
2. Halifax, Nova Scotia hosted by Cisco
3. Montreal, Quebec hosted by Cisco
4. Vancouver, British Colombia hosted by Cisco

The objective of the consultation was to provide a forum for North American stakeholders to discuss regional innovations to reduce food waste along with barriers to creating or scaling up innovations, as an input into the preparatory process for UNEA-4.

Participants discussed the following four questions:
1. *What have you observed as major trends related to food waste, innovation, and environmental sustainability in the past two years?*
2. *What are the drivers of, and most common barriers to, innovation in food systems and waste streams for North America?*
3. *How do various sets of actors influence these drivers and barriers? How can they most effectively respond to them in order to enhance sustainable food production and mitigate food loss and waste?*
4. *How can successful experiences in food loss and waste management be catalyzed and scaled-up?*

Barbara Hendrie, Director, UN Environment North America Office and Alexander Dale, Senior Officer for Sustainability Community, MIT Solve delivered welcoming remarks, introduced the Assembly, and framed the issue of food waste in a North American context.

Key Messages

The issue of food loss and waste has become more prominent on stakeholders' agendas in recent years. This increased saliency also includes a growing emphasis on reducing food waste rather than recovering it for consumption or re-use. This shift in priorities aligns very well with the US Environment Protection Agency's

Food Reduction Hierarchy, which prioritizes source reduction and then moves to feeding people and animals, reprocessing, and finally composting as alternatives to landfilling.

Current trends in stakeholders' innovation

- Participants cited two waves of organizations and innovations in food waste in the last few years. The first wave is predominantly nonprofit organizations that focus on recovery for food insecure people. The second wave is made of social enterprises aiming at helping businesses drive reductions in food waste through new alternative products or business models that utilize or decrease food waste by design. There was a consensus among participants that one approach consists of promoting local innovation that is focused on a specific context, rather than on startup models that can make a billion dollars and scale to hundreds of cities in a short time frame. Participants emphasized scaling the impact or ideas through replicating and re-contextualizing local examples, rather than scaling up specific startup models
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focused on local food recovery are growing, including "on-farm gleaning" of unharvested food, pre- or post-consumer collection for feeding food-insecure families, or food scrap collection for local composting operations
- Municipalities are learning from other jurisdictions who adopted early policies on food waste, including more bans on food waste in landfills
- Consumers, particularly younger generations, are more aware of food waste as an issue and more open to solutions such as buying 'ugly' produce. The rise in conscious consumerism and specific diets such as veganism or vegetarianism were seen as correlating well with action on food waste reduction. Younger generations are interested in more information about where their food is grown and the quality of supply chains and what they purchase. Paired with an interest in specific diets, these groups are willing to pay more money, rather than see higher environmental impacts linked with food waste
- Many groups highlighted specific drivers for change or opportunities that innovators are or could be pursuing:

  o There is an opportunity for better storage/preserving techniques, particularly those methods that do not involve systematic usage of single-use plastic.
  o Food maximization could be a growing industry, particularly in rural areas, based on the concept of "the next best use". This is also an opportunity for the education system to be a better on-ramp for working in the food supply chain as a more sustainable career. Food loss and waste management is an important opportunity for rural economic development, particularly in Canada.
  o Terrestrial food production dominates the conversation, but there are large amounts of waste in the fishing industry at all levels of its value chain. Managing this waste is of great importance to coastal communities, which are open for innovative approaches.
  o Food waste has value as animal feed, typically for pig farms but also for zoos and, with some processing, as commercial livestock feed or pet feed. More opportunities to use food scraps for animals rather than compost could be pursued.

Barriers to innovations

However, different stakeholders face different barriers that prevent more action on reducing impacts from food waste and loss.

