

**Statement of the UNEP Major Groups & Stakeholders, Africa to the Nineteenth Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment Held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

*We, UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa, having met in a hybrid manner in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the occasion of the Nineteenth Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN), hereby adopt the following Statement.*

**Preamble**

*We express our deepest appreciation to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for graciously hosting the Nineteenth Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and for their support to the preparations and hosting of the 2023 Regional Consultative Meeting of the UNEP Major Groups & Stakeholders, Africa. We congratulate the Republic of Senegal for running the presidency of the Eighteenth Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in an open, inclusive, and successful manner that fostered engagement of the UNEP Major Groups & Stakeholders, Africa particularly in the expert segments of the AMCEN; We congratulate the Republic of Egypt for successfully hosting the Twenty-Seventh Conference of Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2022; the Kingdom of Morocco on the occasion of becoming the first African Presidency of a United Nations Environment Assembly; and the Federal Republic of Ethiopia for ascending to the Presidency of the Nineteenth Session of the AMCEN.*

*We register our most sincere congratulations to Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema on her appointment as the Deputy Executive Director of the UNEP and to Dr. Rose Mwebaza for her appointment as the Director for the UNEP Africa Office and take this opportunity to express our commitment to working closely and collaboratively with them.*

*Taking note that previous AMCEN sessions, including AMCEN18 decisions, provide clear policy direction and that the focus of the outcomes of the Nineteenth Ordinary Session of the AMCEN should be on driving implementation as led by national governments and supported by other actors such as civil society, communities, and development partners,*

*Recognizing that AMCEN decisions do not take place in a vacuum and require enabling means of implementation at national and other levels,*

*Deeply concerned that the environmental sector is underfunded at the subnational, national, and regional levels throughout Africa, and that more financing remains a priority for progress on Africa's environmental agenda,*

*Underscoring that mineral extraction, processing and usage in Africa should significantly contribute to Africa's just energy transition and sustainable development prioritizing added value for the continent.*

*Noting AMCEN/18(II)/6 para 15 which makes specific recommendations for action by national governments, cities, and development partners,*

*Aware that* climate change is a justice issue that has disproportionately affected millions of Africans,

*Recognizing* the importance of robust policy frameworks and cross-sectoral collaboration, to effectively tackle the complex challenges of climate change,

*Appreciating* the value of regional and global collaboration in sharing best practices, exchanging knowledge, and mobilizing resources to amplify our collective impact,

*Emphasizing* the importance of indigenous knowledge in reducing deforestation and degradation,

*Recognizing* that adaptation is a key priority for Africa and the critical role of ecosystem-based approaches emphasizing decision 18/1 (a) of the resumed 18th session of the AMCEN last year - on fostering sustainable soil governance in Africa - to enhance climate adaptation and resilience among communities that are most affected and vulnerable.

*Affirming* that the energy transition in Africa must both enhance reliable and affordable access for the 600 million people who lack access to electrification and 900 million others who lack access to clean cooking while increasing investment in renewable energy including decentralized renewable energy,

*Underscoring* that energy transitions should be contextual and recognize and prioritize local value chains in critical minerals mining and renewable energy sectors while upholding best practices in business and human rights,

*Noting that* climate adaptation and loss and damage are a priority for Africa,

*Acknowledging* the significant efforts by the African member states to adapt to the negative impacts of climate change,

*Acknowledging* that biodiversity is essential for all health, livelihoods, food security, resilience and cultural diversity, we express our concern over the alarming rate of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in Africa and globally.

