

## **Australia's submission on the Zero Draft Ministerial Declaration of the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6)**

Australia thanks the President of UNEA-6 and the members of the Bureau for sharing the Zero Draft of the Ministerial Declaration and the opportunity to provide comments on this document. We wish to express our appreciation for the Presidency and the highly-consultative manner they have taken in preparing the Zero Draft of the Declaration.

Australia supports the concise yet thorough nature of the current draft, especially in the context of identifying key areas of action to address the global environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We also welcome the inclusion of language that emphasises the importance of integrated, science-based approaches, including the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities as ways to strengthen resilience to present and emerging risks.

With regards to current paragraph 3, we suggest the use of the term “support” in reference to advancing the attainment of a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Australia recognises there is a relationship between human rights and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and also recognises that current environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution have a detrimental impact on human rights. However, we note that the international legal basis, scope and content of this matter remains unsettled and requires further consideration. For similar reasons, we have suggested an edit to paragraph 5, to note the adoption of the UN Human Rights Council resolution on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

With regards to paragraph 4, we have suggested changes to better capture the outcomes of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties. We consider it important to recognise broader funding arrangements and not limit reference to just a loss and damage fund as identified in the original zero draft text. Australia also notes the fund has not yet been named and considers it important to include text that avoids pre-empting the fund's title at this time.

With regards to paragraph 8.a., we note that the current text can be misconstrued to suggest the Paris Agreement as being subservient to the UNFCCC. We have provided alternative language which more accurately reflects the relationship between the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. Similarly, we suggest swapping the term “principles” to “goals” as the Paris Agreement does not have principles.

With regards to paragraph 8.d., we have suggested text to better reflect the timing of the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5) in relation to the formalisation of this document at UNEA-6 in February/March 2024, noting the ICCM-5 is expected to be held in September 2023.

With regards to paragraph 10, we have suggested text that better reflects the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

As always, Australia welcomes further opportunities to provide written input to subsequent drafts of the Declaration. We note there are some logistical difficulties for Member States in our geographical region to provide views in real-time virtual consultations, which can limit engagement in the drafting process.

Australia offers our full support to the Presidency and Bureau in the development of the UNEA-6 Ministerial Declaration. We look forward to engaging further in the ongoing negotiation of this vital document.

**Ministerial declaration for the sixth session  
of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

**“Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions  
to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution”**

1. We, the world’s ministers for the environment, have gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, together with representatives of international organizations, major groups and other stakeholders at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, with the urgent aim of taking effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral action to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
2. We recall the Rio+20 Principles, the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), , and previous UNEA Resolutions, and welcome the recommendations of the Secretary General in his report [Our Common Agenda](#), and the Stockholm+50 International Meeting.
3. We acknowledge with great urgency the systemic threat to security and human development posed by the three planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and emphasize the importance of integrated, science-based approaches, including the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, that can strengthen resilience to present and future emerging risks with global solidarity, ~~while advancing the attainment of the human right to~~ [and support](#) a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all.
4. We welcome the important outcomes of the twenty-seventh conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC, including the ~~commitment to establish~~ [new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries which are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, in responding to loss and damage, of a Loss and Damage Fund to support vulnerable countries](#) as well as the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan, the twenty eighth Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC including XXX , the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity including its adoption of the historic [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#), and the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD including the [Abidjan Call](#) to act on drought, desertification and land degradation.
5. We also welcome with appreciation other important multilateral achievements including the [2022 UN Ocean Conference](#) and the 2023 UN Water Conference, ~~the adoption of the UN Human Rights Council resolution on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and~~ the adoption of the agreement under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, ~~and note the adoption of the UN Human Rights Council resolution on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.~~
6. We note with great concern the main findings of the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s sixth assessment report (AR6) approved in March 2023, and recognise that global greenhouse gas emissions will need to be halved by 2030 to limit global warming to 1.5°C. By the current trajectory, as estimated by assessing nationally determined contributions (NDCs) announced by October 2021, it is likely that warming will exceed the 1.5°C target during the 21st century, which calls for significant rapid and sustained reductions in all sectors, while ensuring that the level of support provided to developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change remains adequate.
7. We are aware that in order to revitalize the multilateral system and inspire decisive and collective action to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution we surely need to reinforce global inclusiveness and solidarity.

