

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the General Assembly, H.E Mr Abdulla Shahid.

Her Excellency, Ms. Annika Strandhäll, Minister for Climate and the Environment of Sweden,

His Excellency, Mr. Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Forestry of Kenya,

Ms Inger Anderson, Executive Secretary of UNEP, and Secretary General of the International Meeting Stockholm+50

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

I am delighted to welcome you all to this preparatory meeting for the International Meeting “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all - our responsibility, our opportunity” to be held on June 2nd and 3rd.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the co-hosts of the International Meeting, the Governments of Sweden and Kenya, for their leadership and guidance on the preparatory works.

The International Meeting: Stockholm+50 takes place at the apex of many environment and climate events taking place this year – providing an ideal opportunity to take stock of progress and gaps.

These meetings include important COPs of the Rio Conventions, the Ocean Conference as well as the commemoration of 50 years of UNEP. I take this opportunity to congratulate Member States for the monumental outcomes of UNEA 5.2. The solidarity and spirit that shaped the historical decision to begin negotiations for a global treaty on plastic pollution is a pivotal revolution for the future of our planet.

My friends,

As a preparatory forum, the objective of our meeting today is to lay the groundwork for the International Meeting of Stockholm +50.

In discussing the background documents for the three Leadership Dialogues today, we will reflect on the interconnectedness of humans and the environment through an expanded community of thinkers and voices on environmental issues.

Our preparations and outlook for Stockholm +50 and the planet must be guided by profound conviction and resolve. It must take inspiration from the commitments and determination of our forebearers, which culminated in the Stockholm Declaration and the environmental policies and laws that followed.

From its inception, the Stockholm Declaration has led the way for global environmental multilateralism - a language unfamiliar to many and even opposed at the time.

International development frameworks that we have adopted today, and that guide our work - including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Rio Conventions – follow from the Stockholm Declaration.

Fifty years on, we continue to do more harm than good to nature. The rate of pollution is unprecedented in scale, destroying the natural habitats and ecosystems that we rely upon.

Our very own actions have diverted and stalled our progress in what is meant to be a Decade of Action - as the world grapples with a human-induced climate crisis, a pandemic, and conflict.

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues,

Responding to the needs of the planet requires not only concerted action but a comprehensive paradigm shift. From our consumption methods to production practices, we must always consider the toll of our human footprints on the environment.

The recent IPCC report is a stark reminder of the scale of the climate crisis and the severe potential repercussions awaiting us soon. We must act together, and we must act fast.

Thankfully, there is hope, as I continue to reiterate. We have the knowledge, and we have the capacity. All that remains is summoning the political will to translate that into action.

That is why on my part, later this year, here in the Halls of the General Assembly, I will convene a 'Moment for Nature'. It will be another opportunity, for all stakeholders to come together and map out where we need to do more and how it can be done. I invite you all to join me at this important undertaking for nature.

Friends,

By protecting the environment, we are ultimately protecting our own well-being. We must never forget how interconnected we are with nature and how reliant we are on the health of global ecosystems and the preservation of biodiversity.

I encourage member states and stakeholders to avail the discussions and process of this preparatory meeting as an opportunity to shape a Stockholm +50 that will continue to deliver for a greener and bluer planet for everyone, everywhere.

I wish you all a constructive meeting.

I thank you.