

Note by the Secretariat on the proposed Global Coalition for a Pollution-Free Planet

As requested at the Joint Bureaux Retreat held in Costa Rica in June 2017 and as discussed at the Joint meeting of the Bureaux of UN Environment Assembly and Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 14 September 2017. The Secretariat submits a note on a long term programme of action to address pollution, titled the Global Coalition for a Pollution-Free Planet, for member States consideration.

GLOBAL COALITION FOR A POLLUTION-FREE PLANET

Context and Rationale

- The United Nations Environment Assembly, the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, will gather in Nairobi, Kenya, from 4 to 6 December 2017 under the overarching theme '*Towards a Pollution-Free Planet*'.
- This forum of Governments, UN organizations and specialized agencies, inter-governmental organizations, civil society and private sector representatives offers a unique opportunity to launch a programme of multi-stakeholder actions to prevent, reduce and control pollution in all its forms, including air pollution, freshwater pollution, land/soil pollution, marine and coastal pollution, as well as pollution from chemicals and waste.
- The report of the Executive Director '**Towards a Pollution-Free Planet**' provides evidence on the state, impacts and costs of pollution, makes the case for action against pollutants in key risk areas, and outlines actions to be considered by Governments, civil society organizations, private sector entities and individual citizens.
- The report of the Executive Director identified **gaps and challenges** that hinder actions on pollution. These include the following: (i) Implementation (ii) Knowledge (iii) Infrastructure (iv) Limited leadership by financial institutions and industry (v) Mispricing, the invisibility of ecosystem values and externalization of pollution costs, and (vi) Insufficient recognition by different actors that producer and consumer choices have pollution consequences.
- Various stakeholder groups are expected to make voluntary commitments towards a pollution free planet according to their capacity and priority. and to register these at:
<http://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/un-environment-assembly>
- It is expected that a political declaration on pollution will be adopted at this the third session of the Assembly along with resolutions that support specific actions.

With a view to take this work beyond the United Nations Environment Assembly, Member States may request the Executive Director to facilitate the setting up of a public-private platform, a **Global Coalition for a Pollution-Free Planet** to complement existing processes and initiatives. A multi stakeholder Pollution Action Programme (2018-2030), would be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, may inspire the international community and stakeholders at all levels – Member States, UN agencies, development organizations, financing institutions, business networks and entities, cities and local authorities, civil society organizations and individual citizens – to take action.

Proposed goal of the Coalition for a Pollution-Free Planet

To accelerate the transition towards a Pollution-Free Planet by 2030 through:

- (i) **Support of the voluntary commitments/pledges** made by Member States, regional and local level authorities as well as by the private sector and civil society organizations at UNEA 3
- (ii) **Address the specific gaps and challenges** that countries face in implementing actions on pollution and adding value through joined up delivery on cross cutting themes with key initiatives that exist to address pollution. These themes include:
 - a. Strengthening, where appropriate, institutions dealing with pollution-related issues; (implementation gap)
 - b. Developing communication campaigns and education strategies for pollution awareness, disclosure and behavioural change; scaling up the adoption of pollutant release and transfer registers (PRTRs); and setting up a research agenda on the nexus between pollution actions, economic prosperity and health (knowledge gap)
 - c. Work with the private sector and multilateral development banks to fast track pollution management infrastructure (infrastructure gap)
 - d. Financing for pollution prevention and reduction – including clean-up actions and development and testing of innovative solutions; (Finance and industry leadership gap)
 - e. Designing and implementing policy and economic instruments for pollution actions; (market distortions and wrong price signals)
 - f. Promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns (to address pollution consequences)
 - g. Measuring progress and sharing knowledge.

