

With Ref. to the Committee Note No: 00124(2017), and on behalf of H.E. Dr. Thani Al-Zayoudi, Minister of Climate Change and Environment of UAE, I am glad to convey here below the feedback and annotations of his Excellency on the Draft Zero document titled "Towards a Pollution-Free".

1-Because "Pollution-free" is not feasible as far as living forms exist on the planet, we propose replacing this terminology with "Clean Planet" or "Pollution Minimum Planet" to be more precise.

2- There is confusion about the nature of this document as it states "acknowledgment" in some parts and "commitment" in other parts. Knowing the nature of this document is essential for member states and accordingly some linguistic modifications are requested.

3- The forms of pollution prevention, mitigation and management proposed in the document (bullet points) are very generic with little concrete actions, support or commitments.

Furthermore, regarding the UNEP Executive Director's Report mentioned in the Zero Draft letter, the document provides a good overview of all pollution issues and linkages with socio-economic aspects, but it is still generic and adds few values to the existing understanding as is the outcome document; therefore, enable me to provide you also a list of the interpretations on it:

- The document provides an excellent global overview of diverse pollution issues and clear linkages with socio-economic aspects as well as SDGs. This provides a good foundation of ministerial discussions.

- On the other hand, it is unclear how UNEP intends to formulate ministerial discussions as it lacks clear action plans or proposals, particularly of more innovative nature than conventional regulatory approaches. The document should be able to steer discussions on how to collectively overcome challenges and constraints faced by many developing countries. And it should clearly indicate the role of UNEP to play in realizing the "pollution-free planet".

- “29 interventions” (pp.42-3) look what ED proposes Member States to discuss and agree with but if that’s the case, it should be part of the outcome document. The current document doesn’t indicate the nature of this list. And how were these points formulated? The list is uneven as some points are specific with time-bound targets, while others are very generic and don’t guide Member States to concrete actions.

- Annex 3 and 4 (pp. 69-78) provide a comprehensive list of international and regional agreements, which is very useful. But it would be even more helpful to have a status of progress in fulfilling each agreement and challenges faced if not fulfilled, so that Member States will be able to review and discuss the way forward.

- We cannot tackle each area and type of pollution separately, and end-of-pipe interventions are not ideal either. As Figure 2 (p.8) shows, we should focus on sources of pollutants (both production and consumption) and how new technologies and management can reduce different pollutants in the first place. This approach is correctly suggested as “system-wide actions” (3.2) but it’s not fully explored for Member States to consider. Particularly, UNEP should explore improving synergies with existing programs such as resource efficiency, 10YFP and green economy and guide Member States to benefit from its work. This may lead to considering better governance and more harmonized structure of UNEP programs.

- Urgent issues for poor countries are well highlighted such as basic hygiene (clean water and toilets), indoor air pollution, lack of solid waste collection, mining waste, disaster waste, e-waste, etc. (pp.18-9). The report should dedicate more attention to how Member States (and stakeholders) can address such priority areas of pollution in a collective manner, proposing effective mechanisms of knowledge/technology transfer and financing.

- Chapter 1’s list of pollution issues (pp.6-13) is comprehensive but seems missing a few critical items such as other indoor air pollution than cooking and heating (e.g. sick building), land pollution from landfilling organic waste and incinerator ash, etc.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

حسين حسن محمد خالصاحب

مدير إدارة التعاون الدولي

Hussain Hassan Mohamed Khansaheb
Director, International Cooperation Department