

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S COMMENTS ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE MINISTERIAL DECLARATION FOR THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY

Amnesty International welcomes the opportunity to submit comments on the first full draft of the Ministerial Declaration of the Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 26 February to 1 March 2024.

We welcome the focus on the need for urgent, effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral action to address the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We also welcome the emphasis on the importance of integrated, science-based approaches, informed by the latest and best available evidence, as well as the knowledge of local communities, to strengthen resilience to present and future emerging challenges, promote global solidarity and we particularly welcome the stress placed on these approaches to advance the realization of the UN General Assembly's resolution 76/300 on the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

However, in our view, the declaration would be much strengthened by referencing human rights and States' obligations to respect, protect, promote and fulfil them at relevant points throughout the declaration. We have provided some suggested language to this end in track changes in the text of the draft declaration below. We also suggest that the declaration be strengthened by an acknowledgment of the greater harm from climate change suffered by the most marginalized individuals, communities, and Indigenous Peoples, and the greater responsibility of historical high emitting states to redress that harm. The declaration should also commit States to a full, fast, and fair phase out of all fossil fuels, in order to meet the greenhouse gas emissions reductions required. The declaration should also commit to providing timely debt relief for all countries in and at risk of debt distress to enable them to meet the challenges of the three planetary environmental crises, which are also human rights crises. The declaration should state that the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples on environment, climate and biodiversity should be sought and used with their free, prior and informed consent.

We would also support the inclusion of the paragraph 9.e on combating air pollution, as this is a major contributor to violations of the right to the highest attainable standard of health.

We are also proposing an additional paragraph 9.i on addressing climate related displacement in manners that are consistent with States' human rights obligations and an additional paragraph 9.j on enhancing protection for environmental human rights defenders.

WHY HUMAN RIGHTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO TACKLE THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Under international human rights law, states have legal and enforceable obligations to tackle the climate crisis. When states fail to take sufficient measures to prevent human rights harms caused by climate change, including foreseeable long-term harms, they violate their obligations under human rights law.



International human rights law provides extensive legally binding obligations that can be used to demand effective climate change policies and measures. Human rights law also provides extensive tools to enforce states' legal obligations. Similarly, human rights principles and standards provide significant guidance to establish the responsibility of businesses in relation to the climate crisis. Human rights are therefore essential to hold states and corporations accountable for the human rights harms related to climate change for which they are responsible.

Recognizing that the climate emergency is a human rights crisis is also important as it can broaden the spectrum of people inspired to campaign for a just and rapid response to tackling climate change. Campaigning and advocating on the basis of human rights – as opposed to solely environmental protection – can motivate some decision-makers to adopt decisions in favour of human rights-consistent climate action, either due to the intrinsic argument made, or by showing that climate action has broad support in society.

As explained by several UN agencies and experts, civil society organizations and Indigenous Peoples, human rights are essential to strengthening climate action. Ensuring that climate measures and policies are consistent with human rights and centred in human rights principles, such as public participation, respect of free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples, equality and non-discrimination and respect of labour rights, is a legal obligation based on the human rights treaties that states have joined. It is also an effective approach to ensure the shift to a zero-carbon economy happens at the speed and scale required to limit global heating to 1.5°C or below without negatively impacting disproportionately on the rights of the most marginalized and those living in poverty. Affirming human rights principles and standards, but also using human rights mechanisms, tools and tactics to enforce these rights, can and has provided a crucial contribution to shape climate action that is ambitious enough to bring real positive transformation to people and the environment.

Groups most affected by the climate crisis, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees, must not be seen only as victims, but everyone should recognize them as rights holders and as key agents of change and leaders in the local, national and international efforts to tackle climate change.¹

ADDRESSING THE GROWING DEBT CRISIS

Growing levels of unsustainable debt are a serious global concern. More than 60% of low-income countries and over 25% of emerging market nations are in, or at risk of, debt distress, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).² UNDP has said that 54 countries, home to half the world's poorest people, need urgent debt relief.³ The

¹ Amnesty International, *Stop burning our rights! What governments and corporations must do to protect humanity from the climate crisis*, 7 June 2021, (Index: POL 30/3476/2021), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol30/3476/2021/en/>, pp 7-8

