

6 December 2021, revised 13 December 2021

Note from the UNEA-5 Presidency on the draft Ministerial Declaration for the resumed session of the fifth session of United Nations Environment Assembly

The aim of this note is to provide an update on the process to develop a draft ministerial declaration for the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5), and to provide an update on the timeline for further consultations.

The UNEA-5 Presidency is very grateful to all Member States and Stakeholders who have provided written inputs to the [zero draft declaration](#) in the past weeks. Based on a thorough review of the inputs received by 2 December 2021, the Presidency has developed a first full draft declaration.

The Presidency acknowledges with appreciation that many Member States have provided inputs along similar lines. When reflecting these ideas, the Presidency has sought to consolidate similar substantive ideas into one or two paragraphs, to improve clarity and avoid duplicative messages in several different paragraphs.

The UNEA-5 Presidency initiated the preparations for the UNEA-5 Ministerial declaration already in April 2020. After two rounds of written inputs from member States and stakeholders, an initial zero draft was presented to the UNEA Bureau in October 2020. Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, and the decision to organize UNEA-5 in two segments, the consultation process for the ministerial declaration was put on hold. Instead, the online session of UNEA-5 successfully endorsed a set of important consensual messages. At the joint meeting of the UNEA and CPR Bureaux in June 2021, the UNEA President announced that a new, updated draft would be made available at the end of September.

On 29 September, the updated zero draft ministerial declaration was shared with the UNEA Bureau. The text was discussed at the UNEA Bureau Meeting on 6 October and then circulated to all member states on 8 October. The deadline for the submission of inputs to the zero draft was set to 23 November and, upon request by some Member States, was extended to 30 November.

All relevant information, including written inputs from Member States and Stakeholders, have been made available on the [dedicated website](#) for the Ministerial Declaration.

Based on the received inputs and comments from Member States and Stakeholders, the UNEA-5 Presidency is pleased to present the first full draft version of the Ministerial Declaration, as attached to this note. The vision of the document remains the same – namely, that urgent and transformative actions to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services are fundamental to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and rebuild a resilient and sustainable post-pandemic world. We thank all Member States and Stakeholders who have contributed, and regret that it has not been possible to include all suggestions received in full. Nevertheless, efforts have been made to capture most, if not all, of the main points that have been put forward in writing, in a transparent and balanced manner. New wording compared to the zero draft have been marked in bold.

We consider the following to be the most important adjustments related to the previous zero draft:

- Some of the previous placeholders have been replaced with text suggestions, inter alia building on the outcome of UNFCCC COP 27 in Glasgow. Other placeholders, such as on plastic pollution and on the theme for UNEP@50, still remain.
- New references to the special session UNEP@50 and the Stockholm+50 meeting have been added.
- Adjustments have been made in many paragraphs to reflect enriching suggestions by various Members States and Stakeholders. This includes a few last-minute amendments that have been added to reflect inputs from a limited number of member states that had not been considered in time for the bureau meeting, due to technical issues. These amendments have been reflected in paragraphs 4, 6, 13, 17, as well as in a new para 18 on land degradation.

Proposed timeline for the consultation process for the Ministerial Declaration

- December 8** The annexed draft ministerial declaration was considered at the joint meeting of the UNEA and CPR Bureaux.
- December 13** A slightly revised draft was shared with all Member States.
- December 15 (pm)** Online open-ended informal consultation meeting convened by the UNEA Presidency with support of the Secretariat.
- January 2022** Open-ended informal consultations in Nairobi convened by the presidency with support from the Secretariat and CPR. (The exact date is still under consideration).
- February 2022** Circulation of a final draft of the ministerial declaration.
Open-ended consultations as required, including in the margins of the OECPR.
- Feb/March 2022** Adoption of the Ministerial declaration by consensus at the resumed session of UNEA 5.

* * *

Annex: Draft Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”

DRAFT Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”

(changes compared to the zero draft declaration has been indicated in bold)

1. We, the world’s Ministers for the Environment, have gathered **in Nairobi, Kenya, together with international organizations, major groups and stakeholders** at the fifth session of the

United Nations Environment Assembly, under exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, **with the aim** to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

2. **We recall the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, in June 1972 and the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, and its outcome document “The Future We Want”, and reaffirm our commitment to the implementation of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals and General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.**

We recall and commit to the agreed principles guiding the actions at all levels stemming from the relevant international agreements in particular equity and CBDR.

3. We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, 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 **heightened risks of future pandemics and other health threats** if we maintain the current patterns of interaction with nature **and do not take a One Health approach moving forwards.**
4. We recognize that a healthy nature **is required** for sustainable development in all its dimensions, and that **the wellbeing of humanity** depends on nature, and **on** the services it provides for poverty eradication, resilience, our health, economy and ultimately our existence.
5. We note **therefore** with profound concern **that nature is facing severe pressures from human activities**, and stress the urgent need to halt the global decline and fragmentation of biodiversity and habitats, which is unprecedented in human history, **its main** indirect and direct drivers **being** changes in land and sea use, direct exploitation of organisms, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, **invasive alien species** and pollution of **ocean and fresh water**, air, and soil.
6. We note with further grave concern that the 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals, agreed under the Strategic Approach to international Chemicals Management (SAICM), has not been **achieved** with pollution **and adverse effects of chemicals and waste** thus remaining a threat to the environment and our health, **and has been further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic due to increased demand for single-use plastics related to health protection.**
7. We recognize the need for transformative and systemic changes and **for** policies that address several environmental **and societal** challenges simultaneously, **rechanneling financial flows**
8. We are encouraged by the strength of innovation, knowledge building, and investment in green and sustainable technologies currently taking place which indicate that solutions exist or can be found **that can benefit all countries, with a view to enhance technology transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries.**
9. **We welcome the outcomes of COP 26, including adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact, that recognized the critical role of nature in delivering benefits for climate adaptation**

and mitigation, and we are committed to a successful COP 27 in Egypt that enhances global action to tackle climate change

