



17 December 2021

Ulf Bjornholm
Secretary of Governing Bodies
Acting Director, Governance Affairs Office
UN Environment Programme
Via E-mail: unep-sgb@un.org

RE: Revised (13 December 2021) Ministerial declaration for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”

Dear Mr. Bjornholm:

Thank you once again for the opportunity to review the revised draft of the Ministerial Declaration and for the well-organized online consultation held on 15 December. We appreciate the efforts that are going in to creating a consensus draft and, in that spirit, offer several suggestions.

Noting that both the Minamata and POPs Conventions contain reference to the Arctic and Indigenous Peoples, paragraph 4 should read:

4. Noting the particular vulnerabilities of Arctic ecosystems and Indigenous peoples and their communities, we recognize that a healthy **environment** is required for sustainable development in all its **interrelated** dimensions, and that the wellbeing of humanity depends on a **healthy state of** nature, and on the services it provides for poverty eradication, resilience, our health, economy, and ultimately our **collective** existence.

Other international agreements, such as the Agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean, the role of Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Knowledge are explicitly recognized by others. For that reason, paragraph 16 should read:

16. We recognize the importance of **combining** the best available science **with Indigenous Knowledge and other knowledge systems** for effective climate action and policymaking and stress the urgency of enhancing ambition and genuine action in relation to mitigation, adaptation, and finance in this critical decade.

Although paragraph 21 is still a place holder for recent developments and outcomes on marine litter, it should acknowledge and recognize the good work carried out by the Arctic Council and its Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter. Information can be found at <https://arctic-council.org/projects/regional-action-plan-on-marine-litter/>.

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In my letter of 29 November 2021, I pointed to a number of important recommendations made by the UN Special Rapporteur for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, Marcos Orellana. I direct your attention to those suggestions but in particular paragraph 21 would be strengthened by including a reference to the plastics crisis and its connection of human rights. For example,

“A human rights-based approach to global plastics management, focusing on human rights principles as well as mechanisms for accountability and access to remedy, is vital to ensuring that any global agreement on plastics is effective and legitimate. Human rights principles should be reflected not only in the architecture and text of the agreement, but also in the negotiation process.”

We hope that these comments and proposed changes are considered by you and all others for inclusion in the final document. We remain at your disposal should you have any questions or require more information.

Best wishes for the holiday season.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dalee Sambo Dorough".

Dalee Sambo Dorough, PhD
Chair