

**MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS OPENING STATEMENT**  
**UNEA-2**  
**Nairobi, 23 May 2016**

Thank you Chair.

Madame President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am Yugratna Srivastava from India from Children and Youth Major group on behalf of Major Groups and stakeholders.

We are strongly committed to an ambitious and effective UNEA. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum is an essential part of the UNEA process.

A longer version of this statement including the issues and outcomes of our discussion will be posted on the UNEA portal. We also invite Member States to review the compilation of statements and recommendations by Major Groups and Stakeholders for consideration by UNEA-2, that contains the results of the Regional Consultation Meetings (UNEP/EA.2/INF/7).

We welcome the efforts and proposal of UNEA President on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy. We have reached this point through much compromise and good faith negotiations, but future work is needed to fulfill Para 88 (h) of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. At this time, the President's proposal is our bottom line. Further weakening the policy, such as with a silent veto on accreditation (a "no-objection" principle), would be unacceptable and result in our rejection of the entire policy.

2015 was a remarkable year for global sustainability decisions and commitments. UNEA-2 is a great opportunity to take bold decisions to continue this political momentum. It should set the stage for delivering the full and effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda up holding the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities. We must make sure that no one is left behind, including persons with disabilities who also have a significant stake in the 2030 Agenda and its implementation.

UNEA is the leading environmental authority in the UN with UNEP as its executive institution. UNEA-2 should advance global policy coherence and complementarity within the UN system and beyond, including implementation at the national and regional levels.

Effective follow up mechanisms for monitoring, transparency and accountability are essential in delivering on the environmental agenda and MG&S play a critical role in all three areas.

We would echo ED Steiner's words that "There is no UNEA without Major Groups and Stakeholders." We look forward to playing a greater role to play in the future. We reiterate our commitment to contribute to the UNEA process

and are up to the challenge. We intend to continue and further strengthen this positive relationship with Member States and the new Executive Director.

The risks posed to environmental defenders are staggering; on average two people are killed every week defending their land, forests and waterways. We call upon Member States to protect those who put their lives on the line for the environment. We request all delegates to UNEA-2 to stand for a minute of silence to honor the ultimate sacrifice of those who have been killed.

Thank you.