² International Monetary Fund (IMF), *CGD Talks: Compound Crises Call for Decisive Action*, 13 September 2022, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2022/09/14/tr091322-cgd-transcript>. The IMF does not have an established definition of what an 'emerging market' is. More information about how countries are classified is available here: <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2021/06/the-future-of-emerging-markets-dutttagupta-and-pazarbasioglu.htm>

³ UNDP, "50 percent of world's poorest need debt relief now to avert major systemic development crisis, warns UN Development Programme", 11 October 2022, <https://www.undp.org/press-releases/50-percent-worlds-poorest-need-debt-relief-now-avert-major-systemic-development-crisis->

climate crisis, together with weaknesses of the current financial system, are sending lower- and middle-income countries further into debt, as additional loans are often the only option to finance loss and damage caused by climate change.⁴

Unsustainable levels of debt can have a grave impact on states' ability to fulfil human rights. The cost of servicing existing debt limits and diverts available resources away from crucial social spending and spending on climate action, including climate change adaptation and just transition away from fossil fuels. In Sri Lanka, for example, in 2020, 71.4% of government revenue went to interest payments, compared with a global average of 6%.⁵ Recent figures from Debt Justice show that lower-income country debt payments for 91 countries have grown from 6.6% of government revenues in 2011 to 16.3% in 2023.⁶ According to Oxfam, in 2022, debt servicing for all the world's poorest countries is estimated at USD 43 billion, and in 2021, debt represented 171% of all spending on healthcare, education and social protection combined for low-income countries.⁷ Amnesty International has advocated for essential and timely debt relief to create much-needed fiscal space for social spending in several countries.⁸

Coordinated international action offering debt relief can transform the ability of governments to invest in economic development, climate action and social protection. The debt crisis has been acknowledged in several key fora this year. In February 2023, the G20 Finance Ministers' Meeting recognized the "urgency to address debt vulnerabilities" globally.⁹ In April 2023, the Global Sovereign Debt Roundtable (GSDR), met at the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings, to discuss debt sustainability and restructuring challenges and find ways to address them.¹⁰ There is no evidence,

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⁴ Action Aid, "The Vicious Cycle - Connections Between the Debt Crisis and Climate Crisis" 10 April 2023, <https://actionaid.org/publications/2023/vicious-cycle>

⁵ Amnesty International, "We Are Near Total Breakdown": Protecting the Rights to Health, Food and Social Security in Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis (Index: ASA 37/6052/2022), 4 October 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa37/6052/2022/en/>

⁶ Debt Justice, "Lower income country debt payments to hit highest level in 25 years", 11 April 2023, <https://debtjustice.org.uk/press-release/lower-income-country-debt-payments-set-to-hit-highest-level-in-25-years>. Debt Justice figures include "91 countries classified as low or lower middle income by the World Bank, or as a Small Island Developing State by the UN, where data is available".as a Small Island Developing State by the UN, where data is available".

⁷ Oxfam International, Profiting from Pain, 30 June 2022, Oxfam Media Briefing, <https://www.oxfam.org/en/research/profitting-pain>, p. 6.

⁸ Amnesty International, *Resuscitation Required – The Greek Health System After a Decade of Austerity* (Index: EUR 2/2176/2020), 28 April 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur25/2176/2020/en/>; Amnesty International, "We Are Near Total Breakdown": Protecting the Rights to Health, Food and Social Security in Sri Lanka's Economic Crisis (Index: ASA 37/6052/2022), 4 October 2022, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa37/6052/2022/en/>; Amnesty International, "We just watched COVID-19 patients die": COVID-19 exposed Somalia's weak healthcare system but debt relief can transform it (Index: AFR 52/4602/2021), 18 April 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr52/4602/2021/en/>

⁹ G20, G20 Chair's Summary and Outcome Document First G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting Bengaluru, 24-25 February 2023, <https://www.g20.org/en/media-resources/press-releases/february-23/csod/>

¹⁰ IMF, "Global sovereign debt roundtable co-chairs press statement", 12 April 2023, Press Release No. 23/117, <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2023/04/12/pr23117-global-sovereign-debt-roundtable-cochairs-press-stmt>



however, that these meetings have resulted in actions being taken to ensure timely debt relief is available for countries. Further, current international efforts to address debt crises have been inadequate. For example, only three countries have made a request under the Common Framework for Debt Treatments - an agreement of the G20 and Paris Club countries to coordinate and cooperate on debt treatments for up to 73 low-income countries - and only one has reached an agreement.