*Noting* that biodiversity contributes significantly to the GDP, and the urgency needed to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,

*Applauding* the African Group of Negotiators on Biodiversity for taking up the mandate and ensuring that most priorities that were advanced by Africa were successfully included in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework,

*Appreciating* the role of women, youth and Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity,

*Recognizing* that within the African context, the fair and equitable sharing of benefits amongst IPLCs from the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, is vital to achieving Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

*Noting* that while Africa had stressed on the establishment of an independent Global Biodiversity Fund, and the compromise reached to establish a Trust Fund under the Global Environment Facility; and further noting the directives from the Global Environment Facility Council in this regard,

*Further noting* that Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity are required to update their national biodiversity strategies and action plans or develop national targets aligned with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework before the sixteenth Conference of the Parties,

*Acknowledging* the role of UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa in the consultative processes, intersessional meetings and Conference of Parties on the negotiation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and reiterating our commitment to participate and engage in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

*Welcoming* the ongoing consultations on the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted at COP15 in December 2022 under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD),

*Recognizing* the need for strengthening cooperation and collaboration in building the necessary capacity and transfer of technologies to allow Parties, especially developing countries, to fully implement the framework.

*Recalling* resolution 5/14 of the resumed fifth section of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) entitled, “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument, including in the marine environment,” which requested the Executive Director of UNEP to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to begin its work during the second half of 2022, with the ambition of completing that work by the end of 2024,

*Reiterating* the UNEA 5.2 decision that the INC develops an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment that includes both binding and voluntary approaches, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, taking into account, among other things, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as national circumstances and capabilities, and including provisions described in the resolution,

We submit the following perspectives:

**On the implementation of the decisions of the AMCEN**, we underscore that it is important to facilitate stock-taking and collaboration between AMCEN and regional networks/platforms of Major Groups and Stakeholders, and other actors. This would enable measuring progress at AMCEN, national, and subnational levels to improve accountability. We call on the AMCEN to urge and empower the African Union to be

represented within the global processes and forums for multilateral environmental agreements in line with their mandate. It is imperative that going forward, Member States and Major Groups and Stakeholders report back on their contribution and progress in implementing previous AMCEN decisions to subsequent AMCEN sessions. Lastly, we remind all member states that Africa's environmental agenda is also realized through the support of non-financial resources, which should be recognized and further leveraged to realize a whole-of-society approach.

*Concerning the Africa Green Stimulus Programme*, we are considerate that African countries are still recovering from COVID-19's impact on economy, environment, and society and that COVID-19's impacts underlined existing vulnerabilities. We caution that rapid response will not lead to full recovery and will require transformative interventions that lead to resilience in the long term. As such, we recommend the enactment of enabling laws, policies, and mechanisms at the subnational and national levels for the implementation of the programme. In addition, we underline that the Green Stimulus Programme should be linked to efforts that address the risks posed by pandemics. Further, financing for the programme should be focused on implementation. In addition, priority actions should be identified to address major threats.

*Concerning critical minerals and their role in energy transitions in Africa*, building the capacity of the actors in Africa's mining sector should be prioritized to ensure that exploitation is informed by evidence-based and scientific analysis considering environmental, social, and economic impacts. Moreover, promoting intersectoral collaboration between the mining, environmental and other related sectors should underlie decision-making processes.

*With respect to phasing out open burning of waste in Africa*, we invite the Nineteenth Ordinary session of the AMCEN to consider adopting a decision to initiate regional policy interventions and processes that will lead to the phasing out of open dumping and burning of waste.

*Regarding the Africa Environment Partnership Platform*, we call on governments and partners to engage collaboratively to prioritize specific environmental sectors that require critical action in their development strategies. We also call on the African member states to facilitate regional platforms for environmental actors such as the Africa Protected Area Directors to engage in cross-sectoral and cross-regional dialogue and collaboration. We call for the mobilization and coordination of resources that foster knowledge and alignment for the platform. We encourage collaboration between African member states, and the UNEP Major Group of Stakeholders, Africa, regional networks, and other platforms of State Actors.

