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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fifth session**

Nairobi (hybrid), 22 and 23 February 2021
and 28 February–2 March 2022

**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment
Assembly on 2 March 2022**

5/2. Sustainable nitrogen management

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Noting with concern that excessive levels of nutrients, in particular reactive nitrogen and phosphorus, have a significant impact on species composition in terrestrial, freshwater and coastal ecosystems, with cascading effects on biodiversity, on the quality of soil, water and air, and on ecosystem functioning and human well-being,

Noting with concern also that nitrogen use across the global economy is currently inefficient, resulting in the loss of a large proportion of anthropogenic reactive nitrogen to the environment,

Noting the benefits that reducing nitrogen waste would bring to atmospheric, terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments and to human health, ecosystem services and efforts to combat pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss, ensuring food security while offering the potential to save billions of United States dollars annually,¹

Recognizing the need for coherent action to address the multiple global challenges posed by the natural coupling of carbon and nitrogen cycles, and reaffirming the need for enhanced international cooperation for sustainable nitrogen management,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, by which the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Recalling also the Sustainable Development Goals and their interrelated targets,

Recognizing the fundamental priority of safeguarding food security and ending hunger, and the fact that global crop and livestock production and food security depend on using nutrients sustainably and decreasing nutrient waste, including nitrogen and phosphorus,

Recognizing also the action already taken by countries and under intergovernmental agreements related to water quality, air quality, climate and biodiversity, and recognizing actions by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management, the Global Wastewater Initiative, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution and the GEF-UNEP project towards the establishment of

¹ According to the United Nations Environment Programme publication *Frontiers 2018/19: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern* (chap. 4, “The Nitrogen Fix”), annual savings are estimated to be US\$100 billion.

an international nitrogen management system to link science and policy relating to sustainable nitrogen management,

Recalling Environment Assembly resolution 4/14 on sustainable nitrogen management, and reaffirming the importance of the long-term reduction of the multiple pollution threats resulting from anthropogenic reactive nitrogen, with adverse effects on the terrestrial, freshwater and marine environments, and on air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while acknowledging the benefits of nitrogen use for food and energy,

Taking note of the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the partners in the GEF-UNEP project towards the establishment of an international nitrogen management system with members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme, held in Nairobi on 29 and 30 April 2019 as a follow-up to the adoption of resolution 4/14,

Taking note also of the work of the United Nations Environment Programme Working Group on Nitrogen and its task team for the implementation of resolution 4/14,

Taking note further of the ongoing process established in 2017 under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Programme to produce the international nitrogen assessment, delivered through the GEF-UNEP project towards the establishment of an international nitrogen management system with support from the Global Environment Facility and other stakeholders, prior to the sixth session of the Environment Assembly,

Taking note of the launch of the United Nations Global Campaign on Sustainable Nitrogen Management in October 2019 and the adoption by its signatories of the Colombo Declaration on Sustainable Nitrogen Management on United Nations Day, 24 October 2019,

1. *Encourages* Member States to accelerate actions to significantly reduce nitrogen waste globally by 2030 and beyond through the improvement of sustainable nitrogen management;
2. *Also encourages* Member States to share information on national action plans, as available, according to national circumstances;
3. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to:
 - (a) Support Member States, at their request, in the development of national action plans for sustainable nitrogen management, subject to the availability of resources;
 - (b) Identify possible modalities for the options being considered for improved coordination of policies across the global nitrogen cycle at the national, regional and global levels, including, among other options, for an intergovernmental coordination mechanism for nitrogen policies, as specified in subparagraph (a) of resolution 4/14;
 - (c) Present to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, at its 159th meeting, to be held in 2022, a briefing on the implementation of resolution 4/14, including on the status of the assessment requested in subparagraph (c) of the resolution, and a road map for further implementation of the resolution in the period leading up to the sixth session of the Environment Assembly;
 - (d) Invite Member States to nominate focal points to join the United Nations Environment Programme Working Group on Nitrogen;
 - (e) Report to the Environment Assembly, at its sixth session, on the progress achieved in the implementation of the present resolution and of resolution 4/14.