

Meeting of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly  
8 October 2020  
16:00 – 18:00 (GMT +3 Nairobi time)  
Virtual

### **Agenda Item 3: Preparation of a UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration**

This document serves as a background document for agenda item 3 Preparation of a UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration.

The document is a zero-draft of the Ministerial Declaration presented the President of the UN Environment Assembly based on consultations, feedback and input provided by Member States and Stakeholders on the outline of the Ministerial Declaration.

The UNEA Bureau is invited to consider the zero-draft and provide an exchange of views. Based on guidance from the Bureau, the zero draft may be amended and then circulated to all Member States, Major Groups and Stakeholders for their feedback.

**Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session  
“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”**

Proposed preambular section

PP1 We, the world’s ministers for the environment, having gathered at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, under exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, together with the representatives of international organizations and other stakeholders, are determined to build on the outcomes of the previous sessions of the Environment Assembly, and to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

PP2 We recognize that a healthy nature is a prerequisite for and foundation of sustainable development in all its dimensions, and that we depend on nature, and all the solutions it provides, for our health and wellbeing.

PP3 We note with profound concern the loss, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats for biodiversity, affecting both life on land and life under water, due to multiple and interlinked threats such as unsustainable management of nature and its resources, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, and pollution and littering of water, air and soil.

PP4 We further note with concern that, although we are encouraged by the strength of innovation and investment in green technologies currently taking place which indicate that solutions exist, recent scientific reports from United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, nevertheless show that there is a persistently negative long term trend for the environment.

PP5 We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, as well as on our economies and societies, further threatening our ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and that we face recurring risks of future pandemics if we maintain the current patterns of interaction with wild species and encroachment on natural habitats.

PP6 We recognize the need for transformative and systemic changes and further recognize our ability to achieve more by making efforts and investments that address several environmental challenges simultaneously through innovative holistic approaches that truly value nature.

PP7 We reaffirm, as UNEP approaches 50 years since its establishment, its centrality and mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 2997 of 1972, spanning until its further strengthening in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled “The Future We Want”.

Proposed operative section

OP8 We commit to supporting a green and just recovery, with the goal of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods, by mainstreaming environmental concerns into all policies and tools promoting economic recovery; by exploring and utilizing green economy pathways, increasing resource efficiency, environmentally sound business models and sustainable finance, and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change in line with the Paris Agreement, thereby enhancing the resilience of our economies and societies to future crises, and contributing to poverty eradication, putting us on a trajectory towards a healthy and harmonious relationship with nature.

OP9 We commit to working across sectors and levels of government to halt the loss, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems, focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity, through sustainable land use, effectively managing protected areas, safeguarding especially vulnerable

habitats, types of nature and eco-systems, and addressing illegal deforestation, mining, wildlife trade and other crimes that have serious impacts on the environment.

OP10 We commit to rethinking our approach to the use and management of nature and its resources, to advance sustainable consumption and production patterns, including through resource efficiency and circular economy policy approaches, and by integrating the proper valuation of nature and the assessment of nature-related risks in policymaking.

OP11 We commit to promote and strengthen nature-based solutions by actively protecting, sustainably managing and restoring degraded ecosystems that provide us with food, water and energy, are habitats for biodiversity, and provide carbon storage and sequestration, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, for example natural forests, wetlands, and mangroves, thus underpinning our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

OP12 We commit to cooperate across sectors and levels of government to realize untapped opportunities to transform food systems by 2030, to avoid negative impacts of agriculture on the environment, and to enhance the systems' delivery of food security, resilience, healthy nature and healthy people, and supporting an ambitious outcome from the UN Food Systems Summit.

OP13 We will promote comprehensive land use planning backed up by robust national enforcement as an invaluable tool for sustainable development, and help create a conducive business environment that stimulates investments in sustainable production and value chains.

OP14 We commit to safeguarding life under water, and a clean, healthy and productive ocean capable of providing food, livelihoods, and storing carbon, through strengthening efforts to sustainably manage all of our ocean, as well as by sustainably using and protecting oceans, seas and coastal ecosystems, while acting to prevent pollution, and prevent marine temperature rise and ocean acidification, by keeping our efforts in line with the Paris agreement.

OP15 We maintain our dedication to act in line with the implementation plan towards a pollution-free planet welcomed at the fourth environment assembly and to detoxify land, ocean and freshwater to safeguard nature and human health from adverse impacts from unsustainably managed chemicals and waste, and support an ambitious Beyond 2020 Framework for Chemicals and Waste.

OP16 We commit to enhance our efforts against plastic pollution of the oceans and our environment, and to take further steps to strengthen the global framework to honour our ambition from UNEA-3 to eliminate all discharge of plastic litter and microplastics into the oceans in the long-term.

OP17 We reaffirm the continued need to strengthen actions for nature, acknowledge the messages from the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity and our commitment towards the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and call for an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity that inter alia includes a set of clear and robust goals and targets to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, as a key instrument to reach the Sustainable Development Goals.

OP18 We call for the adequate and coherent implementation of the actions, commitments and resolutions adopted by the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly and further recognize our role, as ministers of the environment, in following up on these commitments within our own governments, contributing to coordinated action across sectors and levels of government, and promoting effective implementation.

OP19 We recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling and coherent policy frameworks, good governance and law enforcement at the global, regional, national, subnational and local levels, and effective means of implementation, including finance, capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies and developing partnerships in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.