

Statement of the Asia Pacific Regional CCSOs Engagement Mechanism in the opening session of the Annual Sub Committee Meeting dated 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2021

Ajay K Jha, CECOEDECON/APRCEM

Madam Chair, Madam ED UNEP, Excellencies and Colleagues

At the outset I would like to congratulate you all for organizing

Thanks for giving me this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism (APRCEM) a platform of more than 400 organizations and people's movement committed to development justice.

We want to congratulate all of you making this meeting possible in the hybrid mode, and also appreciate the progress made on the programme performance as well as preparations towards UNEA 5.2.

I am happy to share that we organized the Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum in collaboration with the UNEP ROAP and the Republic of Korea the host of the 4<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum on Environment on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2021. I take floor to share few major outcomes from our deliberations which are also extremely relevant for zero draft Ministerial Declaration of UNEA 5.2.

1. We all support Nature Action, which has the potential to restore biodiversity and prevent worse impacts of climate change, support food systems and reverse degradation and desertification. However, it would be a fallacy to presume that nature can continue to provide solutions *ad infinitum* to all the sins that we have committed. With countries and corporations' race to fantastic illusion of "net zero," nature and people dependent on nature will suffer further poverty, hunger, unemployment, and dispossession. The nature action being promoted currently is so called degraded spaces with industrial monoculture, hugely protecting the investment and is completely devoid of people, culture and their inter relation with nature. Currently its also completely self labelled. Therefore, it's extremely important for the UNEA to agree on the definition and principles of nature action, nature solution or nature based solution, before it becomes a free ride for all and particularly interests promoting false solutions. Unless we reduce the current energy consumption and make system wide transformations in short term, no amount of circular economy, NBS, Carbon Reduction Technologies or even planetary scale renewable energy can help us avoid worst impacts of climate change and achieve the SDGs.
2. There have been very wide and extensive protests by CSOs all over the world against the form of multi actor corporate driven food governance model and vision that relies only on sustainable intensification and market based solutions, which UN Food Systems Summit has given us. This not only threatens food security and sovereignty of small farmers, but also undermines the intergovernmental space by taking power of decision making out of public democratic space. We request that UNEA declaration desist from endorsing something which remains questionable, undemocratic and undetermined in its efforts and intentions.

3. On sound management of chemicals, we share your concerns. For us the first priority is to end the production, use and export of highly hazardous pesticides by 2030 which is responsible for unintended poisoning of thousands of poor farmers in developing countries. This is completely no less than genocide and completely unacceptable that some countries do not use this poison in their own territories but continue to dump it on poor communities in poor countries.
4. Lastly, we would like to request UNEA to ask UNEP to come up with a report how it can ensure science policy coherence across UN agencies. We also want UNEP to broaden its horizons of science beyond institutional science for experiential knowledge (as against experimental science) to include time tested innovations by traditional and knowledge systems of farmers, women and indigenous peoples.

We remain completely committed for environmental restoration and regeneration and look forward to participate fully in the UNEA and spaces ahead of UNEA on these and other important issues.

I thank you Madam Chair.