

COUNTRY STATEMENT OF SRI LANKA

Delivered under Agenda item 2 on

draft Resolution of Sustainable Nitrogen Management

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Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to present the draft Resolution on Sustainable Nitrogen Management representing the Government of Sri Lanka, to be taken up at the fifth session of the UNEA by the member states.

This draft resolution has the ambition to halve nitrogen waste by 2030 by covering all the spheres of the Nitrogen cycle, to address Sustainable Nitrogen Management (SNM). The draft resolution also suggests, operational dimensions and elements to define the mandate of the INCOM, to be negotiated at UNEA 5.2.

The draft follows up UNEP/EA.4/Res.14 as a value-added resolution. The present draft takes account of the substantial progress made since March 2019, especially through the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management and reflects these to enable action on Sustainable Nitrogen Management to be advanced in working towards UNEA-6.

At this point, I'd like to give the background to the proposed draft resolution on SNM.

In 2013, SACEP jointly with FAO and Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem Project (BOBLME) implemented a scoping study of Nutrient Pollution on the Coastal and Marine Environments of South Asia.

In 2017, SACEP with assistance from International Nitrogen management System (INMS) organized a regional meeting on Nitrogen Management which initiated work on draft UNEA resolution on Nitrogen. After further work in 2018, a Resolution on sustainable

nitrogen management was submitted by the Government of India at the fourth session of the UNEA and it was adopted in 2019.

The goal of the UNEA4/Res.14 was to improve understanding of global Nitrogen issues and to establish an Inter-convention Nitrogen Coordination Mechanism (INCOM).

In 2019 SACEP, partnered with South Asian Nitrogen Hub which will study the impacts of different forms of Nitrogen Pollution over the next 5 years and suggested policy interventions.

“Following the adoption of the resolution, SACEP supported Government of Sri Lanka and UNEP in partnership with SANH to launch the UN global campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen management.

The event also launched **the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management**”.

- “The Colombo Declaration has been developed with the technical support of the International Nitrogen Management System (INMS), a joint activity of the UNEP and the International Nitrogen Initiative supported by the Global Environment Facility”.
- “As part of the Declaration, environment ministers and officials representing the governments of more than 30 countries endorsed United Nations plans for a campaign on sustainable nitrogen management called “Nitrogen for Life”, which stems from the UNEA4/Res. 14.
- Spearheaded by Sri Lanka, United Nations member states endorsed a proposed **roadmap for action on nitrogen challenges** called the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management on 24th October 2019. The roadmap strives to have national SNM policies drafted for all participating countries of South Asia by 2024.

Key regional activities following up on the UNEA 4 Resolution and Colombo Declaration includes several initiatives;

- In 2019 SACEP GC approved partnership with South Asia Nitrogen Hub to develop regional policy framework on sustainable Nitrogen Management. The targets set in Colombo Declaration (is the provisional vision for the regional policy framework. The progress of this activity includes
 - a. Virtual Sub-Regional Nitrogen Frame Work Policy meeting in 2020, soliciting information from member countries in relation nitrogen use and reporting.
 - b. Desk assessment of available Nitrogen Policies (regionally, nationally, sub-nationally) in the region.
- National Level activities in the region has been progressing despite the pandemic with key Nitrogen related policies being implemented and work being built up to improve coordination for development of national policies.

Though there has been significant barriers and challenges to work due to pandemic, there has been significant progress in progressing the regional work on nitrogen management.

However, an inefficient Nitrogen cycle has been observed in South Asian region which includes;

- **Nitrogen pollution increase**

It was revealed by the regional studies that Agricultural activities followed by energy and industry are the major source of nitrogen pollution in the region.

- **Eutrophication in coastal habitats**

The coastal habitats of South Asia are at a high risk of eutrophication due to the accumulation of reactive Nitrogen.

- **Deteriorating air quality**

There is also evidence of **deteriorating air quality concern for the development of fogs during winter.**

- **Oxygen depleted oceans**

There are **already signs of large dead zones (where oxygen level is too low for life) in Bay of Bengal**, whose well-being is depended upon by a large part of South Asian Fisheries industry and related livelihoods.

