



Women's Major Group

Draft closing statement Women's Major Group at UNEP

To Parties Participating in the Leadership Dialogue

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Thank you chairs,

I am speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group (WMG)

The WMG appreciates the hard work during this online UNEA5.1. And as WMG we welcome the fact that UNEP MTS includes specific actions on gender and we look forward to a strong participation of the network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment in next year's UNEA 5.2 and UNEP+50 events.

We take this opportunity to highlight furthermore the following additional points:

1. Rights-holders priority: Indigenous Peoples rights, Women's rights:

Corporations have tried to attack science in fields like climate or agrochemicals among others. We are deeply worried about UNEP giving privileges to polluting companies that represent short term private interests.

We call on UNEP to put rights-holders first and foremost, to greatly increase its efforts to stand up for environmental rights defenders, indigenous peoples and women, and to support local communities and governments, at the same time to hold polluters accountable through legislation and moratoria on extractives industries, deforestation and destructive energy projects.

In this sense, we see efforts in this direction in the draft Medium Term Strategy, which identifies women as rights holders who need to be at the decision making tables, therefore we call on



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Member States and its civil society partners to support UNEP in order to allocate dedicated funds to support the implementation of these gender actions within the MTS.

Accordingly, we call on the international community to set up an applicable framework and fair "performance indicators" mechanisms for education, health and social care in a way that supports building the capacities of civil society organizations in achieving:

- Realization of the right to education, with regard to underrepresented fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics;
- Ensure full, equal and meaningful participation, representation and leadership between women and men at all levels and in all fields;
- Ensuring economic empowerment, access to finance, decent work, equal pay, and social security;
- Addressing disproportionate shares of unpaid care in domestic work for women;
- Address the impact of climate change and uneven natural disasters;

2. CBD and Biodiversity:

Closer and clearer linkages to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) are urgently needed from UNEP/UNEAs since an effective implementation of the CBD has been greatly lacking in the decades since it entered into force. For instance, Perverse subsidies are key drivers for biodiversity loss and there has been no progress of phasing out these.

Monoculture tree plantations, as well as other dubious investments like hydropower dams on indigenous territories are high threats to biodiversity and contrary to the SDGs especially when climate finance is behind. This demands immediate action. Furthermore funding strategies for ensuring protected areas and indigenous territories are crucial at this stage.

Besides, the voluntary approach given to the new Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), Parties must not detract from legally binding obligations to conserve and promote the sustainable use biodiversity, and to share the benefits derived from it equitably while recognizing the rights of IPLCs (Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities)



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3. Plastic pollution treaty:

We ask Member States to keep the momentum and work towards the adoption of a negotiating mandate for a new treaty on plastic pollution at UNEA5.2, and acknowledge how plastic pollution, including hazardous additives in plastic products, is disproportionately affecting women compared to men.

Plastic pollution is causing irreversible damage to biodiversity and human health. Alarming as it sounds, microplastics have been found on fish that humans consume and in women's placentas. This must be an "alarm bell" for our consumerist societies, on how the damage we do to our environment slowly comes back to us, and how urgently we need to stop producing single use plastics.

4. Chemicals, heavy metals and mining:

UNEP's global chemical conventions need to have stronger implementation and financing mechanisms, including for women groups and civil society to take the lead. Also we call on urgent measures for phasing out of mercury in artisanal and small-scale gold mining under the Minamata Convention, and an overall strategy to address the terrible contamination of the environment, water sources, and whole basins from mining activities, starting with a moratorium on new mines in fragile ecosystem areas like near glaciers and on indigenous territories, including uranium mining.

SAICM beyond 2020 needs to focus on emerging issues not yet covered in the conventions, and address them urgently into legal frameworks. We request a clear signal from UNEA 5.1 to the SAICM Bureau to extend the current SAICM until a new instrument is adopted.

5. Food systems and pesticides:

We call on UNEP to lead the way for a global treaty to support Member States to help with national regulations that can enforce the phase out of the most dangerous pesticides from developing countries' markets by 2030 and support a just transition for farmers, in particular women food producers, to protect their traditional knowledge and aim at all food production globally to be



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based on agro-ecological practices, and divestment from agroindustrial practices and especially the agro-chemical industry.

An integrated approach to food systems must be at the heart of UNEP's work acknowledging the damage that a few corporations controlling the food we eat has been causing to communities, the environment and people's health around the world. In fact, agroindustrial livestock and feedstock production for exports is one of the culprits of rising deforestation rates and increasing global warming.

Migration, hunger and human right abuse due to war, environment and climate change impacts are happening in many regions such as the Horn of Africa. We call up on UNEP and member states to design inclusive approaches based on the principle of no-one left behind.

6. Covid-19 response:

We call on UNEP and member states to accelerate an inclusive system of responding to Covid 19 pandemic solutions in which women are involved, as well as an urgent call to shift our relationship with nature in order to prevent future pandemics and other natural disasters.

Thank you Chair