



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

The Minister

Letter to members of the United Nations Environment Assembly

Dear Colleagues,

I would like start by thanking you for your trust, patience and flexibility through this transition period.

I am honoured to have the opportunity to serve as the President of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) and I am committed to building on the foundation laid by my predecessor Mr. Ola Elvestuen. This entails in particular continuing to ensure an inclusive and transparent preparation process to lay the ground for a successful Environment Assembly.

The Bureau of the Assembly, with the valuable involvement of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, agreed that the theme for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly is “**Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**”. I believe this theme will allow the Assembly to focus on the deeply worrying trends on biodiversity loss and help us identify how we can work together to scale up measures to protect and restore nature. All the goods and services that nature provides, including nature-based solutions, are critical to achieving the sustainable development goals. The recognition of the role of nature in this respect is steadily growing. It is my strong wish to work with all on how we can expand this awareness and build the needed political momentum further towards an impactful Assembly. The Environment Assembly should also build upon the international milestones and conferences on biodiversity, climate, oceans and ecosystems restoration that we collectively refer to as the *Super Year for Nature*.

I will do my utmost to ensure a clear and ambitious Ministerial Declaration that responds to our strong knowledge base and speaks to the significant challenges and opportunities we face as a global community. I plan to start discussions on this with the Assembly Bureau in the coming months and remain committed to ensuring a strong sense of ownership from member States, with inputs from all stakeholders.

Furthermore, I appeal to member States to agree on a manageable number of implementable, targeted and action-oriented resolutions that take us forward in addressing global environmental challenges, and that do in fact *strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*. Our goal must be to add value and scale up action from where we are today. Together, we can make UNEA-5 a forum for transforming our world and creating impact far beyond 2021.

While the fifth session of the Environment Assembly will continue to work on established streams of work from previous Assemblies, I strongly encourage member States, with the support of the Executive Director of UNEP, to work together towards resolutions related to the theme. The resolutions we consider at the Assembly should call for specific action and not duplicate work previously done by the Assembly or others. This will enable us to send a clear message to the world beyond the Assembly that we are serious about implementing what we decide.

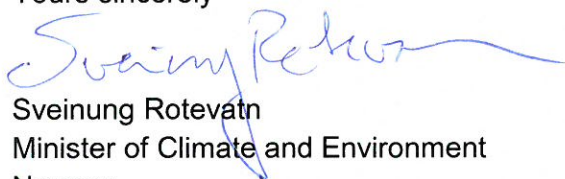
Furthermore, I stand ready to work with the Executive Director and all member States in identifying how the fifth UN Environment Assembly can appropriately kick start the UNEP@50 commemorations, charting a course towards a United Nations high-level meeting in Stockholm in 2022, currently under consideration by member States.

We have heard the calls for urgent action, scaling up efforts, and that scientific knowledge underpins our political choices appropriately, as well as to enhance citizen participation. To make sure we hear inputs from stakeholders, Norway will host the civil society global consultations, as well as a conference involving the private sector and academia, in cooperation with the Science-Policy-Business Forum. This will be in the context of the Joint Bureaux Meeting in Oslo in June 2020, for which we will share more information shortly.

Together we can identify innovative actions for nature and creative ways of strengthening and scaling up already successful actions, to make sure we intensify our efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals in its three dimensions.

I look forward to working closely with all of you in preparing a successful fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sveinung Rotevatn', written over a faint blue line.

Sveinung Rotevatn
Minister of Climate and Environment
Norway

Ministers Responsible for the Environment
Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Major Groups and Stakeholders representatives accredited to UNEP