*On collaboration between African ministers of environment and African ministers of finance and economic planning*, we call for the development of an enforcement mechanism that enables long-term collaboration between AMCEN and African ministers of finance and economic planning. To enhance financing, we urge African member states to adopt an AMCEN decision inviting all African Member States to significantly increase their annual national budget quota/contribution to environmental ministries/departments and institute a concrete means of implementation. We also call on member states to develop, revamp and support the mobilization and capitalization

of innovative financing mechanisms for biodiversity, climate, and the environment from domestic sources. These include but are not limited to mechanisms such as A Pan-African Conservation Trust (A-PACT) and mechanisms of the Consortium of African Funds for the Environment (CAFE). We also call on African member states and governments to enhance accountability mechanisms that promote transparent deployment of financing from diverse sources.

*With reference to the circular economy*, we strongly recommend the development of a mechanism for integrating circular economy into national development agendas, with AMCEN policy direction at the regional level.

**On Climate Change**, the adverse impacts are felt in particular by vulnerable groups including women, Indigenous people, local communities, and the youth. Climate change impacts adversely affect biodiversity, food systems, forestry, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, livelihoods, human security, and human settlement among others. The 2022 report of the IPCC warns that Climate change's impacts are becoming increasingly complex, more difficult to manage, and will lead to numerous risks to natural and human systems if left unchecked, requiring substantial adaptation efforts to protect human life and economic stability. Africa contributes to less than four percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) but bears the brunt of the climate crisis and those historically responsible as high emitters should be held to account. The 19th ordinary session of AMCEN is an opportunity for African leaders to renew their commitment to the fight against climate change. Acknowledging the centrality of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the AU Agenda 2063 and the importance of the African Union Climate Change and Resilient Development Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2032), it is important to update, as appropriate, the common position of Africa on climate change, and revisit commitments made in the context of multilateral environmental agreements such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement and focus on the implementation of important regional initiatives such as the African Renewable Energy Initiative, the African Adaptation Initiative and the Adaptation of African Agriculture Initiative and the three Regional Climate Commissions of the Congo Basin, Sahel and African Island States as well as other relevant elements such as the Malabo Declaration.

Today, over a quarter of global energy-related greenhouse gas emissions come from operating buildings, including their heating and cooling systems and electricity use. Considering rapid urbanization around the world, the number of people living in hazardous locations and inadequately built housing is expected to more than double to three billion over the next 15 years. Without immediate and appropriate solutions, growing numbers of climate-displaced populations will add to the complexity of the global need for adequate and affordable housing.

Recognizing and promoting women's participation in the development of innovative policies and solutions - both technologies and processes - to solve the pressing climate and environmental issues like governance, adaptation, and mitigation is critical, taking into account the fact that four out of five people displaced due to climate

change are women. As a continent with a population of over 70% young people, Africa has the opportunity to leapfrog towards a sustainable development model through meaningful engagement of youth in decision-making processes at all levels. Thus, we call upon the AMCEN to enhance inclusion, alignment, and ownership of climate strategies, policies, programmes, and plans across all spheres of both state and non-state actors.

*Regarding food systems and climate change*, agriculture is said to contribute seventy percent of employment, forty percent of exports, and one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP) in Africa. The global food system is responsible for 21-37 percent of annual emissions.

It is our belief that the triple planetary crisis that concerns AMCEN is linked to the food systems in a cyclic manner. Firstly, environment and nature-based agriculture and allied sectors remain the largest employers in Africa. The majority of the food producers, who are women, have their livelihoods adversely affected by climate change. Secondly, agriculture is one of the key sectors to curb emissions. We call on the African member states to focus and increase finance on climate-resilient development pathways such as agroecology. Agroecological policies and approaches that prioritize biodiversity, soil health, and water conservation should be adopted.

Cognizant that our current food systems are failing us, and need transformation, it is our belief that this transformation needs to be socially accountable and built on the principles of the right to food, food security, and food sovereignty, participatory governance of the food system, and enhancing accountability & transparency mechanisms for communities - particularly rural women, food producers, farm workers, young people involved in the food supply chains, and particularly those living with hunger.

