



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Minister

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6th May, 2020

His Excellency
Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn,
President of the UN Environment Assembly and
Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway

Excellency,

I would like to extend my regards and best wishes during these difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic and thank you for your letter of 24th April 2020, requesting our views on the crucial issue of the protection of nature and biodiversity in a holistic and inclusive way. At the commencement of this new decade, I believe that we should look forward to upscaling our efforts since we are still experiencing biodiversity loss at an intensive rate.

My initial ideas and inputs to the specified questions of the ministerial declaration of the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly are as follows:

QUESTION 1

What would you, as government/organization/stakeholder, welcome as the most important elements and/or key messages from the ministers in the declaration to address the theme in an impactful manner?

Despite our efforts through international, regional and national strategies to halt biodiversity loss, it is widely accepted that we have failed to do so at a significant level. This is very thoroughly documented in the relevant IPBES report. The way forward is, therefore, the crucial question: I believe we have to identify what needs to be changed and how the necessary changes should be implemented.

Now is the time to act effectively upon mainstreaming biodiversity and ecosystem services issues. Climate change both mitigation and adaptation, sustainable consumption and production – circular economy, minimizing pollution from chemicals are all interlinked and necessary to act upon in order to move faster towards the ultimate goal which is the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Actions need to be coordinated and ambitious. I strongly believe that the EU Green Deal is a big step towards this direction, encompassing all the aforementioned policies.

In this effort, the role of the private sector should be strengthened through various financial and fiscal tools, linking to a low carbon economy and at the same time ensuring the protection of our natural capital.

To move faster towards this path at a global scale, the support and strengthening of developing economies is essential: any financing should, therefore, have as its main pillars a low carbon economy, an environment safe from chemicals and the adequate protection of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Last but not least, we need robust data in order to measure progress. Efforts should thus be focused on both knowledge gaps and harmonized methods. As this is essential for all countries, support is needed to move towards this direction.

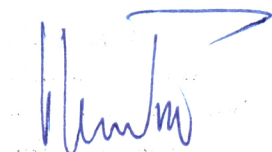
QUESTION 2

How can the Environment Assembly make a significant contribution to Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at a global scale? In doing so you may take into account the preparation for the meeting, its conduct and follow up as well as its relationship to other meetings and processes.

The Environment Assembly can contribute significantly as a catalyst by bringing together the Members into a constructive dialogue during its own proceedings, and at the same time pave the way for other meetings which will take place during 2020 such as the UNGA and the CBD COP 15. It is very important that we mainstream processes in such a way that they may lead to concerted actions and reinforce each other. Synergies should be sought with other UN Conventions such as UNCCC in such a way that all decisions will reinforce targets and goals towards the same direction in a timewise manner.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration along with my warmest personal wishes for every success in your endeavours, especially under the difficult conditions of the pandemic.

Yours sincerely,



Costas Kadis
Minister