

May 25, 2016

UNEP 2nd UN Environment Assembly (UNEA2)
Committee of the Whole (COW)
May 23 – 27 in Nairobi, Kenya
Business and Industry NGOs attending UNEA2

Thank you Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Norine Kennedy, USCIB, and I speak for business and industry groups attending this important meeting.

The ground breaking sustainability agreements of last year were carried across the finish line by the strong engagement of business working with governments and other stakeholders. In the post 2015 world, new roles for major groups and stakeholders must evolve, and we see UNEP and UNEA2 as a forum for dialogue, action and institutional innovation.

Sustainability and environmental challenges will require new ways of working, through partnership and enhanced cooperation between governments, business and other stakeholders.

As part of that, business is seeking a distinct and recognized role in UNEP going forward, inspired by existing effective models in the UN, such as the Private Sector Mechanism at the World Food Security Committee, the FfD Private Sector Coordinating Group and the Business and Industry Advisory Committee to the OECD. The Global Business Alliance for 2030 recently proposed new institutional architecture in the HLPF to “crowd in” business and industry as a resource for member states, UN bodies and other stakeholders. A similar institutional proposal for UNEP is being discussed by business groups here.

For business there are as many pathways to environmental sustainability as there are types of business, and without exception they all involve deploying innovation via economic viability.

We look forward to helping you reach agreement on ambitious UNEA2 outcomes across all clusters, to:

- Prioritize cost-effective outcomes that work in synergy with commitments and actions under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. All SDGS have environmental dimensions and should be considered in an integrated manner.
- Encourage collaborative public-private and multi-stakeholder partnerships that deliver impact transparently.

A key message from the recent Global Opportunity Report 2016 was that “the SDGs are the job description for business.” The SDGs are the framework that will guide businesses going forward, including in many vital environmental areas. In that regard, they present a significant opportunity for collaboration with the UN and Governments, as well, as we now roll up our sleeves for implementation and look forward to working with you for actionable and shared UNEA2 conclusions on the foundation of a strong stakeholder engagement policy.

Finally, we express our sincere thanks to Executive Director Achim Steiner for his leadership, dedication and partnership, and to the outgoing UNEA president, Mme. Oyun, Mme. Pataki and the entire outgoing Bureau for their willingness to engage with business and other MGs

Thank you.