

Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

UNEA - 5

Inputs from Chile

I. Introductory remarks

Chile wishes to refer to the communication sent by H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway, on 24 April, inviting to provide inputs and ideas regarding the Ministerial Declaration and the contributions expected from the Assembly to achieve the goals related to the theme “*Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*”.

We welcome the initiative on starting a dialogue on the results expected for the next session of the Assembly, and we reaffirm our commitment in working on a consensual basis that will lead to concrete results to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals during UNEA 5.

In relation with the specific elements requested in the communication, we would like to provide some initial comments:

II. Elements for the Ministerial Declaration

We believe this Ministerial Declaration, as the main outcome on the agreements reached during the Assembly, should be an instrument that works as a call for action to all public, including civil society, academia and private sector, in a clear and direct language, using concepts agreed at an international level and understood by all.

The Declaration should recognize the high relevance of environmental protection as a fundamental pillar for sustainable development and declare the positive impacts that actions for nature may have in other human dimensions. On the context of the current pandemic it has become evident that there is a clear relation between biodiversity conservation and health, and that increased ecosystem degradation puts human existence itself in great danger.

The Declaration may point out the benefits that actions for nature can have on increasing societies' wellbeing. For example, nature-based solutions and ecosystem services generate multiple advantages, from essential elements such as access to water, to economic opportunities such as green jobs and sustainable tourism. The Declaration should highlight environmental protection as an opportunity for increasing societal welfare, challenging the idea of environmental policy as a cost for development or as a luxury. Today, after the negative effects of the COVID 19 in the economies of the countries, it becomes more important than ever to stress the need for continuing the work and momentum in terms of environmental action. Protecting the environment now can help countries to reduce global threat for tomorrow.

We believe that the Declaration from UNEA may be an opportunity to highlight the co-benefits from environment action in areas which are regularly understood as separate. For example, by recognizing

the direct relationship of biodiversity conservation, climate change, oceans, among other areas and how their interaction affects society. On that sense, a greater coordination between the conventions that address these issues could be proposed.

We would prefer a Declaration that recognizes these ideas and that enumerates possible actions to be taken by all stakeholders instead of one that establishes binding commitments. The Declaration should be an invitation to react, and it should be as inclusive as possible.

III. **Contributions of the Assembly for *Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals***

We consider that UNEA is the highest-level authorities meeting on environment. It should be an opportunity to exchange the advances of the environmental policy of member States and their best practices, which may be reflected in an increased ambition and action. The agenda should include exchanges on concrete examples on how countries are dealing with actions for nature as an overarching tool in environmental policy to reach a sustainable future and co-benefits in the economy and society.

For example, Chile recently presented its update on the [Nationally Determined Contribution](#) to the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC). One of its new features is the addition of the “just transition and sustainable development social pillar” as the basis that inspires this new climate commitment. It links the commitments with identified Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), clearly identifying how actions contribute with SDG targets.

This document also recognizes the concept of just transition and how advancing towards a decarbonization of the power generation matrix is related to social goals, particularly to the most vulnerable sections of the population. It includes gender equality and equity considerations, establishing a fair allocation of charges, costs, and benefits with a focus on gender.

The new NDC recognizes nature-based solutions as instruments that seek to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural or modified ecosystems, addressing social challenges while proving benefits for human well-being, among other elements.

This process shows how environmental policies are related to social and economic goals, and how co-benefits can be identified in a concrete commitment.

NDCs can actually be a beacon that can help to guide social and economic recovery after the COVID 19 crisis with a clear vision of how to improve the quality of life of our people.

In that regard, we would like to highlight UNEA 5 as an opportunity for countries to show their best actions in several areas, and where authorities can learn from each other, to increase their commitments and ambitions at a national and international level.