Emphasizing in AU agenda 2063 and, in particular, Aspiration 6 on people-led development, we urge AMCEN to ensure that dialogues be inclusive with the participation of marginalized groups and their experiences and voices in relation to the nexus between environment and the right to food, gender, livelihoods opportunities, education, and health-forming centerpiece. We further indicate that any solution being proposed need be built around promoting community resilience, taking into account the triple planetary crisis, building on local knowledge, and supporting environmentally friendly-gender responsive agriculture. We further urge African Member States to UNEP to promote and advocate a shift towards the use of organic fertilizer as opposed to synthetic fertilizers that harm soil health and ecosystem balance.

*Concerning ecosystem-based adaptation*, we call on increased investment towards community-led aquatic and terrestrial management. We call upon the member states to commit to the outcomes of the CITES COP15 to safeguard Africa's endangered animal and plant species.

*On just energy transition pathways*, we are calling on AMCEN to lay out a strategy for operationalizing, within the African context, the principle of just transition and the Work Programme on Just Transition Pathways at COP28 to reduce, in the long-term, Africa's dependency on fossil fuels and prepare the continent for low carbon energy systems. We strongly recommend that member states increase investment in renewable energy, and use social dialogue and stock-taking to deliver a people-centric just

energy transition that addresses the needs, priorities, and lived realities of communities.

*With respect to climate finance*, we are calling on AMCEN to push for new and additional climate finance that is adequate, flexible, predictable, and accessible to grassroots communities especially those at the forefront of climate change impacts. We emphasize that funding should be grant-based, in alignment with Africa's special needs and circumstances and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities .

*Regarding loss and damage*, African Member States should prioritize strategies that enhance the long-term resilience of society for society to respond and cope with the increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as rising sea levels, droughts and floods, forced migration, and related conflicts. While COP27 agreed to establish a Loss and Damage Fund, we urge member states to push for the operationalization of the Loss and Damage facility that emphasizes the value of Africa (sovereign wealth in our natural resources) in delivering for the world hence the need to prioritize investing in the continent based on vulnerabilities of communities in the Africa region. For example, the prioritization of improved housing as a component of loss and damage is an essential entry point for effectively preventing the loss and damage of non-economic assets. This includes accounting more accurately for the impacts that climate change has on housing through loss and damage discussions. Notably, the IPCC calls out that “concentrated inequalities in risk are broken through prioritizing affordable housing and upgrading of informal and precarious settlements paying special attention to including marginalized groups and women.”

*Regarding adaptation*, recognizing the progress made in COP26 and COP27, we call on the developed countries to honor their obligations to double funding provided for adaptation to developing countries. Further, we call upon member states to the UNFCCC to finalize the framework for the global goal for adaptation at COP28.

*Concerning the climate change and environmental degradation security nexus*, the compounding effects of climate change on fragile and conflict-affected settings (FCAS), and conflict sensitivity should be part of the official AMCEN agenda, discussed in negotiations, and included in agreements or other outcome documents.

*About policy advocacy and implementation of regional commitments*, commit to advocating for policies that prioritize sustainable development, climate resilience, and social equity.

*With focus on housing and human settlement*, as the home of a third of biodiversity globally, Africa's development trajectory is vital for delivery of climate adaptation by redefining development through embracing climate resilient infrastructure. While a house is considered an economic asset, adequate and resilient housing especially for the most vulnerable is a means of securing protection of non-economic losses, including life, health, human mobility, societal/cultural identity and knowledge. Moreover, climate change is effectively reducing the supply of affordable housing around the world. In many developing countries, affordable housing has been developed in hazard prone areas, either formally or informally, exposing communities to greater risk of flood and sea level rise. We, therefore, call on AMCEN to ensure that adaptation actions that protect communities and natural habitat are inclusive of the needs of the most vulnerable. Adaptation must be prioritized in our urban spaces, especially in rapidly urbanizing cities and informal settlements in Africa. Industrial

mitigation efforts in the built environment and housing sector must not drive-up costs for households and further expand the global deficit of adequate and affordable housing.