- Consumers in the region generally still lack clear incentives to change behavior. Many participants mentioned the lack of direct costs to throwing away food at the individual consumer level. This is paired with a "culture of abundance" mindset that encourages over purchasing habits
- Current regulatory structures were cited in equal measure for having created and stabilized markets in some cases (e.g. through landfill organics bans) and prevented them in others (e.g. through preventing processing of food scraps). Strong local level policies are still rare, and regulations were seen as creating a strong incentive, both for new innovations and for existing actors to pursue change. Finally, municipal policies have limited impact on regions or state/provincial-scale food systems, and many hubs highlighted the need for broader policy frameworks to support larger and more stable markets
- Different actors in the food chain system, such as farmers, markets, and consumers, are well-connected to traditional supply chains. However, the actors often lack the infrastructure – physical assets and/or regulatory permission – to move material between stages that are not traditionally connected, such as residents and nearby farms that could use food scraps as animal feed. Missing infrastructure limits stakeholders' ability to pilot new approaches without significant capital expenditure. For example, *Save that Stuff*, an urban composting facility in Boston, MA was encouraged by Cambridge, MA, and provides a missing link that has now enabled other surrounding municipalities to pursue residential composting programs
- Farms are a source of food loss for many reasons, including a lack of labor for harvesting, insufficient market value to pay for harvesting, and insufficient shelf life or processing. Stakeholders recognized the importance of addressing food loss at farms, but also recognized that various subsidies and socioeconomic policies in place to assist farmers also contribute to food loss. These can be hard to change due to inadequate policy frameworks or social norms
- Data was cited as both a barrier and potential opportunity. Data on food losses or wasted food is often limited and is not standardized. Data from farms was noted as being particularly limited and more complex to improve. Data would be valuable for many reasons:
    - Consistent data would help demonstrate potential cost savings or environmental impacts to both public and private stakeholders, or compare the potential outcomes of programs across different communities.
    - Businesses are interested in data making the case for? reducing over purchasing, identifying waste and saving money, and de-emphasizing organics bans by enabling earlier action during food preparation or purchasing.
    - Publicly developed data on food waste, even as a baseline, would enable local innovators to utilize it in developing new tools or businesses. Standard metrics or interoperability would help scale-up these innovations.
- Food waste management has been tightly connected to helping people struggling with food insecurity due to a focus on recovery through food banks. Participants highlighted a need to consider the issues of food waste and food insecurity as tightly linked but requiring different efforts to address root causes. In particular, with a greater focus on reduction of food waste overall, several food recovery organizations have already seen a decline in food available for food insecure people, and a need to tackle root issues like poverty simultaneously
- Other potential risks linked to the management of food waste include:
    - Continuing the expansion of food recovery organizations risks building a greater set of services rooted in unsustainable donations, causing increased tensions with food insecurity if those donations become unavailable as a result of existing efforts.
    - Aiming to improve shelf life or preservation could lead to a greater use of single-use plastics and a less circular food system, a topic discussed in the other regional consultation.

    o   A more efficient food system or better recovery of food waste could lead some consumers to further discount the value of waste and lead to more purchased but uneaten food, a phenomenon observed with energy efficiency.

Key Recommendations

The recommendations from the consultation build on the key points above, focusing on ways that all stakeholders can catalyze, encourage, and support the scaling up of innovation.

- **Governments or funders** should help develop both good baseline data on the scope and nature of food waste and establish a shared set of metrics that can be useful for multiple sectors and database systems and easily adopted across the region.
- **Funders** (both grants and debt/equity) should encourage replication of innovations from other places, rather than focusing solely on novelty or profit potential.
- **Foundations** should encourage and support cooperative multi-organization applications to decrease competition and drive cross-sector work and success.
- **Governments or foundations** should help build capacity for networks of similar small organizations – whether food recovery, food reuse, composting, regenerative farming, food hubs, etc. – to have a voice in regional planning and policy discussions.
- **Governments** at all levels should consider best practice policies from other jurisdictions, including broader bans on organic materials in landfills or eliminating restrictive regulations that inhibit new approaches to addressing food waste. Simultaneously, future policies should incentivize more comprehensive management of food waste by private sector actors using both fines and restrictions along with incentives.
- **Food retailers** should pressure suppliers for better information on food loss or waste in their processes, by drawing on consumer interest.
- **The private sector** should pursue and embrace solutions that can help monitor and reduce food waste across operations.
- Given the interplay between different parts of the supply chain, **all stakeholders** should work to build trust between different actors in a given geographic area.
- Consumer education will continue to be a key piece of the solution, but **all stakeholders** should recognize that they have a role in educating the general public. Participants cited examples of 'pick your own lettuce' restaurants, retailer education on 'ugly' produce, farms that also provide educational programs, and municipal information on composting programs.

Part 2 - The North America Major Groups and Stakeholders Regional Consultation on Innovations to Address the Challenges of Single-Use Plastics in the Region, February 5, 2019

The distributed regional consultation on Innovations to Address the Challenge of Single-Use Plastics gathered 107 participants from eight major groups and other stakeholders, spread across twelve 'hubs' throughout the US and Canada, and a thirteenth hub made up entirely of virtual participants.

