

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

My name is Alphonse Muia from the Catholic Youth Network for Environmental Sustainability in Africa, CYNESA. I am delivering my statement on behalf of several NGOs present here with regard to item B (Protection of the Atmosphere) as presented in the Secretary General's report.

Co-chairs, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we appreciate the significant strides made towards developing sound environmental laws, principles and regulations under different frameworks to address climate change at the global, regional and national levels.

We take note of the gaps identified in the report of the Secretary General in relation to the declining ambitions by states to commit to adherence to agreements, protocols and principles set forth in instruments such as the Kyoto Protocol and especially the Paris Agreement.

We caution that creating room for regression in the climate change commitments already made or even introducing confusion through hasty harmonization could be the advent of a very worrying trend where we will definitely suffer a rise in the global average temperatures above the 1.5-degree threshold, threatening biodiversity, current and future generations.

There is reason to celebrate the significant milestones achieved by the international ozone regime for the protection of the stratospheric ozone layer. However, we are of the view that providing legal linkages between the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol would create requisite synergy and extend the capacity to deliver on the implementation of the regimes as did the Kigali Protocol of 2016.

Mercury and mercury compounds continue to threaten the very existence of humanity. We take note that some member states have prioritized the implementation of the 2013 Minamata Convention while others still have a long way to go. The biggest gaps are in the fragmented and uncoordinated approaches towards data formatting and content, which makes it impossible to

monitor and deal with the health-related catastrophes resulting from the global bioaccumulation of mercury in the ecosystems.

Air pollution remains a huge threat to humanity and biodiversity. A 2006 study by the FAO found that 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions is directly attributable to livestock production, more than the emissions attributable to the entire transportation sector.

Scientific data demonstrates that a child born in cities such as Katowice and Warsaw will inhale polluted air equivalent to 1000 cigarettes in the first 12 months of their life on the planet we shall be handing them. We have no right to harm such innocent souls.

No doubt, the various regional and sectoral instruments mean well to contain if not prevent transboundary air pollution. However, there is little cohesion between the upsurge in the rapid economic development and consideration for the containment of transboundary air pollution. "Air pollutants know no borders, which is why international coordination of air pollution policy remains indispensable."

Consenting to universal guidelines on preventing atmospheric pollution complements the full implementation of the principles of polluter-pays, common, but differentiated responsibility, effectiveness of environmental norms, prevention, precaution, environmental damages and even intergenerational equity.

In conclusion, we reiterate that consenting to existing regimes, agreements, legal frameworks and conventions – fragmented as they may be - without globally accountable implementation renders efforts in developing those instruments almost futile. Mr. Co-chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, the world is depending on us to show that we can bridge gaps that exist in the international environmental law and steer the planet towards global environmental legal cohesion.

I thank you Mr. co-chair.