

Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly
“Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”

This draft outline has been prepared by the President of the Assembly for consideration by Member States and stakeholders. It includes a structured list of initial points shared by the President with all Members of the Assembly on 8 May 2017 and Member States and stakeholders are invited to continue to share their views and contributions.

Member States, including through their respective regional Ministerial Fora and political groups, are invited to send their inputs to the Secretariat (unep.sgb@unep.org) at the latest by the 30 June 2017. In early July, the President will submit a Zero Draft Document for consideration by Member States taking into account all the feedback and positions received with a view to producing a coherent, concise, and action-oriented document.

Introduction:

- As the world’s Ministers of Environment, we must be determined to take the bold and necessary steps to address pollution at every level in order to protect the health and lives of all people on this planet, the developmental aspirations of current and future generations, and the immeasurable wealth of the environment and the natural resources upon which we all depend;
- The UN Environment Programme is mandated to serve as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda. The UN Environment Assembly is the highest-level decision making body on the environment. Both are key in keeping the state of the environment under review and in addressing the vital environmental challenges of global and regional significance, which we are facing today, such as pollution;
- We recognize that both, our UN Environment Assembly and UN Environment Programme, cannot tackle the challenge of pollution alone and in this regard, we urge the other inter-governmental bodies, UN specialized agencies, funds and programmes, and all other stakeholders, including business leaders, to contribute towards our effort;
- We invite all governments, businesses, communities and people, and all other stakeholders to work towards a pollution-free planet by determining their own contributions and commitments to achieve our vision.

Vision:

- Our goal, collectively, must be a pollution-free planet. Urgent action is our responsibility;
- Reducing pollution means positively transforming our world. It will help ensure that we, as humanity, make a leap towards a healthier, safer, brighter, more sustainable future, with benefits for all;
- More people will be able to leave poverty behind;
- We will protect the health of everyone on this planet, today and in the future;
- Safer and cleaner technologies will drive our economies;
- We will transform our societies to become sustainable, resource efficient and able to support the needs of present and future generations;
- Peace, security and stability will help us promote inclusive societies, which respect human rights and gender empowerment, as well as the environment;

- We will increase global, regional and national knowledge, awareness and education around pollution sources, impacts, and solutions.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- Pollution affects everybody. It is a massive global challenge with consequences far beyond the environment;
- The increasing pollution of our air, water, land and seas is a major obstacle towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Aichi Biodiversity Targets;
- Pollution is destroying our ecosystems, affecting human health, hampering long-term economic growth and exacerbating social inequalities;
- Pollution is an individual and collective concern the world over, threatening the health and well-being of all of us;
- We welcome the many pledges and voluntary commitments being made by Governments, business and civil society as actions towards the achievement of our vision in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, and commit to take the following steps/actions;
- The solutions to reduce and eliminate pollution are available and moving onto a more sustainable path lies in our hands.

Comment [BN1]: Australia suggests including reference to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Transformative Steps and Actions:

- Reduce all waste, through increased reuse and recycling of materials, innovation, and improved transfer of and access to clean technologies;
- Work with the private sector to identify and implement market based solutions and alternatives to end all forms of pollution;
- Improve the health of the environment and ecosystems, and the health of people everywhere, including through stronger, integrated, and coherent policies and laws to reduce pollution, including standards for air, land and water quality based on scientific evidence and data;
- Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and policies through capacity building and institutional strengthening, including monitoring systems;
- Eliminate major sources of marine litter, such as microplastics and the excessive, wasteful usage of single-use plastic by 202X;
- Bring pollution levels, including from excess nutrients, to levels that are not detrimental to ecosystem function by 2020;
- Accelerate efforts to achieve the sound management of chemicals and wastes, including eliminating lead in paint by 202X;
- Reduce, by half, the amount of untreated wastewater entering water bodies by 202X;
- Substantially improve air quality in cities to within healthy levels for human consumption by 202X;
- Work with the local governments of the world towards promoting sustainable models of urban development that address, in an integrated manner, cleaner and livable cities;
- Significantly expand the application and distribution in all countries of the best available science and technologies available towards combating the threat of pollution in all its forms;
- Expand existing and create new multi-stakeholder partnerships, bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and the people of the world.

Comment [BN2]: Australia suggested this additional clause that reflects Aichi Target 8 which all parties to the Convention of Biological Diversity have agreed.

Comment [BN3]: Recent evidence suggests that there are no safe thresholds for some pollutants (such as particulate matter), and, by extension, air pollution. Being recognisant of this research, Australia supports a clearer definition of the proposed improvement in air quality. This may be done by referring to a certain index.

Australia also recognises that 'substantially improving' air quality by the proposed 202X date may not be feasible for all cities/countries. For example, some cities in Asia and Africa have very significant air quality problems and the reasons why may not be easily addressed/remedied in this timeframe.