*On the issue of climate mobility*, we can no longer talk about Climate change without talking about Human Mobility. Well-managed migration in the context of climate change and environmental and land degradation can contribute to both sustainable development and climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts. We call on AMCEN to establish and strengthen regional and national weather and climate institutions and systems to generate adequate and timely data and information on the impact of climate change on human mobility and increase collaboration among member states. We call on member states to support and invest in addressing the issue and challenge of climate-related displacements in the continent.

*With respect to youth and climate change*, we recommend that AMCEN's focus should include, in a stronger manner, advocating, engaging, and educating youth through targeted awareness campaigns and partnerships with schools and youth organizations. At the national level, there is a need to integrate comprehensive climate education into school curricula, ensuring that every student receives the necessary knowledge to understand and address environmental challenges effectively. AMCEN must meaningfully engage youth-led organizations at all levels to increase the opportunity to scale green jobs, green housing, sustainable agriculture, adoption of renewable energy, etc. while ensuring that the youth access financing directly.

**On the implications of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework on Africa**, we express our concern over the alarming rate of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation in Africa and globally. We urge AMCEN to ensure that with the implementation of the framework, African member states reflect the aspirations and priorities of Africa. As UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa we have actively engaged in the consultative processes, intersessional meetings, and Conference of Parties meeting on the negotiation of the GBF, and we remain committed to ongoing active participation and engagement in the implementation of the GBF.

*With respect to Africa's participation in the making of the Kunming – Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and UNEP Major Groups - Africa's Approach*, we urge Member States to take appropriate measures to implement the Kunming-Montreal global biodiversity framework including through revision of national biodiversity strategies and action plans by COP16, and where not possible to report on progress at COP16.

We urge AMCEN to work with the African Union Commission to ensure that UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, in Africa are involved in consultations on the draft African Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan.

We urge African member states to recognize the role and contributions of UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa in implementing, monitoring, and reporting of the GBF, and to actively engage them in all GBF processes including consultations and intersessional work.



We encourage MS to contribute as appropriate and continue pressing for the mobilization by 2030 of at least \$200 billion per year in domestic and international biodiversity-related funding from all sources – public and private; and we support the urgent call for international financial flows from developed to developing countries, in particular for Africa with focus on the least developed countries and small island developing States.

We call upon African Member States to ensure coordination and harmonization between all government ministries, spearheaded by the Ministries of Finance and Environment with regard to the prioritization and budgetary allocation for biodiversity conservation.

We urge African member states to develop common positions for engaging in the intersessional work of the CBD as well as the sixteenth Conference of the Parties while ensuring the meaningful engagement of UNEP MGS Africa in their preparations, especially on issues of Digital Sequence Information, resource mobilization, and the development of indicators. We urge the African Group of Negotiators on Biodiversity to ensure that the outcome of the continued further negotiation on DSI at the sixteenth Conference of Parties, will be favorable to Africa. We further request the informal biodiversity support group to continue providing technical and financial support to the African group of negotiators on biodiversity during the intersessional meetings of the Conference of the Parties as well as participation in the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties.

We request AMCEN to ensure that subnational governments, cities and other local authorities are represented in the informal biodiversity support group and encourage Africa member states to ratify the Marine Biodiversity Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) Treaty under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Further, we call on the African Union Commission, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), the United Nations Environment Programme, and other development partners to support African countries in strengthening regional data and information capacity on biodiversity, including on undertaking digital sequencing of genetic resources, access to information for research and development, value addition, and innovations that support sustainable utilization of biodiversity.

We also urge AMCEN member states to integrate the One Health approach, among other holistic approaches, in their national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and national health plans, as appropriate, to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Further, we call on African member states to advocate for the harmonization between the Paris Agreement and the Kunming-Montreal GBF towards the achievement of targets 8 and target 11 of the GBF. We also call on African member states to, in consultation with related sectors and informed by the best science available, urgently enact legislation that addresses the impacts of

pollution across respective value chains, specifically plastics, highly hazardous pesticides, and fertilizers, on biodiversity and human health communities.