10. **We welcome outcomes of Kunming Declaration from the High-Level Segment of the UN Biodiversity Conference 2020 (part 1) under the theme “Ecological Civilization: Building a Shared Future for All Life on Earth”.**
11. **We welcome and express our support for the upcoming Special Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly [PLACEHOLDER under the theme...] to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya on 3-4 March 2022.**
12. We commit to supporting an **inclusive and sustainable** recovery, promoting a green and just transition, with the goal of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods, **contributing to achieving sustainable development and** poverty eradication, by mainstreaming **biodiversity, climate and pollution** concerns into all policies and tools; making use of green economy pathways that emphasize ecosystem and knowledge-based management, and by reducing **carbon and non-carbon** greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change in line with the **UNFCCC and the** Paris Agreement.
13. We commit to working across sectors and levels of government, **and between governments**, to halt the loss, degradation, and fragmentation of ecosystems, focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity; sustainable land, **sea and water** use, effectively managing **and designating** protected areas **and parks**, safeguarding especially vulnerable habitats, types of nature and ecosystems, and addressing deforestation, wildlife **trafficking**, illegal mining, illegal, **unreported and unregulated fishing**, and other unsustainable activities, crimes and **conflicts** that have serious impacts on the environment.
14. We commit to promoting conservation and sustainable use and management of nature and its resources, to advance sustainable consumption and production patterns, including through resource efficiency and circular economy policy approaches,

15. We commit to safeguarding all water bodies, including lakes and rivers, to address water pollution in inland, coastal and marine ecosystems and improve water quality by, inter alia, increasing efforts in pollution prevention at all levels, including increased transboundary cooperation, integrated water resources management, sustainable use of water, water governance, improved water quality data collection and improved data sharing in order to ensure a sustainable supply of water for life, agriculture, food production and other ecosystem services and benefits, and we further note that the midterm review of the water goal under the agenda 2030 in 2023 would be an important milestone in this regard.

- 15.16. We commit to promoting and strengthening **ecosystem based approaches** and nature-based solutions, **including** by actively **reducing deforestation and forest degradation**, and by protecting, **actively conserving**, sustainably managing, and restoring degraded land and ecosystems that provide us with food, water, and energy, are habitats for biodiversity and provide carbon storage and sequestration, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, for example natural forests, wetlands, **peatlands**, mangroves **and coral reefs**, thus underpinning our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

16.17. We recognize the importance of the best available science for effective climate action and policymaking and stress the urgency of enhancing ambition and action in relation to mitigation, adaptation and finance in this critical decade, with understanding the linkages between level of support and level of action by developing countries.

17.18. We will promote comprehensive land and water use planning backed up by robust national enforcement as an **important** tool for sustainable development and **encourage international cooperation** to help create a conducive business environment that stimulates investments in sustainable production and value chains.

18.19. We are deeply concerned about the impact of land degradation and droughts, especially in the most vulnerable countries, and recognize that practices that restore land and soil and achieving land degradation neutrality has the potential to bring about positive socioeconomic change, protect ecosystems, and act as an accelerator for achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, and acknowledge the work done by UNCCD in this regard

19.20. We commit to safeguarding life under water, and **restoring** a clean, healthy, **resilient** and productive ocean capable of providing food, **sustainable** livelihoods, and storing carbon, through strengthening efforts to protect, conserve, and sustainably manage **our ocean**, seas and coastal ecosystems, while acting to support coastal communities, prevent pollution, **including nitrogen pollution**, and increase resilience to climate change, and prevent marine temperature rise, **sea level rise** and ocean acidification, by keeping our efforts in line with the **UNFCCC and the Paris agreement and the Agenda 2030.**

20.21. 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.

21.22. [Placeholder for text with reference to recent developments and outcomes on Marine Litter]

22.23. We commit to pursuing and joining **new and innovative** partnerships across sectors, and engage all relevant **stakeholders**, working with youth, women, Indigenous Peoples **and local communities, business, finance and science** sectors to develop actions **that are nature positive and reverse** the persistently negative long term trend for the environment described by recent scientific reports from the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), **the International Resource Panel (IPR)** and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

23.24. We commit to cooperating across sectors and levels of governments, in partnership with other governments and local actors and the private sector to transition to sustainable food systems, **in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, and inspired by the UN Food Systems Summit vision of sustainable food systems that deliver enhanced food security and resilience contributing to efforts to deal with climate change, biodiversity loss and freshwater use, as an essential solution to accelerate actions on all the Sustainable Development Goals, and we **welcome the strong engagement** by UNEP in the Summit follow-up processes.

24.25. 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

UN 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, **and the 2050 vision of the Convention of Biological Diversity of living in harmony with nature.**

- 25.26. We call for the **urgent**, adequate and coherent implementation of the actions, commitments and resolutions adopted by the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly as well as previous UNEA outcomes **addressing the triple planetary crises – climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification and land degradation and pollution**, 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.
- 26.27. We further recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling and coherent **legal and** policy frameworks at all levels, good governance and law enforcement **ambitions, effective and sustainable provisions of international cooperation to developing countries**, to be supported by effective **and urgently mobilized** 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 from relevant international environmental agreements, **by** further capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies, dedicated development partnerships, and a renewed and strong commitment to multilateralism **and international solidarity.**
- 27.28. We further welcome and express our support for the upcoming international meeting *Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity*, to be held in Stockholm, Sweden, on 2-3 June 2022, to further accelerate the transformation to a sustainable future, and regard this UNEA5 declaration as our input to Stockholm +50 [ref UNGA resolution A/RES/75/280].