

Comments on Zero Draft of the UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration

At UNEA 5.2 that begins on February 28, 2022, States have a unique opportunity to strengthen the growing movement that seeks to prevent, mitigate, and minimize the environmental impacts of armed conflicts to protect people, their livelihoods, and the environment they depend on. We call upon States to support strong language that highlights the linkages between Actions for Nature and armed conflicts.

Context

The environmental consequences of armed conflict can have acute and long-lasting impacts on civilians, nature, and climate resilience. Often, these negative consequences are overlooked in the humanitarian response phase, post-conflict rehabilitation work and reconstruction programs. Building on previous UNEA resolution 2/15 on protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts and UNEA 3/1 on conflict pollution, UNEA 5.2 presents a unique opportunity to include nature-positive concrete proposals to explore opportunities to address these consequences.

Analysis

With growing discussions in various relevant multilateral platforms, including the UN Security Council, the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council around the environment-climate-conflict nexus, it is of grave importance to recognize the relevance of conflict-linked themes in the conversations taking place at UNEA 5.2. Major stakeholder groups and States have made calls to include the conflict-linked environmental issue as a key problem that must be addressed by this forum leading up to UNEA 5.1. Having this nexus reflected both in the Draft Declaration and relevant resolutions tabled with strong and robust language, States can

contribute to mainstreaming this work throughout the UN and help build resilience for conflict-affected communities to protect, remediate, rehabilitate and restore nature, wildlife, and biodiversity.

Recommendations

Existing 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 interlinked threats such as unsustainable management of nature and its resources, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, [ADD: armed conflicts, military activities], climate change, and pollution and littering of water, air, and soil.

New OP on nature and conflict – “We emphasise the role of nature and conservation, including addressing impacts of climate change, in all phases of armed conflict - prevention, mitigation, resolution and recovery - and call for new partnerships between UNEP, humanitarian, development, conservation and military sector actors to increase knowledge and awareness and propose innovative governance and policy options.”

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