

Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session

“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”

Proposed preambular section

PP1 We, the world’s Ministers for the Environment, ~~have gathered~~ at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, under exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

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

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 ~~use~~~~management~~ of nature and its resources, ~~climate change, soil contamination and erosion, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, and water and air, and water, and [ocean] [marine] pollution, and and littering of water, air, and soil contamination marine litter.~~

~~NEW~~ We note with further grave concern that the 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals, ~~to produce and use chemicals in ways that minimize significant adverse impacts on the environment and human health and waste~~ has not been met, ~~with pollution thus remaining a threat to nature and our health.~~

~~NEW~~ [Placeholder for reference to outcomes from COP 26 Glasgow]

PP4 We are encouraged by the strength of innovation, knowledge building, and investment in green ~~chemistry and green~~ technologies currently taking place, which indicate that solutions ~~to relevant threats~~ exist or can be found.

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

PP6 We recognize the need for transformative and systemic changes and could have the opportunity to achieve more by policies and investments that address several environmental challenges simultaneously through innovative holistic approaches that truly value nature.

PP7 We reaffirm, as UNEP celebrates through a Special Session of UNEA50 years since its establishment, its continued great importance as ~~an~~ advocate for the global environment and express our support for ~~further-the~~ strengthening of UNEP.

Proposed operative section

Commented [A1]: Note that these verbs are not framed in the typical way for preambular paragraphs. If there is a desire to distinguish between preambular and operative paragraphs, the former should have verbs ending with -ing" (e.g., having gathered..."), and the latter should have verbs in the regular second-person plural present tense (e.g., "We commit..."). For what it's worth, the UNEA-4 ministerial declaration did not distinguish between preambular and operative paras.

Commented [A2]:

We reviewed the SAICM mandate and have added the correct language that reflects the agreed goal.

The 2020 goal is just for chemicals, so waste needs to be deleted. In order to ensure that the position paper is clear on this point, please be sure to note that UNEA 4/8 refers to SDG *Target* 12.4 which includes all wastes, but 4/8 also refers to the SAICM *goal*:

12. Calls upon Governments and all other stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as appropriate, industry and the private sector, civil society, and the scientific and academic communities, to:

(a) Take into account the overall orientation and guidance of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management for achieving the 2020 goal of the sound management of chemicals, entitled “The future we want for the sound management of chemicals”, in efforts to achieve the 2020 goal;

November 18, 2021, 6:42 PM

Commented [A3R2]: There is always a challenging discussion on this language, and the slight difference between the SAICM 2020 goal language and the SDG 12.4 language is important.

Commented [A4]: We support a simple "welcoming" of the Glasgow Climate Pact, rather than highlighting certain paragraphs, which risks a really long paragraph that could end up being focused on climate finance (developing countries' preferred focus), as opposed to mitigation measures (our preferred focus).

OP8 We commit to supporting a green and just [economic](#) recovery, with the goals of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods, contributing to poverty eradication, [advancing environmental justice in the development, implementation, and enforcement of their respective domestic laws, regulations, and policies, and enforcement mechanisms](#), and mainstreaming environmental [considerations](#) into all policies and tools promoting economic recovery; making use of green economy pathways that emphasize ecosystem and [science and knowledge-based management](#), and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change, [consistent with achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement](#).

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 and ecosystems, and addressing illegal deforestation, wildlife [trafficking](#), [illegal](#) mining, and other crimes that have serious impacts on the environment.

NEW We commit to pursuing [partnerships](#) across sectors, and working [with youth, Indigenous Peoples, underserved and vulnerable populations, the private sector and all of civil society](#), to develop actions that [are nature positive](#) and [reverse](#) the persistently negative long-term trends described by recent scientific reports from United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

OP10 We commit to rethinking our approach to the [conservation and sustainable](#) use 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 [appropriate](#) valuation of nature and the assessment of nature-related risks [to](#) policymaking.

OP11 We commit to promoting and strengthening [nature-based solutions](#) by actively [conserving](#), protecting, [restoring degraded and sustainably managing](#) ecosystems that provide us with [natural resources including](#) food, water, and energy, are habitats for biodiversity, [and](#) provide carbon storage and sequestration, climate change adaptation, [resilience](#) and disaster risk reduction, thus underpinning our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

OP12 We commit to cooperating [in partnership with governments, local actors, and the private sector](#) to transform our [global](#) food system, inspired by the UN Food Systems Summit vision [to build a sustainable food system that delivers on enhanced food security and resilience while catalyzing action to end global hunger and ensure inclusive and equitable access to safe, nutritious, and affordable food, and reducing food loss and waste, GHG emissions, eutrophication, land degradation, biodiversity loss and freshwater use](#), as an essential solution [towards](#) accelerating actions on [achieving](#) all the Sustainable Development Goals [by 2030](#), and we underscore the role of UNEP [within its mandate](#) in the Summit [to pursue](#) follow-up processes.

OP13 We will promote comprehensive land use planning [supported](#) by robust enforcement [of environmental laws](#) as an invaluable tool for sustainable development and help create a

Commented [A5]: Listing these as FSS goals/vision equivalent to food security and resilience is misleading. The UNFSS vision was food systems that enhance food security, resilience, and sustainable use of natural resources.

conductive 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 [\[sustainably manage\] \[conserve and sustainably use\] the ocean,](#) seas, and coastal ecosystems, while acting to prevent pollution, and prevent [ocean warming and](#) acidification by keeping our efforts in line with the Paris [A](#)greement.

[NEW – We commit to reducing environmental risk factors for human health, such as through actions to address air pollution, water quality, water recycling, and sanitation, and improved medical responsiveness to pathogens and vector-borne disease, and encourage deeper cooperation with the World Health Organization, including through existing initiatives such as the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, the Health and Energy Platform of Action, and the One Health High-Level Expert Panel;](#)

OP15 We maintain our dedication to act in line with the implementation plan towards a pollution-free planet to protect nature and human health from adverse impacts from chemicals and waste and support an ambitious framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

OP16 [\[Placeholder for text with reference to recent developments and outcomes on ocean plastic pollution\]](#)

OP17 We reaffirm the continued need to strengthen actions for nature 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 15th Conference of Parties of the 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 as well as previous UNEA outcomes, 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 [legal and/or](#) policy frameworks at all levels, good governance and law enforcement at all levels, to be supported by effective means of implementation from all sources of finance, including domestic, international, private sector and innovative sources in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as further capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies, dedicated development partnerships, and a renewed and strong commitment to multilateralism.

Commented [A6]: We recognize the need to address the discharges of plastic into the environment, including the ocean where it causes significant harm to marine life and negatively impacts our well-being.