With regards to **Africa's participation in the development of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment**, we call on African member states to continue upholding the UNEA 5/14 resolution to End Plastic Pollution through the international legally binding instrument and the AMCEN 18/2 decision to “protect the Africa region from the health, climate, and biodiversity threats posed by plastic pollution”. We underscore that the treaty must facilitate advancements in key goals of reducing and enforcing a rapid shift to biodegradable forms of plastics through a just and inclusive transition process and to swiftly prohibit the most harmful and high-risk plastic products, chemicals, and substances. Further, the treaty should impose mandatory, full, and transparent disclosure on the chemical composition of plastics produced by manufacturing companies, and address all false solutions to the plastic crisis and its related problems to ensure meaningful engagement of youth and indigenous persons in formulation, implementation, and the review of strategic actions, establishing targets and requirements for reuse, non-toxic recycling, and recycled content. The UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa stand ready to support the African Group Negotiators (AGN) in a technical capacity throughout the negotiation process.

Fostering swifter innovation through more robust regulations and incentives for the private sector, producer accountability, and private sector transition is essential. The transition from a linear to a circular economy and ensuring a just transition for vulnerable groups including waste pickers and indigenous communities to enhance shared solutions and technologies must be appropriately framed. Together with the recently established Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and the internationally binding instrument developed within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea concerning the conservation and sustainable utilization of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction, such a treaty would serve as a cornerstone for a novel international environmental legal structure, which would enable Member States to construct a more equitable globalization that safeguards nature and promotes beneficial innovation for our planet.

We welcome the Just Transition Initiative for an effective global instrument to end plastic pollution, led by Kenya and South Africa to incorporate issues of justice, equity, and inclusivity for the effective implementation of the future instrument shown at INC1 and INC2, and we hope to continue seeing the AGN functioning as a strong and consolidated group that drives the INC processes towards a treaty that addresses plastic pollution in the full lifecycle approach that reflects the African context.

*On the substantive elements of the treaty*, the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa, collectively ask the AMCEN member states to consider the following regarding the scope of the Global Plastic Treaty: the [UNEA Resolution 5/14](#) defined clearly the

mandate for the international legally binding treaty's scope to end plastic pollution across the full lifecycle of plastics that includes all plastics and associated pollution with no exceptions, and remediation of existing pollutants. Efforts to tackle plastic pollution must involve the means to prioritize different types and categories of plastics but not limited to hazardous, toxic, and problematic plastics. The treaty must also cover the expected cooperation modalities and articulate the stakeholders to be involved clearly beyond its actual territorial scope. This is the scope to which it should adhere without further negotiations at INC3. Furthermore, with regard to the principles of the treaty, the [UNEA Resolution 5/14](#) is underpinned by many principles of the [1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#) which includes among others:

- The principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)
- Liability and compensation
- Transboundary environmental justice, also known as the “no harm rule” protecting states from transboundary harm
- The Preventive and Precautionary Principle
- The Polluter Pays Principle

To make the treaty truly international legally binding, the outcome document should uphold human rights and access to environmental justice to all whose interests will be affected, and especially the negative ones during implementation of response measures including waste workers, women, indigenous, people with disabilities and frontline communities. We note that the principles are usually added to the preamble, but it is important to translate them into the text through obligations and control measures.

INC2 envisioned that intersessional work will play a crucial role in the support the development of the international legally binding instrument. Based on the reports published by the two Contact Groups that took place at INC2, we recommend focused areas for Intersessional work. For Contact Group 1, we recommend focusing on information on the definitions associated with terminologies such as plastics, microplastics, and circularity amongst others. We also recommend that Contact Group 1 works on the information on criteria also considering different applications and sectoral requirements, including chemical substances of concern in plastics, problematic and avoidable plastic polymers and products and related applications, designs (for reuse and circularity of plastic products), and substitutes and alternatives to plastic polymers and products.

