

Statement by Ambassador and Permanent Representative Annett Günther under Agenda Item 4: Report of the Executive Director

- Madam Chair, Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, distinguished delegates and observers, ladies and gentlemen;
- First of all, I would like to **align myself** with the statement made on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
- It is a **great pleasure** for me to speak to you on behalf of the German government as new Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kenya and designated Permanent Representative of Germany to UNEP. I am excited to be here, in this beautiful country, and to be working closely with all of you towards a successful UNEA-4 and beyond.
- **Joyce**, let me join others in **warmly welcoming** you in Gigiri and in **congratulating** you to your appointment as Deputy Executive Director. Your arrival had been announced with high expectations and a lot of enthusiasm and we look forward to working with you.
- **Erik**, let me **thank you for this very interesting quarterly report** and your active engagement for environmental protection around the world. The report gives a lot of food for further discussion.
- For instance, you mentioned the **repositioning of the UN Development System in the context of UN Reform**. We would be very interested to hear your thoughts on what this means for UNEP and how the opportunities associated with this for UNEP as a non-resident agency can be leveraged.

- Additionally, I am glad to see highlighted in your report the **meeting with** the German Federal Environment Minister, **Svenja Schulze**, which was a **reflection of our long-standing and trusting cooperation**.
- Germany greatly appreciates the work that the UN Environment Programme has conducted over the last years and decades. As the “voice for the environment” within the UN, UNEP plays a central role in protecting our environment and implementing the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- In **future quarterly reports**, we would welcome **regular updates on your reform efforts and the concrete steps that they entail**. As you know, Germany is supporting your efforts to make the organization even more effective and visible in combatting environmental problems and we would like to hear more on how this is moving forward.
- In this context, we would also like to emphasize that, **as change can create a lot of uncertainty**, we believe it is **crucial to include all stakeholders and staff members right from the start and to communicate and consult all reform efforts in an open, transparent and inclusive manner**. And I would like to highlight that **while rules can be reformed, one needs to ensure that procedural checks and balances are in place and respected at the same time**. We appreciate any effort in this direction.
- As we are currently preparing the **2020-2021 Programme of Work and Budget**, we would like to underscore once again the **great importance we are placing on UNEP’s Programme of Work and its ambitious implementation**. We believe that the Programme of Work and the concrete actions specified in it constitute so to say **the heart of UNEP**. Therefore, we

believe that an organization like UNEP will be **measured against the concrete actions it has delivered**. Communication and public relations efforts are important, but cannot be more important than the concrete and substantive work on the ground.

- Germany strongly believes that **together, we will be able to overcome the difficulties UNEP is currently encountering. My government and I stand ready** to work together with UNEP, the organization's leadership and all member states to steer the organization back into calm waters and to make sure that it will be able to fulfill its **mandate as the spearhead in the fight for a clean and healthy global environment**.
- I am looking forward to a fruitful and trusting cooperation.
- I thank you.