Multi-stakeholder engagement and working modalities

- The **Global Coalition** will bring together interested Governments, UN agencies, secretariats of relevant environmental conventions, development organizations, financing institutions, business networks and entities, cities and local authorities, civil society organizations and individual citizens. This would not only provide a common platform for ministers of Health and Environment, but would also bring on board other national ministries, partners from the UN, business and non-governmental organizations.
- The **Global Coalition**, while informal and non-bureaucratic, may establish its own **Governance configuration**, which may include a Plenary where all stakeholders would be represented.
- **A Pollution Action Programme** can be developed by all interested stakeholders to catalyze action. To avoid overlap and duplication, the Pollution Action Programme would build on other relevant voluntary coalitions, partnerships and alliances and focus on the added value of such a

synergy. The main focus of such a Programme would be to (i) address the gaps that exist to implement actions (ii) help deliver better through building on existing agreements, partnerships, coalitions and organizations (iii) have some of the suggested pollution actions integrated into existing initiatives

- The global coalition may have a **common knowledge platform** that would bring together multiple pollution-related initiatives that operate largely in isolation;
- Examples of **current initiatives** that can be brought under this global coalition may include but are not limited to:
 - the Climate and Clean Air Coalition;
 - the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;
 - the Global Waste Partnership;
 - Health, Environment and Climate Change Coalition
 - the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns with its six programmes;
 - the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities;
 - the Global Alliance for Health and Pollution;
 - the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy;
 - the Environment and Trade Hub on enhancing trade in environmentally sound technologies
 - the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases.
- **UN Environment** is uniquely positioned to play a key role in supporting this Global coalition. It can play a catalytic role in mobilizing and bringing together above key initiatives operating in the pollution/environment and health space. It can use its convening power to integrate actions; to scale up action in short time frames and make strategic interventions for change; can involve key stakeholders in the design and the planning of initiatives given that it already hosts initiatives to address pollution in different media; can design action points in an integrated fashion, without losing the environmental entry point or lens; can highlight multiple benefits of actions on pollution to business, to governments, to the environment; can deliver in partnership mode, and focus from the local to the global and from the global to the local. It can convene actors but also integrate the decarbonizing agenda with detoxification through strengthened environmental governance and decoupling growth from pollution as a key route for the same. It is also in a position to strengthen work on ecosystem resilience as key to addressing the SDGs. Thus supporting such a coalition will fit well with UN Environment's programme of work that focusses on climate change, resource efficiency, chemicals and waste, environmental governance, and ecosystem based resilience and adaptation and help this work address the nexus of pollution/environment and health.

- **Science and innovation based actions:** A group of scientists and technology/innovation leaders would be established to advise the Coalition. This group could be drawn from the various technical and scientific advisors of above initiatives to ensure that the group has cross media expertise: air, water, marine, and land pollution .
- A **small team** would be established by the Executive Director in one of the existing Divisions of the UN Environment to serve as central hub for the Coalition, to increase the impact of the diverse initiatives and platforms working in the pollution space, while each stakeholder will have their own action programme to combat pollution. This hub will:
 - Coordinate and bring together the work of the various existing initiatives as they relate to the above mentioned gaps to enable scale and collective impact
 - Report at each UN Environment Assembly on progress to maintain momentum;
 - Support member states and other stakeholders in demonstrating clear and quantifiable impacts from the actions;

Conditions to be met for the Coalition to be realized

- ✓ Member States request, at the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Executive Director to facilitate the setting up of a Global Coalition for a Pollution-free Planet
- ✓ Consequently, Member States to request the Executive Director to engage interested stakeholders in shaping a Global, Multi-stakeholder Pollution Action Programme (2018-2030)
- ✓ Member States to request the Executive Director to report on progress at subsequent UN Environmental Assemblies and at the High-Level Political Forum

Expected positive outcomes (2018-2030)

1. Significantly reduced levels of pollution
2. Reduced mortality and morbidity associated with air and water pollution
3. Improved human health and economic productivity
4. More robust/restored ecosystems and a reduction in the loss of biodiversity due to pollution
5. Increased collaboration and improved knowledge on the environmental and human health impacts of pollution, pollution prevention, control and management
6. Strengthened policies and incentives, increased enforcement of rules and improved compliance on pollution prevention and reduction
7. Job creation and reduced waste through adoption of life cycle, eco-innovation and circular approaches and resource-efficient practices in key economic sectors
8. Enhanced engagement of the private sector, citizens and local governments in tackling pollution including by scaling-up environmentally sound technologies

9. Improved knowledge and intensified research that promotes a preventive approach to pollution, including assessment of economic costs, mitigation, avoidance and remediation.
10. Catalyzed innovation on waste systems, promoting circularity and sustainable product design.