

14 July 2017

**EU+MS input to the report “Pollution free planet“
by the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme
(shorter version for policy-makers)**

The EU and its Member States would like to reflect on how best to use the report “Pollution free planet” in developing the shorter version of the report targeting policy makers.

EU+MS first reflections on the report „Pollution free planet“

- EU+MS welcome the Executive Director’s report that sets the scene for pollution problem, and see it as a valuable input for UNEA-3 preparations.
- The report is a comprehensive and impartial analysis of complex pollution issues providing robust evidence, overview of gaps and suggesting a framework for actions.
- We welcome the core message of the report that we have to simultaneously strengthen environmental governance and deal with the root causes of pollution. This means shifting to more sustainable, innovative and cleaner production and consumption patterns.
- The report emphasizes, that tackling pollution should be seen as an opportunity rather than a cost and a problem. EU+MS appreciate this viewpoint. Reducing pollution not only helps to clean the environment and improves health, but also drives economic productivity and creates jobs.

EU+MS suggestions for the development of the short version for policy makers

- Most important of all, the EU+MS would like to emphasize that the version for policy makers should set out clear and powerful political message that leads to ministers’ pledge to commit and take the policy decisions to tackle pollution.
- The EU+MS emphasize that the short version of the report should be brief and clearly understandable to policy makers, who may not be specialists in pollution area.
- The main objective of the version for policy makers should be building the ministers’ ownership and responsibility in transitioning to a pollution-free planet. It should present clear strategic options to tackle and prevent pollution.
- It should summarize the impacts of pollution and provide clear arguments on the importance and urgency of addressing pollution in a comprehensive and global manner, building on existing initiatives, enhancing synergies, addressing institutional gaps where action or new alliances are needed and avoiding duplication.
- The version for policy makers should focus on relevant actionable policy recommendations and a clear suggested framework for action globally that is most impactful in addressing the specific types of pollution. It should provide the basis for UNEA-3 to move us from “words” to “actions”. Therefore it must also look at policy instruments and means of implementation.
- The short version of the report should also provide a clear link to UNEP’s mandate and the goals of UNEA-3.

- As the report pointed out that tackling pollution should be seen as an opportunity, policy recommendations included in the short version should also demonstrate trade, investment and innovation opportunities and interlinkages.
- Whilst the report describes well the situation regarding the different environmental media, there could be separate sections enhanced visibility of the potential contribution of key sectors of society, such as industry, transport, agriculture, etc., to reducing pollution in the short version.
- We find that addressing pollution requires a cross-cutting and preventive approach. This is important also for addressing change in global value chains to prevent and reduce the pollution in a life-cycle approach. Therefore, due to the complexity of pollution issues globally, we find system-wide actions fundamental to be pointed out in the short version for policy makers.
- In particular we would like to highlight the following cross-cutting approaches:
 - Promoting sustainable consumption and production, circular and resource efficient economy, sustainable chemistry, green economy, sustainable finance and similar approaches that provide cross-cutting and preventive solutions to tackle pollution;
 - Promoting life-style changes as well as underlining the essential role of prevention;
 - Considering planetary boundaries, in particular those that are linked to pollution;
 - Facilitating science, technology, innovation and knowhow implementation between regions and promoting ecosystem and nature-based solutions;
 - Developing adequate communication and education strategies to raise awareness on pollution;
 - Underlining the importance to have actions at all level and highlighting especially the role of cities, which concentrates most of the pollution (water pollution, air pollution, etc.) but are also part of the solution and an essential level of governance to tackle pollution;
 - Strengthening the partnerships and inclusive governance for effective implementation of cross-sector policies;
 - Pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors.
- From the policy recommendations listed in the report, EU wishes especially to stress the importance and relevance of the following recommendations:
 - Develop air quality policies and strategies at sub-national, national and regional levels;
 - Invest in air quality monitoring and assessment systems as there are clear gaps in data and information;
 - Establish, improve and harmonize different water quality monitoring systems, status and risk assessment initiatives;
 - Promote integrated water resource management, including sanitation and waste water treatment and facilitate sharing of best practices;

- Reduce soil pollution both from diffuse and point sources that is linked to unsustainable management practices (growing use of pesticides, improper use of nutrients/nitrogen, etc.);
- Tackle marine pollution (including marine litter and in particular microplastics) from different sources, i.a. taking full account of the precautionary and polluter-pays principles, as well as extended producer responsibility and promote monitoring;
- Prevent the use and promote recovery of unnecessary plastic (e.g. packaging, single-use plastics, discarded fishing gear);
- Tackle cross-cutting issue of chemicals and waste through integrated life-cycle and value chain approaches and sustainable chemistry;
- Address the planetary boundaries that are exceeded and have a particular link to pollution such as nitrogen;
- Tackle antimicrobial resistance;
- Harvest reductions in industrial pollution to all environmental media through the spreading of Best Available Techniques;
- Support clean energy and energy efficiency.