

146TH COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES
Statement by the Deputy Executive Director
20 JUNE 2019 | TIME: 10:00 AM | VENUE: CONFERENCE ROOM 1

Thank you Inger for your welcoming remarks.

I very much look forward to working with you in taking to new heights, the important mandate we have for member states, people and planet.

Welcome to the UN Environment Programme. Welcome to Nairobi.

KARIBU SANA NAIROBI!

Excellencies and colleagues,

We have just concluded a wonderfully successful **World Environment Day on June 5**. Focused on beating air pollution, our campaign galvanized action around the world. A record number of events and commitments united communities against the global health risk that affects us all, irrespective of our age, where we live, or nationality. Our content was seen 1.4 billion times online. More than 2800 events registered on our site alone were an affirmation of the truly global nature of this important issue— my congratulations to

you Member States for engaging with us and our staff for the hard work on this.

My thanks to the Government of China for leading the global celebrations this year and drawing attention to the science, political will, investments and citizen awareness, that have together come together to scripted some of your country's great successes in this area.

The busy first quarter of the year culminated in the **success of the fourth UN Environment Assembly**. Held as we all dealt with the tragic events of the crash of Ethiopian Airlines flight, Member States were both bold and optimistic in elevating our ambition for and actions towards protecting the planet and promoting sustainable development. We thank you for your leadership. In a **recent interview to TIME magazine**, the UN Secretary-General noted that climate change offers an opportunity for multilateralism to prove its value. And I believe this is exactly what we achieved at the largest-ever Assembly that included almost 70% of the worlds' ministers of environment.

We look forward to working with you to translate the ambitious vision you laid out into concrete actions and results.

As you know, **this year we released several important pieces of science including the Global Environment Outlook, the Global Resources Outlook and the Global Chemicals Outlook.** But I wish to draw your attention to another very important analysis that we released in **January on the environmental rule of law** which draws attention to the urgent need to focus attention on enforcing environmental laws. This is critical to addressing the challenges outlined by these reports, from climate change and habitat loss, to reducing pollution.

This challenge is echoed by the third and final substantive session of the Global Pact. The working group agreed to 13 substantive recommendations to the General Assembly including a renewed focus on enhancing obligations under international environmental law; inviting Multilateral Environmental Agreements to enhance cooperation and collaboration; and encouraging us to continue to

strengthen system-wide coordination through the Environmental Management Group. We now have a clear timeline to mobilize global action and support for environmental law and on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda overall.

I recently signed three agreements with the governing bodies of our three chemicals and waste conventions (Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm) to strengthen our collaboration to ensure complementarity with the UN Environment Assembly. Congratulations to many member states who were instrumental in arriving at agreement to control the movement of plastic waste between national borders, to curb the world's plastic crisis.

As we build global ambition ahead of the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit, we have another milestone that we can be proud of.

The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol came into force on January 1. And 72 parties have ratified it so far. Its implementation will avoid up to 0.4 degrees Celsius of global warming by the end of

the century. I would like to thank all the parties that have ratified and those that are working towards ratification.

Universal ratification of the Kigali Amendment will help to bring the full power of the Montreal Protocol to bear on this important issue.

We also look forward to engaging with the **CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)** community in August to examine the status of regulated trade in endangered species in response to the alarm raised by the IPBES report on species extinction.

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Moving now to partnerships for action, I am pleased to share with you that the GEF Council recently approved our largest ever work programme with **US\$ 119.9 million** in projects and programmes for our agency. They cover a diverse range of environmental issues including sustainable landscapes in the Congo Basin; a 17 country project on electric mobility and non-chemical development in small-island states.

Moving to the Green Climate Fund, **a nine-million-dollar project grant has been approved**, aiming to enhance the climate resilience of rural communities in the central and north of Benin.

Over the course of the year, we have also responded to the environmental challenges of different Member States. Partnerships with the governments of Canada, the United States and Mexico, aim to revitalize the North American Marine Protected Areas Network; and with the government of Japan, we seek to counter marine plastic litter in Southeast Asia and India.

As facilitators of the nature-based solutions coalition (co-led by China and New Zealand), we are working closely with partners to develop a highly ambitious and action-oriented proposal to amplify nature-based solutions as a game-changer for climate action.

Our comprehensive quarterly report provides more details on our progress. We look forward to receiving your feedback.

the evaluation office to benefit from an external view; and focusing on communication of results, improving our programme management and reporting, and transparency. You will hear from Sonja Leighton-Kon, our Head of Corporate Services later, allow me to say a few words on building a stronger culture of results which has been a key priority for me. We are working on three fronts: (a) empowering managers to be accountable for results; (b) increasing usage of data to better deliver results; and (c) improving our communication on results (qualitative, quantitative and simple stories) to influence change. We have finalized a results roadmap which is now being translated into unit level workplans that will focus on results. In addition we are improving our quarterly results reporting to Member States and communicating our results stories on a regular basis. At the Environment Assembly we launched an open data platform that will be used to capture, monitor and report results better.

The Office of Internal Oversight Services evaluation this year focused on management approaches to results and covered relevance,

effectiveness and efficiency. We are closely reviewing the recommendations in this report, and looking towards revising our resource mobilization and partnerships strategies and introducing change management processes.

This afternoon you will also hear about our efforts to adapt to the UN reform agenda. You would all have received a roadmap which identifies policies, guidelines and regulations that we need to adjust to fully align ourselves with the critical processes underway. I am delighted to welcome Ms. Gunilla Olsson, the Head of the Transition Team on UN Development System Reform who will speak to us all later in the day.

And finally, please allow me express my deepest and heartfelt thanks to Member States – for the close collaboration, guidance and support I have received over the last seven months in my acting capacity. It has been a privilege.

I look forward to building this partnership with staff and the management team to take our agenda for the planet forward.

ASANTENI SANA/THANK YOU!