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Switzerland - Response on the Outline of the Ministerial Declaration of UNEA-5

We thank you for the draft outline document for the Ministerial Declaration and your invitation to Member states and other stakeholders to share written proposals. Switzerland welcomes the first outline as proposed by the UNEA Presidency. We would like to share with you the following points with respect to form and content to be considered while developing the zero draft of the ministerial declaration.

On form

We support a *short, concise, and political* ministerial declaration, *based on scientific evidence such as the most impactful ministerial outcomes of past UNEAs*, with concrete political responses on emerging topics and calls for action. Examples stem from UNEA-3 and UNEA-4 when ministers called for a Pollution Action Plan to be developed and a Data for the Environment Alliance to be created.

For a ministerial outcome relying on scientific evidence, it is essential the key environmental assessments are taken into account, in particular the 6th Global Environment Outlook (GEO), and thematic assessments like the Global Chemicals, Biodiversity and Resources Outlooks. This holds particularly true as the current outline stresses the link between “healthy people and healthy environment”, in line with the headline of the GEO-6. We therefore encourage the Presidency to draft the zero draft *along the negotiated summary for policy makers of the GEO-6, as well as other recommendations from the other assessments*. This will be instrumental to further strengthen the link between science and policy.

On content

Based on the three areas of the outline, ecosystems and biodiversity related matters seem to be forming the core of the declaration. While we generally agree on placing adequate emphasis on this area, we would like to see a more balanced declaration and therefore wish to point to the following considerations.

Switzerland would like to see a stronger positioning of the chemicals and waste cluster in the ministerial outcome document. The current outline only marginally touches on that important cluster and its associated post-2020 goals, currently in development. The outline speaks of “nature”. In this light, we cannot limit the action to biodiversity and climate related concerns. While looking into SDGs, we need to emphasize that we are developing at present new sets of goals and targets for a post-2020 era for both the biodiversity and chemicals & waste clusters.



As an observation, the current draft outline does not mention (micro-)plastics and marine litter as an area of particular concern. Obviously, the ministerial declaration cannot enumerate each and every important topic. Nonetheless, plastics are an ever more important global environmental issue in dire need to be addressed in this chapter.

We would also like to raise the ambition regarding addressing climate change. For instance by adding the following words to the draft outline: “Ministers should also consider ways to support the work of the UNFCCC and the Paris agreement, *especially on increasing ambitions*, thus contributing to the 26th Conference of the Parties in 2021... .”

The outline of the declaration intends to dedicate a focus on food waste. We generally welcome this proposal. It is already specific enough to develop concrete political calls. Food waste is part of one of the six programmes of the UN framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP on SCP, with UNEP as host) and a lot of progress on the matter has been made over the years. We expect that the declaration will *target the 10YFP and its many stakeholders of the One Planet Network* with respect to implementing the outcome document. In addition, by acknowledging that the end of 10YFP in 2022, we acknowledge that the ministers *will make a call at UNEA-5 for a UN response on sustainable consumption and production patterns beyond/post 2022.*

Our overarching recommendation concerns the impact of the UNEA-5 ministerial declaration on the 2021 major environmental processes on climate, biodiversity, chemicals and waste. *The ministerial declaration can be instrumental for these processes when presenting a concrete political call, a distinct added value.* The outcome should therefore highlight how UNEP, Member states and others will be able to contribute to ambitious outcomes in those important processes.

Switzerland continues to support an ambitious ministerial outcome and stands ready to support the Presidency in this endeavor.