

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY H.E. MR. DAMPTEY BEDIAKO
ASARE, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF GHANA TO KENYA AT THE
SPECIAL SESSION ON UNEP@50**

Excellencies,
Executive Director of UNEP Hon. Ministers
Heads of Delegations Distinguished Delegates Ladies and Gentlemen

Ghana congratulates the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the important milestone of UNEP@50. Ghana commends the leadership of UNEP in the management and protection of the environment at the global, regional and national levels. Since 1972, when UNEP was born at the Stockholm Convention, it has played vital coordinating roles, particularly through the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA). The role of UNEP has become even more critical, as the world continues to deal with the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, while facing the challenges of Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, Pollution and Waste.

Madam President, global environmental diplomacy has come a long way, from the days of the first United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development held in Stockholm and Rio. In spite of the successes achieved, we still have opportunities to do more to strengthen global efforts to effectively tackle the threats of Climate Change, reverse ecosystem degradation and reduce pollution.

Many pledges and commitments have been made during UNEA 5.2 by member states to strengthen actions for nature, and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These commitments are critical for accelerating momentum and ambition for nature. However, they will not by themselves lead to meaningful and impactful results until they are translated into tangible actions.

Distinguished delegates, Ghana wishes to extend special commendation to UNEP for steering the world successfully to the adoption of a resolution to establish an Inter-governmental Negotiation (INC) to develop an international legally-binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This achievement marks a very critical milestone along the journey to tackle the terrible menace of plastic pollution. It is a gift to the world, and an opportunity for us to create the tools that will safeguard the planet for future generations. Ghana wishes to congratulate all member states for their support and cooperation that led to this achievement. We hope that the same spirit of cooperation and teamwork will prevail as we go through the INC process, until we reach the ultimate goal.

Mr. President, indeed at 50 is a time for celebration but also a time for a deep reflection, and Ghana stands ready, as always, to cooperate and collaborate with UNEP as it enters into another phase of its work. We call on member states and other stakeholders to support UNEP in the implementation of its Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work. I thank you for your attention.