

Ministerial declaration for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment
Assembly

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

Proposed preambular section

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, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, 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”.**
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 spread of zoonotic diseases ~~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 environment ~~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 the environment ~~habitats~~, which is unprecedented in human history, affecting both life on land and under water, **its main** ~~indirect and direct~~ drivers **being** unsustainable changes in land and sea use, ~~direct~~ overexploitation 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 in financing, means of implementation and **for** policies that address several environmental **and** societal challenges simultaneously, ~~rechanneling financial flows through~~ innovative holistic approaches that truly value nature.
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.**
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.**
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** post COVID-19 recovery, promoting a green and just transition, with the goal of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods, **contributing** to poverty eradication, by mainstreaming environmental ~~biodiversity, climate and pollution~~ concerns into all sectors, policies and tools promoting economic recovery; making use of ~~green~~ sustainable economy pathways that emphasize ecosystem and science and knowledge-based management, and by reducing ~~carbon and non-carbon~~ greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity loss and land and water degradation 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 negative impacts on the environment.

14. We commit to promoting conservation and sustainable use and management of ~~nature and its~~ natural resources, to advance sustainable consumption and production patterns, including through resource efficiency and circular economy policy approaches, and by **applying appropriate valuation of nature and assessment methods** of nature-related risks in policymaking.
 15. 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 sea 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~~ including natural forests, wetlands, **peatlands, mangroves and coral reefs, thus** underpinning our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
 16. **We recognize the importance of the best available science for effective climate action, biodiversity management and policymaking and stress the urgency of enhancing ambition and action in relation to mitigation, adaptation and finance in this critical decade.**
 17. We will promote comprehensive land, ocean **and water** use planning ~~backed-up~~ supported by robust national enforcement as an invaluable 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. ~~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.~~
- We recognize the importance of addressing the negative impact of land degradation and droughts, especially in the most vulnerable countries, and the potential to bring about positive socioeconomic change by implementing practices that restore land and soil, and achieving land degradation neutrality.
19. 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 sustainably manage **our ocean**, seas and coastal ecosystems, while acting to prevent pollution, ~~including nitrogen pollution~~, 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. We maintain our dedication to act in line with the implementation plan towards a pollution-free planet to protect the environment ~~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. [Placeholder for text with reference to recent developments and outcomes on Marine Litter]
22. We commit to strengthening engagement with ~~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. We commit to cooperating across sector and levels of government, in partnership with other governments and local actors and the private sector to transition to sustainable food systems, **in line with the 200 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, and inspired by the UN Food Systems Summit vision of sustainable food systems that deliver enhanced food security and resilience while reducing emissions, biodiversity loss and freshwater use, as an essential solution to accelerate actions on all Sustainable Development Goals, and we welcome the strong engagement by UNEP in the Summit follow-up processes.
24. We reaffirm the continued need to strengthen and accelerate actions for nature and our commitment towards the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and the UN Decade on Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, 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 well as the provision of new, additional, accessible and predictable financial resources for its implementation, 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. 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**, and pollution, and further recognize our role, as Ministers of 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. 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, 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 renews and strong commitment to multilateralism **and international solidarity**.

- 27. 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 Stockhol+50 [ref UNGA resolution A/RES/75/280].**