- **Fragmented policies**

The policies of N management is also highly fragmented in South Asia.

Therefore, regional findings, desk assessments of policies, and the road map agreed by the parties to the Colombo declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management demanded a new value-added resolution on SNM.

Also, in 2019, the parties to the Colombo Declaration agreed to submit a joint resolution to the Fifth session of the UNEA. fulfilling that agreement, Sri Lanka submits this draft resolution and this resolution will call upon member countries to take more comprehensive policy

interventions, a coherent interventions and investments at international/regional level.

As you know, UNEA 4.14 Resolution of 2019 provided a general framework to act on the Nitrogen cycle. It has started the process of Sustainable Nitrogen Management.

But, with the Colombo Declaration launched in Sri Lanka in 2019, we now have more clarity on how this process needs to move forward comprehensively with ambitious targets.

This proposed resolution prepares way for the second phase of action in following up UNEA Resolution 4/14, allowing acceleration among member states in the run up to UNEA-6. This draft Resolution aim to reach broad agreement on the overall concept of the Inter-convention Nitrogen Coordination Mechanism, and the detailed terms of reference of which will then be proposed in advance of UNEA-6.

Now let me brief on Why a resolution on urgent action on reactive Nitrogen has been prepared?

- Nitrogen is not just another problem, but rather it must be part of the solution for many of our environmental challenges, as it is an essential element for building structures of living organisms and as a critical element for the survival of all living things,
- Unreactive di-nitrogen is extremely abundant in the atmosphere and is converted naturally to reactive forms through various pathways, which cycle through roots of plants into food chains and made available to life, health and environment,
- Agricultural wisdom and traditional best practices of ancient civilizations relevant for sustainable nutrient management, as this has descended over generations,

- Human activities continue to fertilize soils with reactive nitrogen in order to sustain global food and feed production,
- Nitrogen is relevant for all forms of life and this requires national, and multilateral coordination between different Ministries such as Environment, Agriculture, Health, Education and Science as well as agencies and other stakeholders, in addressing Sustainable Nitrogen Management using the Whole of Society approach,
- This draft resolution constitutes a starting point for negotiations, contains necessary elements to be discussed under the negotiations at UNEA 5.2 to establish an Inter-convention Nitrogen Coordination Mechanism and Secretariat to better facilitate communication and coherence across nitrogen policies, consistent with mandate of existing conventions and MEAs.

Let me now introduce the main elements of the draft resolution;

First this resolution will support the ambition to halve Nitrogen waste from all sources by 2030 as agreed in the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management of 24, October 2019, offering the potential to save US\$ 100 billion annually.

Second, this resolution will consider the proposed Roadmap for Action on Sustainable Nitrogen Management 2022-2024 of the Colombo Declaration, including its activities to establish an Inter-convention Nitrogen Coordination Mechanism (INCOM) to address nitrogen pollution, continuing its work from 2022 with including reporting of its work to the Sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, and the Secretariat to better facilitate communication and coherence across Nitrogen policies, consistent with mandates of existing conventions and MEAs,

Third, resolution will support in close collaboration with relevant UN agencies and other international organizations, development partners, philanthropic agencies, academic and civil society organizations for implementation of the Colombo Declaration, through cooperative mechanisms to mobilize human, financial and technical resources, including capacity building and transfer of know-how and technology for promoting innovation on anthropogenic nitrogen use and recycling, emphasizing the opportunities for the circular economy.

Fourth, this resolution will also coordinate existing platforms to catalyze a comprehensive Global Assessment on quantitative and qualitative Nitrogen cycling covering scientific aspects, policy, regulation, implementation, Nitrogen budgeting, impacts, solutions, and valuation of natural Nitrogen fixation, while identifying the best available knowledge including descended traditional agricultural wisdom and assess the opportunities offered for Nitrogen management, where appropriate mainstreaming it through policy, implementation and regulatory channels,

Fifth, this resolution will facilitate, with relevant United Nations bodies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and, as appropriate, Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) to sensitize citizens to understand the natural Nitrogen cycle and how anthropogenic activities alter its balance,

Finally, this resolution will report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its Sixth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution.

This is the overview and the introduction to the main elements to the draft Resolution.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

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