PROTECTING ENVIRONMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

As detailed by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights and the environment,¹¹ under human rights law, states have several procedural obligations in relation to their duty to protect people from environmental harm, including climate change. Their main obligations are to provide access to information, facilitate public participation, and provide access to justice and effective remedies. All of these obligations recognize the crucial role that environmental human rights defenders (HRDs) play in demanding action and accountability in the protection of the environment, and the necessary pre-conditions that states must provide so that HRDs can play that role safely and effectively.

These obligations are also recognized under environmental law, including the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. They are also the object of two regional treaties, the 1998 Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, commonly known as the Aarhus Convention,¹² and the 2018 Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Escazú Agreement.¹³ The Escazú Agreement stems from Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on access to information and public participation, and contains the world's first binding and specific provision on the protection of HRDs in environmental matters and therefore sets an example for the whole world to follow. Other similar protective tools should be adopted widely and quickly.

HRDs are groups and individuals who claim and defend human rights, including rights related to the environment, through non-violent actions. Environmental HRDs play a key role in tackling the climate crisis and ensuring a just transition, for example by standing against fossil fuel extractive projects or deforestation, demanding more ambitious

¹¹ OHCHR, *Mapping Human Rights Obligations Relating to the Enjoyment of a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment*, June 2014, [srenvironment.org/sites/default/files/Reports/2018/ClimateChangemapping15-August.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Reports/2018/ClimateChangemapping15-August.pdf); Report of the Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, 1 February 2016, A/HRC/31/52, paras 50-64; UN Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, Report, 24 January 2018, UN Doc. A/HRC/37/59; UN Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, Report, 15 July 2019, UN Doc. A/74/161, para. 64.

¹² See [unece.org/env/pp/treatytext.html](https://www.unece.org/env/pp/treatytext.html) The Aarhus Convention was adopted in 1998 and entered into force in 2001. By the time of writing, it had 47 parties: 46 European and Central Asian countries and the European Union. For the status of signatures and ratifications, see treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=XXVII-13&chapter=27

¹³ See [cepal.org/en/escazuagreement](https://www.cepal.org/en/escazuagreement) The Escazú Agreement entered into force on 22 April 2021, after being ratified by 12 countries. For the status of signatures and ratifications, see observatoriop10.cepal.org/en/treaties/regional-agreement-access-information-public-participation-and-justice-environmental

climate action, or opposing climate mitigation and adaptation projects adopted in violation of human rights.

Because their activities often bring them into conflict with powerful interests, environmental HRDs the world over are among the most at-risk HRDs. They face a high risk of physical attacks, killings, criminalization, threats and intimidation.¹⁴ This particularly applies to those who fight for a safe and healthy environment and access to their land and territories, such as Indigenous rights defenders. Such attacks do not only affect individuals and their immediate social circle, they also create widespread fear and an enduring chilling effect in affected communities and wider civil society and put environmental protection in further jeopardy. Such attacks do not take place in a vacuum. They happen because of widespread impunity and corruption, and because environmental activists are often stigmatized, defamed, silenced and ignored, adding to the risks they face.

The rights to freedom of expression, information, association and peaceful assembly are essential to ensuring that HRDs and civil society at large are able to play their role in demanding decisive climate action, exposing corruption and those who put our environment at risk. However, in many contexts, governments impose or apply restrictions and limitations to these rights such as increased criminal and civil penalties for those who take part in non-violent protests and civil disobedience, censorship, surveillance, and curbs on freedom of association, which constrain activism and put a gag on civic space.