8. We are strongly committed to urgently address our common and global environmental challenges through effective, inclusive, sustainable, transformative, inter-generational and science- and knowledge-based actions together with all stakeholders including civil society, citizens, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the private sector, and academia; and we therefore decide to take the following actions, taking into account, the special needs and circumstances of the least greenhouse gas emitters and the most vulnerable, in particular, Small Island Developing States (SIDS), Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), African States, and developing middle-income countries:
  - a. Deploy sustained global efforts to address climate change in line with the ~~principles-goals~~ of the UNFCCC and ~~its-the~~ Paris Agreement, including by addressing the urgent need for scaled up action for adaptation and resilience as well as loss and damage. We will spare no effort to protect our communities against natural disasters induced or exacerbated by climate change, such as drought, famine, and flooding, recognizing the devastating impacts these phenomena have on societies, economies, ~~and~~ ecosystems ~~and biodiversity loss~~.
  - b. combat biodiversity loss in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, by urgently reversing ecosystem decline, promoting and strengthening ecosystem-based approaches and nature-based solutions, while mitigating and adapting to climate change and boosting resilience, supporting sustainable food production, promoting One Health and ensuring equitable benefits across economies and societies through robust safeguards and policies for environmental and social protection.
  - c. End plastic pollution, as resolved in UNEA resolution 5/14, by fostering innovation, global collaboration, and public-private partnerships. We call on Member States to continue to engage constructively in the ongoing negotiations with a sense of urgency, and seek to reach common ground for a fair and ambitious legally binding outcome of the INC by the end of 2024.
  - d. Deploy greater efforts, as well as mobilize and allocate adequate resources towards chemicals safety and management and the ~~[adoption]/[progress toward adoption]/[other relevant language to be inserted subject to outcome of ICCM5]~~implementation of a new chemicals and waste management framework ~~during-following~~ the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5) ~~to be~~ held in September 2023.
  - e. Incorporate environmental considerations into disaster risk management to mitigate the adverse impacts of natural disasters, on human health and the environment and recommend using a combination of measures to strengthen the resilience to global risks, and accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including actions on the conservation and restoration of ecosystems, climate change mitigation and adaptation, pollution reduction and management, as well as actions to transform economic and financial systems and to ensure sustainable production and consumption.
  - f. Act towards the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by advancing existing international commitments and obligations, ensuring the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation, representation and leadership of women at all levels of relevant climate change, biodiversity and pollution decision-making, promoting gender mainstreaming and integration across policies and actions and the safeguarding of marginalized groups and the most vulnerable, in our pursuit of inclusive solutions for climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution that leave no one behind.
9. We will work towards using the potential of digital transformation as a necessary tool for sustainable economic and social behaviour at the global level, bridging existing digital divides, improving equal access to environmental information and harnessing emerging technologies for environmental sustainability.
10. We commit to continue to advocate a whole-of-society approach to a more inclusive and equitable digitalisation that effectively empowers vulnerable and low-income populations, to accelerate research, innovation, education and neighbourhood change, and to move towards the implementation of circular economy models along value chains and ~~just-accelerate achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goal~~transitions that can ~~accelerate~~

~~progress towards the achievement~~address the environmental challenges of climate change, biodiversity and pollution ~~goals and targets~~.

11. We call upon Member States to engage domestic, international, and private sector actors towards a rapid mobilization of means of implementation, in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, while welcoming ongoing efforts to reform the international financial architecture to provide additional funding, in particular concessional finance to support low- and middle-income countries tackle and adapt to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
12. We reiterate our recognition of UNEP's role in strategic foresight and horizon scanning as well as in improving the capacities of Member States at all levels to stimulate and encourage long-term advance environmental decision-making bringing the most pressing emerging environmental issues to the attention of Governments. UNEP should therefore ensure that it continues to anticipate trends and risks, bring them to the attention of the world, particularly with the aim of prioritizing scientific research and promoting collective and multi-stakeholder responses to new challenges.
13. We call on UNEP, as the leading environmental authority within the United Nations, and echoing the UNEP@50 Ministerial Declaration, to intensify its support and assistance to Member States in the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the UNEA outcomes and UNEP' delivery, notably through the UN Country Teams, through access to scientific information, technologies, technical assistance and financial resources.
14. We look forward to the adoption of a Pact for the Future at the Future Summit in New York in September 2024, and urge all Member States as well as relevant NGOs, Major Groups and stakeholders to advocate for the implementation of the relevant actions set out in this statement during the consultation process to ensure an ambitious outcome that will reinvigorate environmental multilateralism, stimulate the implementation of existing commitments and agree on concrete solutions for a better tomorrow with greater effectiveness, inclusiveness and confidence.
15. We therefore request the President of the UN Environment Assembly to transmit this statement as the UN Environment Assembly's contribution to the General Assembly for the Summit of the Future.
16. We invite the governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements to work with the United Nations Environment Assembly, as appropriate, to promote effective implementation of the commitments contained in this Declaration.