

## ***Final draft Ministerial Declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly***

### **Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**

1. We, the world's Ministers for the Environment, have gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, together with international organizations, major groups and stakeholders at the **resumed** fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, under exceptional circumstances created by the **coronavirus** pandemic, with the aim to **urgently** strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. **We reaffirm all the principles set out in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and our continued commitment to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, with the United Nations Environment Assembly contributing to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in an integrated manner.**
3. **We are at this global environment assembly ready to rid the world of plastic pollution and halt the destruction of the world's cherished biological diversity.**
4. We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, economies and societies, which further threaten our ability to achieve **sustainable development**, and **we** 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.
5. We recognize that a **clean, healthy and sustainable environment** is **important for the enjoyment of human rights** and for sustainable development in all its dimensions, and that the wellbeing of humanity depends on nature **and hence our ability to sustainably use, restore and protect the ecosystem** services it provides for poverty eradication, resilience, our health, economy and ultimately our existence.
6. We note with profound concern **the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services** that nature is facing severe pressures from human activities and stress the urgent need to halt the global decline **of biodiversity** and fragmentation of habitats, which are 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.
7. We are deeply concerned about the impact of land degradation, **desertification** and droughts, especially in the most vulnerable countries, and recognize that practices that restore land and soil and **aim to achieve** land degradation neutrality **have** the potential to bring about positive socioeconomic change, protect ecosystems, **facilitate climate adaptation** and act as an accelerator for achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, **and acknowledge the work done by the UN Convention on Land Degradation in this regard.**
8. We further note with 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**, agreed under the Strategic Approach to international Chemicals Management, has not been achieved with adverse effects of chemicals and waste thus remaining a threat to the environment and our health, and further aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic **in terms of wide use of single use plastics and disinfectant chemicals, and economic challenges.**

9. We recognize the need for transformative and systemic changes and for policies that address several environmental, **economic** and societal challenges simultaneously, rechanneling financial flows **to serve the attainment of sustainable development goals** through innovative holistic approaches that truly value nature.

10. We **will build on** the strength of innovation, **science and** knowledge, **capacity building** and investment in green and sustainable technologies, which **show** that solutions exist or can be **developed to** benefit all countries, **reaffirming the importance of dedicated North-South, South-South and triangular development partnerships, and our strong commitment to multilateralism and international solidarity.**

11. We welcome the outcomes of **the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 26)**, including adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact, **which recognized the need to urgently reduce emissions from fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and the critical role of protecting, conserving and restoring nature and ecosystems** in delivering benefits for climate adaptation and mitigation **while ensuring social and environmental safeguards. We are committed to a successful COP27 in Egypt that further enhances global action to tackle climate change.**

[PREV. PREVIOUS PARA 10 COMBINED WITH PREVIOUS PARA 24 TO MAKE HOLISTIC NEW PARA 12]

12. We welcome **the Kunming Declaration from the High-Level Segment of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Kunming, China from 11 to 15 October 2021**, and we call for an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the second part of the 15<sup>th</sup> Conference **of the Parties** that inter alia include a set of clear and robust goals and targets to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, and is supported by increased finance and strengthened reporting and review mechanisms as a key instrument to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, and the 2050 vision of the Convention **on Biological Diversity of living in harmony with nature.**

13. We welcome and express our support for the upcoming Special Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly under the theme **"Strengthening UNEP for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development"** to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, **as a historic opportunity to reflect on the past, present and future contribution of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment** to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 3 to 4 March 2022.

14. We commit to **promoting** an inclusive and sustainable recovery, a green and just transition, with the goal of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods and **ending** poverty; by mainstreaming biodiversity, climate **change** and pollution concerns into all policies and tools; **by** making use of green economy pathways that emphasize ecosystem and knowledge-based management; **employing gender sensitive approaches and addressing inequalities; and** by reducing carbon and non-carbon greenhouse gas emissions while adapting to climate change **and its impacts** in line with the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** and the Paris Agreement.

14. We **reaffirm our commitment to the UN decade of ecosystem restoration and undertake to work** across sectors and levels of government, and **among** 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 **actively** designating protected areas and parks, safeguarding especially vulnerable habitats, types of nature and ecosystems, **promoting ecological connectivity** and addressing deforestation, **illegal timber trade and wildlife trafficking, environmentally harmful and illegal mining, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and crimes, conflicts, and other** unsustainable activities that have serious impacts on the environment.

**15.** We commit to promoting conservation and sustainable use of and management of **natural** resources, to advance sustainable consumption and production patterns, including through resource efficiency and circular economy policy approaches, and by applying appropriate **methods** of valuation of nature and assessment of nature-related risks in policymaking.

**16.** We **will promote and strengthen** 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, **soil** and ecosystems that provide us with food, water, and energy, are habitats for biodiversity and provide carbon storage and sequestration, **and contribute to** 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.

**17.** We recognize the importance of the best available science for effective **action and policy-making on climate change, biodiversity and pollution** and stress the urgency of enhancing ambition and action in relation to mitigation, adaptation, and finance in this critical decade.

**18.** We will promote comprehensive land and water use planning **with** 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.

**19.** We are deeply concerned about the impact of land degradation, **desertification** and droughts, especially in the most vulnerable countries, and recognize that practices that restore land and soil and **aim to achieve** land degradation neutrality, **have** the potential to bring about positive socioeconomic change, protect ecosystems, **facilitate climate adaptation** and act as an accelerator for achieving several Sustainable Development Goals, **and we acknowledge the work done by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in this regard.**

**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, **lakes and rivers** and coastal ecosystems, while acting to prevent pollution, including **eutrophication and plastic** pollution, and prevent sea level rise, ocean **warming and** acidification by keeping our efforts in line with the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.

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

**22.** We **will continue our dedicated efforts** to act 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 **recognizing pollution as one of the major drivers of climate change and biodiversity loss requiring us to detoxify land, ocean and freshwater.**

**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, **education** and science sectors, to develop actions that are nature positive and reverse the persistently negative long-term trend for the environment.

**[previous para 22 split in two to make standalone para 23 on science and knowledge]**

**24.** We welcome and rely on the knowledge gained from the recent scientific assessments from the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Resource Panel and the United Nations Environment Programme, **and we encourage enhanced collaboration among scientific panels. We further recognize the contribution of indigenous peoples' expertise and knowledge.**

**25.** We **undertake** to cooperating across sectors and levels of governments, in partnerships 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, **the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Paris Agreement**, inspired by **the outcomes of the UN Food Systems Summit with a view to delivering** enhanced food security and resilience **and fostering innovation** while reducing emissions, biodiversity loss and freshwater use.

**26.** We call for the urgent, adequate, and coherent implementation of the actions **and commitments in** resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly **at its fifth session** as well as previous UNEA outcomes addressing the triple crises **for our common environment** – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. **We** 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.

**27.** We recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling and coherent legal and policy frameworks at all levels, good governance and law enforcement. **We reaffirm the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and acknowledge the need for** 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 **of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development**, as well as from relevant **multilateral** environmental agreements.

**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, **from 2 to 3** June 2022, to further accelerate the transformation to a sustainable future, and **request the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Environment Programme, in her capacity as Secretary-General to the international meeting, to forward this declaration to the international meeting** as UNEA's input to Stockholm+50 [ref UNGA resolution A/RES/75/280].