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TURKEY'S INPUTS TO UNEA-5 MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

How can the Environment Assembly make a significant contribution to Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at a global scale?

Coastal areas, which are fragile and vulnerable zones due to the existence of various environmental threats, also present valuable natural resources with substantial economic potential. Coastal ecosystems have unique characteristics as they constitute immediate transition zones (ecotone) where marine and land ecosystems intersect.

Integrated coastal zone planning and management is generally under the purview of central government authorities, including in Turkey. In addition, national governments are party and subject to a multiplicity of international conventions, protocols, agreements and judicial regulations establishing various international processes and frameworks in the global and regional scale, namely, Sustainable Development Goals, Barcelona Convention, UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan Barcelona Convention.

National governments are therefore expected to plan their activities for marine and coastal areas taking into account national priorities, local needs as well as international processes, joint decisions, action plans and documents agreed on this subject.

We request, in the upcoming UNEA and in the Ministerial Declaration, due attention to be given, among other pertinent environmental issues, to integrated coastal zone management and planning with a view to develop the linkages among marine spatial planning, ecosystem-based management, land-sea interaction approaches and sustainable blue economy issues.

Such emphasis to be provided by the UNEA, highest universal environmental body, would help us achieve SDGs, particularly No. 14., by supporting initiatives for sustainably managing and protecting marine and coastal ecosystems, conserving at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources consistent with national and international law and regulations.

Finally as a separate point, we expect possible language in the Ministerial Declaration with regards to international environment related agreements, such as Paris Agreement or UNCLOS, will take into account national sovereign decisions of Member States not being party to those agreements.