US Hubs: Canadian Hubs:

1. Boston, Massachusetts hosted by MIT
2. Washington DC hosted by National Geographic
3. New York City, New York hosted by the Long Island University – Brooklyn Campus
4. Denver, Colorado hosted by the Municipal Service Center
5. Irvine, California hosted by the University of California at Irvine
6. Monterey, California hosted by Think Beyond Plastic
7. Honolulu, Hawaii hosted by Hawai'i Green Growth
8. Athens, Georgia hosted by the University of Georgia
9. Ottawa, Ontario hosted by Cisco
10. Montreal, Quebec hosted by Cisco
11. Toronto, Ontario hosted by Cisco
12. Vancouver, British Colombia hosted by the David Suzuki Foundation

The objective of the consultation was to provide a forum for North American civil society stakeholders to discuss innovations to address the challenge of single-use plastics and provide input into the upcoming United Nations Environmental Assembly.

Using the same format as the previous consultation, participants were invited to discuss the following three main questions:

1. *What are the groundbreaking innovations for a single-use plastics free future?*
2. *What are the drivers and barriers to innovations for alternatives to single-use plastics in the region?*
3. *How can successful experiences be catalyzed and scaled-up?*

Barbara Hendrie, Director, UN Environment North America Office delivered welcoming remarks and presented the process and key themes of the upcoming Assembly and Jenna Jambeck, Professor of Associate Professor, College of Engineering, University of Georgia, delivered a keynote on the challenge of single-use plastics in North America.

Key Messages

A recognized challenge with structural barriers to change

The overall consensus from all of the hubs is that single-use plastics is a widely-recognized challenge, but one that has seen less substantial progress compared to food waste, partly as a result of several large barriers to effective action at scale. Much of the progress to date has been from voluntary restrictions by interested businesses or consumers. Among the barriers that were identified are the following:

- The costs and impacts of single-use plastics are highly externalized, including the costs of recycling contamination, ecosystem contamination, or climate change. Internalizing these costs will likely require broad regulation motivated by citizen interests rather than a specific constituency
- As a result of externalized costs, there are few economic incentives for businesses to switch from single-use plastics to alternative materials or reusable approaches, either for their own purposes or for their customers. Fossil fuel-based plastics are cheap and easier to manufacture, compared to recyclable plastics or other alternatives in the region
- Participants noted the many different uses of single-use plastics in the agricultural sector, the retail sector, the medical sector, and the manufacturing sector, among others. It was noted that most single-use plastics are used in direct connection with consumers

- Local health codes from restaurants make accepting customer-provided reusable containers either prohibited or a liability (real or perceived). This practice will persist and will limit action until stakeholders in several sectors can coordinate clarifications or changes to local policy.

Strong Opportunity for Government Action

Hubs agreed that addressing these barriers will require a broad systemic approach which includes lifecycle analysis of costs and impacts of current and future approaches. As part of that systemic approach, governments have a strong role to play in creating market opportunities.

To date, bans have reduced hard-to-manage plastics such as plastic bags, Styrofoam containers, or straws in municipalities, states, and provinces across the region. Replacing these items either directly with different materials or through different business models represents a policy opportunity.

A key driver for businesses would be robust Extended Producer Responsibility systems that incentivize redesign and responsibility for those single-use plastics that continue to be used. Hubs cited the efforts of both Canadian cities and provinces, in conjunction with a federal EPR policy. However, they noted that EPR policies are currently geared towards fines for unmanaged waste rather than any positive incentive for systemic redesign.

Local governments have a key role in determining what infrastructure is available, including collection processes and composting/recycling facilities. Local regulation also determines whether new approaches can be legally piloted to test effectiveness.

Participants also noted a disjoint between local grassroots efforts and national or international conversations. US participants noted that there is no federal policy on single-use plastics or Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and so national conversations are driven by specific NGOs connected to a variety of broad issues, while local action has often started with specific bans in mind. A few examples have scaled from local initiatives to broader action, such as the efforts of the *Surfrider Foundation*, where a local program to reduce single-use plastic availability became a certification program to recognize restaurants that use no Styrofoam, provide reusable utensils, and eliminate plastics bags.

Consumer pressure is key to creating market demand

Consumer education was listed as a major opportunity and a major need for driving large-scale change, either for the adoption of new products or services or policies to incentivize changes and innovation by industry. At the same time, several limitations to broad public education efforts were mentioned, including:

- Traditional campaigns around recycling are seen as having lost effectiveness, leaving consumers confused about what they can recycle. In addition, the numerical classification does not map to recyclability – many facilities will accept any hard-plastic containers but no plastic films, even if both might be labeled as #4 recyclable plastic.

