World Animal Net (WAN), an organisation accredited to UN Environment, would like to offer our preliminary comments on the proposals for resolutions which will be further considered at the Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 29th November 2019:

Sustainable Food Systems

We are surprised and disappointed that there is no draft resolution on sustainable food systems given that this is one of the three focus areas.

Our current food and agriculture system has one of the biggest impacts on the environment of any human activity, and without shifting production and consumption patterns it will not be sustainable into the future, given that the world's human population is projected to grow to 9.7 billion by 2050.

This is a key area for addressing a range of significant environmental disasters and destruction. Industrial agriculture is one of the main causes of deforestation[i], land degradation[ii], climate change[iii], and biodiversity loss[iv]. Intensive monocultures – including livestock and crops for animal feed - deplete soil and leave it vulnerable to erosion and also detrimentally impact biodiversity, leading to declining populations of birds and beneficial insects[v]. Herbicides and insecticides harm wildlife (including insects and pollinators) and can pose human health risks, while chemical fertilizer runoff and industrial animal agriculture wastes create oxygen-deprived "dead zones" in major waterways[vi].

Prof. Ron Milo from the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, who led the ground-breaking work of assessing "all of life on earth", published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences[vii], reflecting on the vast impact of humans on the natural world, stated that: "Our dietary choices have a vast effect on the habitats of animals, plants and other organisms."

Because of these vast impacts, organisations such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) have begun promoting policies that disincentivise the production and consumption of unsustainable meat and dairy products, while incentivising healthy fruits and vegetables, as well as technological innovations in alternative proteins.[viii] [ix]

There are already existing innovative solutions to the problem of unsustainable food and agricultural systems, and others are on the horizon. These could be further developed, supported and rolled out to address these multiple, urgent problems. They include technological innovations such as plant-based and cellular alternatives to meat, fish and dairy

products and creative approaches in policy, financing and education/awareness campaigns designed to promote more sustainable patterns of consumption.

Food Loss and Waste

We were pleased to see a suggested resolution on food loss and waste. This is a vital area, which could also make a significant impact on environmental destruction and degradation; unnecessary animal suffering and deaths; livelihoods and food security. This matter should indeed be targeted separately for maximum impact. Its consideration should definitively extend throughout the food production and consumption chain. The forgotten aspect is the impact of food choices on food waste i.e. what types of foods are produced, promoted and marketed (and this is an aspect that can be addressed through innovative methods of responsible consumption education and awareness).

Circular Economy

This is also an important subject for a resolution, and the only proposal which gives the possibility of keeping within environmental/planetary boundaries (which is necessary for our survival). It seems that the proposals should be amalgamated. They could also usefully be extended to include innovative methods for financing and regulating shifts towards a circular economy; and not shun away from the need to reimagine, redevelop or replace products which cannot fit into the concept of circularity.

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WAN is the world's largest network of animal protection societies, with over 3,000 affiliated organisations in more than 100 countries. We provide research, information, best practice resources, and opportunities to cooperate and collaborate for beneficial policy change.

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