

19 March 2020

First round of comments from the UNEP Major Group for Children and Youth on:
16 March draft of UNEA contributions to HLPF 2020, in context of response to the questionnaire from the ECOSOC President

The Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP (UNEP - MGCY) is pleased to make this submission with first comments on the **17th March version of Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development 2020** as found on -

https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31968/Contributions%20of%20the%20UN%20Environment%20Assembly%20to%20the%202020%20HLPF%20Consolidated_rev2_14032020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

The comments are structured as substantive and procedural, and provided with the intention of reflecting them in the revised version in the lead-up to CPR sub-committee meeting on the 24th March 2020 and beyond. Further comments will be made in due course based on evolution of the text. The youth constituency also takes this opportunity to further thank co-chairs of the CPR, and the Secretariat and UNEA Presidency for their work, and reassure our continued support in the lead up to UNEA-5 and other engagements.

Substantive comments

Key -

Blue color denotes addition

~~Red strike-through denotes deletion~~

Overall

- The references to all three Rio-conventions - climate change, biodiversity and desertification must be made equitably. We have seen prioritisation of climate change and biodiversity angle, so inclusion of further narratives such as land, energy, is also important.
- The text should have stronger references to the participation of Major Groups as they serve as a formal avenue to facilitate civil society engagement - in particular rights

holders and critical segments of society (as defined by Agenda 21 and further in the outcome of Rio+20) - in the context of both UNEAs and HLPF.

- Language should also be added on further children and youth participation, and intergenerational equity
- The overall text must demonstrate more urgency of environmental degradation and climate crisis that the planet is going through and in the light of COVID-19 should include inter-linkages with the health (SDG3) priorities
- The overall text could highlight the important role of the HLPF in providing political guidance, in particular by identifying and addressing emerging issues before they become emergencies.

On Page-1 Summary of inputs

- The summary should have further language reflected to demonstrate urgency of environmental crisis, and interlinkages among different SDGs. We also suggest adding references to IPCC special reports.
- The summary reflects that 2030 Agenda is "people-centered", the language could be adapted to this being "people and planet centered".
- Summary should also add references to data presented, such as death from air pollution, January 2020 being the hottest ever recorded.

Last bullet on Sustainable infrastructure

*Sustainable infrastructure: the HLPF should promote integrated approach to sustainable infrastructure to meet development needs while ensuring the preservation of biodiversity, **and** mitigating climate change [ADD-] and achieving land degradation neutrality targets, thereby safeguarding the global environmental commons.*

Rationale - in order to reference priorities from all three Rio conventions which form a part of the overall sustainable infrastructure

On Key policies and measures to ensure “accelerated action and transformative pathways” for realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development

- *Closing paragraph on Ministers*

Ministers of Environment express their determination to ambitiously scale up our efforts to overcome common environmental challenges, including health-related challenges, in a balanced and integrated manner through identifying and developing innovative

solutions by fostering sustainable and efficient resource management; promoting the use and sharing of environmental data; and engaging civil society, citizens, indigenous peoples and local communities, [ADD- children and youth], local and subnational authorities, the private sector, academia and all other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

On Page 4 and references to Nature-based solutions

- Our **preference is to use “Ecosystem-based approaches”** terminology rather than the Nature-Based solutions. This is a continuing discussion within the youth constituency and at the moment, we do not have consensus to advocate for “nature-based solutions” terminology

On Page 4 - paragraph about NBS / Ecosystem-based approaches

- In the paragraph about Nature Based Solutions/ Ecosystem-based approaches, references should be added to the **UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030** which is being led by UNEP and FAO.
- Suggested text at end of para, before beginning of SCP para
 - ***ADD- UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 as proclaimed by UNGA RES 73/284¹ provides an opportunity for member states and stakeholders to come prevent, halt and restore ecosystems***
- There is also some text that is not visible due to strike throughs

On Page 4 - paragraph about SCP

- Make references to the 10 year-framework of programmes on SCP, and relevant UNEA resolutions made on this in UNEA-3

On Page 6 - paragraph (b) on Address the lack of environmental data

- Edit the last statement as -
 - *Civil society, **ADD- Major Groups and Other Stakeholders** can also play an important role in gathering environmental data and information and should be supported in doing so*

¹ https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/73/284

On Page 7 - paragraph on Address the lack of resources

- We support the reference for protection of the environmental defenders and text should be retained. Furthermore, references should be added for the statistics about the environmental defenders

On Page 10 - bullets

First bullet,

In the text “Stressing the importance of **nature/biodiversity** as an essential requirement and key enabler for sustainable development”, **we support the term “biodiversity”**

Third bullet,

- Addition to the third bullet, to reflect priorities from all the three Rio-Conventions

*Promoting sustainable infrastructure to meet development needs while ensuring the preservation of biodiversity, ~~and~~ mitigating climate change **ADD- and achieving Land Degradation Neutrality:***

Fourth bullet on Access to information

- Following text is suggested in-order to reference the existing modalities of Major Groups

*Access to information and engagement of all relevant stakeholders, as set out in the principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, is also a key condition for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the promotion of integrated approaches. Significant effort has been made to ensure that citizens, civil society, **ADD -Major Groups and other Stakeholders**, local and subnational governments, **ADD- Children and Youth**, and the private sector are consulted but further efforts are needed. Recent successful negotiations such as the adoption of the Escazu Agreement on the “Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in the Latin and American Countries” are inspiring. The HLPF should recognize their success and stress the need to be upscale and replicate them.*

On Page 11 - bullets

- Add references to technology transfer, especially of proven and environmentally friendly ones, linking also to CTCN and the Technology Bank for LDCs.
- Disaggregated data, should be in line with target 17.18 "availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts"

Procedural comments

- Further time should be given to consult on the text, both with member states and Major Groups
- After the CPR sub-committee meeting on 24th March, we suggest that revised draft be made available for comments and inputs for 10-14 days
- We will also make further contributions available in the coming days



- submitted on behalf of the constituency by -

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