- Labels can be a good opportunity to encourage better consumer choices, but there are no shared definitions on issues such as 'ocean degradable'. The numerous NGOs working on consumer education might benefit from greater coordination for a shared and effective campaign.
- Helping consumers understand where plastics go after use can help shape the overall conversation around plastic waste management – understanding that exported plastic waste may go to places with poor waste management systems, and unexportable plastic waste may end up in close proximity to economically stressed communities or end up in landfills.
- A new push to focus on zero waste rather than recycling was mentioned as a key opportunity. With rising awareness of the need to reduce carbon emissions, tying action on single-use plastics to national targets to reduce carbon emissions could also help raise awareness and shift behavior.

Drivers for Innovation

With existing consumer pressure and sporadic policy support, a growing number of innovations are appearing throughout the region. Innovations are focused primarily on either business models (e.g. replacing single-use items with refillable versions) or alternative materials which are bio-based and biodegradable (with limitations as noted below). Participants were enthusiastic at the potential of new startups but note that almost all are in their very early-stage of establishment, with little market traction to date.

Several additional innovation needs were mentioned as potential opportunities:

- The development of new plastic dyes or additives which are compatible with repeated recycling without impeding plastic or product quality or human health
- Improving options for replacing or eliminating plastic packaging, particularly films. Films are rarely recyclable but are increasingly common in e-commerce and other industries
- Identifying new financial and business models that encourage rather than discourage EPR, even in the absence of broad policies
- One solution mentioned was gasification technology, which can use plastic waste to either create energy or feedstocks for new plastics. While noted for its industry traction and potential benefits in dealing with non-recyclable plastic waste, it was criticized by NGO participants as a potential source of ash and new emissions. Debate on the overall value of this technology to managing single-use plastics and moving towards a circular economy is ongoing

While several types of alternative materials were discussed, compostable plastics were a particular point of significant disagreement among hubs and participants. Some groups highlighted that these materials are a direct replacement for single-use service ware but should decompose rather than persist in the environment. They may also be sourced from biological sources, eliminating demand for fossil fuel. However, other participants noted that they are a contaminant in traditional recycling streams and require specific infrastructure to ensure proper disposal. That infrastructure is still not common, and the similarity in appearances can be confusing to consumers. Finally, compostable plastics do not drive a shift away from single-use items, potentially maintaining a system with high material volume, even if that material is decomposable at end-of-life.

Overall, participants felt that this challenge is important for innovators in North America to tackle, both in developing new materials and shifting the regional culture towards less consumption of single-use items and more of reusables. For this to happen, governments have a strong role to play in creating a level playing field

and generating market opportunities, and consumers will need to maintain pressure and demonstrate their desire for change.

Recommendations

Hubs identified a variety of actions for all types of stakeholders, focused on reducing current consumption of single-use plastics while setting up innovation for longer-term and larger-scale shifts towards more reusable or biodegradable materials as part of a circular economy.

- **Local governments** should help develop infrastructure to manage new materials such as compostable plastics, including updated collection infrastructure and consumer education
- **Health departments** should work with local businesses to enable reusable service ware at restaurants, either through education on current policies or updated policies
- **Governments** at all levels should target bans on specific materials or products in such a way as to reduce total lifecycle impacts and avoid encouraging replacement with high-impact alternatives
- **Institutional buyers** such as school districts should eliminate Styrofoam and other unrecyclable materials from procurement processes, using their buying power to drive aggregated change. Environmental offices at these institutions should provide procurement training on alternative materials
- **Schools and workplaces** should encourage behavior change through education on alternatives and making options like reusable utensils easy
- **Universities** serve as a strong resource to communities providing current scientific data and research to help inform policies and offer access to the latest technologies aimed at reducing the consumption of single-use plastics. They should be invited to contribute to reinforcing the use of more ecologically friendly, biodegradable and/or reusable materials
- **Private industry** should consider a coordinated shift in consumer education around product labelling and post-consumer management, as the current numerical system is confusing for consumers and leads to contamination in single-stream recycling systems. New systems of labelling or a focus on zero-waste may be fruitful
- **Foundations** should support more political advocacy aimed at regulation that internalizes waste management costs to producers, including ecosystem damages. Support for coalitions of NGOs, scientific organizations, and industry actors could be particularly valuable
- **Governments or foundations** should help build capacity to test new materials or processes at a small scale. This might include access to lab facilities, industrial processing space with access to actual waste streams, or simplified short-term permits
- **Funders** of all kinds should devote more resources to validating pre-commercial prototypes of materials or business models in real-world conditions, and work with corporate buyers to enable broader scale-up once tested. Where possible, funders should seek innovators with social impact in their model, in contrast to direct private-sector replacement focused only on capital return.