For Contact Group 2, we, firstly, recommend focusing on developing articulate and detailed enforcement mechanisms, strict liability, and compensation for transboundary movement damages, including penalties for polluters and translation of the treaty into national laws. Secondly, we recommend focusing on domestication of the international legally binding instrument at the national level, including methodological approaches and implementation such as National Action Plans and National Implementation Plans.

We would like to highlight the importance of the unity of the African voice, which should also reflect in the collaboration between the African Member States and the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa. This collaboration will be key to realizing the treaty at the regional, national, and subnational levels and to connecting the treaty with the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

**With respect to the 6<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA),** we emphasize the need for an ambitious ministerial declaration that reflects on progress achieved since previous sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly (particularly UNEA 5.2), and a clear determination of what constitutes transformative change. We strongly urge Member States to UNEP to ensure that the necessary means of implementation, including finance are mobilized, so that the resolutions adopted at UNEA 5.2 especially those lagging behind, are implemented accordingly, in particular in Africa.

We highly appreciate the meaningful and ongoing engagement of the Moroccan UNEA 6 Presidency with the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders, in particular the African Major Groups and Stakeholders, and we urge UNEP to make that type of engagement a standard to enhance inclusion and participation. Accordingly, we strongly urge UNEP to make appropriate arrangements to support robust and meaningful in-person participation of African Major Groups and Stakeholders during UNEA 6 to ensure that the processes and decisions are participatory and inclusive in nature. However, we note with concern that some processes impeded within UNEA do not remain anchored within the UNEA process and strongly urge UNEA to make the necessary arrangements to address that issue and maintain and strengthen the coordinating role of UNEP to address, globally, the triple planetary crisis.

We urge African Member states to UNEP to call for strengthening UNEP, bearing in mind that it is the only UN agency headquartered in the Global South. We further invite African Member States to UNEP to urge UNEP to strengthen the leadership role of African experts in UNEA Processes and in UNEP. We also urge UNEA to strengthen the global environmental governance structure including amongst other things an environmental court of justice, capacity building on environmental justice, and recognizing the significant threat of environmental crime internationally and nationally. In addition, we urge UNEA to advance the understanding and responses of Member States to the impacts of conflicts on the triple planetary crisis and vice versa.

We also urge African Members States to UNEP to further enable a just transition towards affordable and clean energy, leveraging, in particular, the potentialities of renewable energy and strongly urge developed countries and other partners to support that transition including through scaled-up and accessible climate finance for Africa. With respect to biodiversity, we urge UNEA to include biodiversity finance, and coordination and harmonization between the Ministries of Finance and Environment with regard to the prioritization of, and budgetary allocation for, biodiversity

conservation and ecosystem restoration in the UNEA 6 agenda, acknowledging the biodiversity finance gap.

On the grave matter of chemicals and waste, we call upon UNEA to prioritize the issues of chemicals and waste, noting, in particular, its detrimental impacts on human health and the environment in Africa. In this regard, we urge Member States to look into the issue of illegal transboundary movements of chemicals and waste as reported by African countries in line with the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions.

We commend the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework for acknowledging the important roles and contributions of indigenous peoples and local communities as custodians of biodiversity and partners in the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use and urge UNEA to mainstream that recognition across the environmental spectrum. We take cognizance of the role of women in environmental action and call on Members States, development partners, and all Major Groups and Stakeholders to further commit to building and strengthening their capacity, especially at the grassroots level. We also call on UNEA to support meaningful youth engagement across the spectrum of environmental governance and mainstreaming of the Youth Assemblies in subsequent UNEAs, building on the inaugural Global Youth Environment Assembly that happened on the sidelines of UNEA 5.2.