

Thank you Chair, Madam Executive Director and distinguished colleagues,.

As this is the first time I am taking the floor, the United Kingdom wishes to thank the Executive Director for her thorough and informative report. My delegation also welcomes Madam Deputy Executive Director Elizabeth Mrema on her appointment and her return to Nairobi. We also take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Dr Rose Mwebaza as the new Regional Director for Africa and thank her predecessor Mr Frank Turyatunga for his dedicated service. We look forward to working closely with all new members of the UNEP team.

Now, under AOB, I have the privilege to make a statement on behalf of the *European Union, Australia Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States*. We congratulate Member States for their joint achievements at the resumed first session of the Open-Ended Working Group to establish a Science Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. We look forward to further engage constructively at Open Ended Working Group 2 and beyond. As we all hoped to complete election of officers in Bangkok, we note with regret that one Member State at the meeting departed from the long-standing tradition and established practice of accepting unanimous nominations put forward by regional groups.

The requested vote on a candidate that was unanimously nominated by a regional group undermines the Nairobi spirit of multilateralism that Member States have forged through decades of dedication to compromise. Moving forward, we stress the long-standing role of Regional groups in UNEP processes. This role has served the system well in the past. Voting in plenary should remain well justified and only a last resort measure.

Finally, we reaffirm our support for constructive collaboration in international environmental diplomacy as the best way to find solutions to our joint environmental challenges.

Thank you.