States should view environmental HRDs as crucial allies, not adversaries. They should recognize them as HRDs and protect them in line with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, adopted by consensus in 1998.¹⁵ They must guarantee a safe and enabling environment for all those engaging in this struggle,¹⁶ and guarantee the freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

States should ensure a culture of zero tolerance towards those who attack environmental HRDs. In particular, they should urgently and thoroughly investigate all human rights violations and abuses against environmental HRDs and bring perpetrators to justice. They should also refrain from using legal and administrative provisions or the misuse of

¹⁴ See for example: Amnesty International, *The Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association to Advance Climate Justice: Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association* (INDEX: IOR 40/4235/2021), May 2021, [amnesty.org/download/Documents/IO4042352021ENGLISH.pdf](https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/IO4042352021ENGLISH.pdf); Amnesty International, "We Are Defending the Land with Our Blood" – *Defenders of the Land, Territory and Environment in Honduras and Guatemala* (previously cited); Amnesty International, "They Will Not Stop Us": *Justice and Protection For Amazonian Women, Defenders of the Land, Territory and Environment* (Index: AMR 28/0039/2019), 30 April 2019, [amnesty.org/en/documents/amr28/0039/2019/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr28/0039/2019/en/); Amnesty International, *A Recipe For Criminalization: Defenders of the Environment, Territory and Land in Peru and Paraguay* (Index: AMR 01/8758/2018), 26 April 2018, [amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/8158/2018/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr01/8158/2018/en/); Amnesty International, *Mexico: Caught Between Bullets and Neglect: Lack of Protection For Defenders of the Territory in the Tarahumara Sierra* (Index: AMR 41/9554/2109), 24 January 2019, [amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/9554/2019/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr41/9554/2019/en/); Amnesty International, *Madagascar: A Damocles Sword on Environmental Activist's Head* (Index: AFR 35/6841/2017), 30 July 2017, [amnesty.org/en/documents/af35/6841/2017/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/af35/6841/2017/en/); Amnesty International, *Thailand: Six Years After Billy Disappeared, Authorities Must Provide Justice and Protect His Community's Rights* (Index: ASA 39/2155/2020), 17 April 2020, [amnesty.org/en/documents/asa39/2155/2020/en/](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa39/2155/2020/en/)

¹⁵ See [ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CivicSpace/Pages/DeclarationHumanRightsDefenders.aspx](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/CivicSpace/Pages/DeclarationHumanRightsDefenders.aspx)

¹⁶ The elements of a safe and enabling environment are detailed in the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, 23 December 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/55.



the judicial system to harass, criminalize and stigmatize their activities. States should also ensure that businesses comply with their human rights obligations and refrain from attacking HRDs, including by introducing legislation to curb vindictive lawsuits (so-called SLAPPs: “strategic lawsuits against public participation”) that punish climate and environmental activism and freedom of expression.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL’S COMMENTS IN TRACK CHANGES ON THE DRAFT 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, from 26 February to 1 March 2024, 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, sustainable and human rights-consistent multilateral action to tackle the three planetary environmental crises of human-induced climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
2. We reaffirm all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and we 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 threats posed by the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution to the enjoyment of the right to sustainable development and their impacts on human rights, including human and environmental health, human well-being and security.
4. We emphasize the importance of integrated, science-based approaches, informed by the latest and best available evidence, as well as the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples – that should be sought and used with their free, prior and informed consent - and local communities, to strengthen resilience to present and future emerging challenges, promote global solidarity and advance the realization of the UN General Assembly’s resolution 76/300 on the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
5. We welcome the important outcomes of the twenty-seventh session of the conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP27), including commitments to establish new funding arrangements for assisting developing countries which are particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, including with a focus on addressing Loss and Damage as well as the Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan; the twenty eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP 28) including XXX; the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and its adoption of the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and the fifteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the Abidjan Call to act on drought, desertification and land degradation; as well as the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5) including the [agreement] on a new chemicals and waste management framework beyond 2020.



6. We also welcome with appreciation other recent, important multilateral achievements, including 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 (BBNJ), the outcomes of 2022 UN Ocean Conference and the 2023 UN Water Conference and the high-level meeting on the mid-term Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

7. We note with great concern the main findings of the Synthesis Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) and recognise that, to limit global warming to 1.5°C, global greenhouse gas emissions must be rapidly and progressively reduced by 43% by 2030, below 2019 levels and to 60% by 2035 before ultimately reaching net zero by 2050. By the current trajectory, it is likely that warming will exceed the 1.5°C target during the 21st century, which calls for significant, rapid and sustained emissions reductions in all sectors, especially those with large share and growth in gross GHG emissions, while ensuring that the level of support provided to developing countries and vulnerable regions to mitigate and adapt to climate change is significantly raised to adequate levels.

8. We are aware that in order to revitalize the multilateral system and inspire decisive and collective action to tackle the three planetary environmental crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, as well as other related crises of desertification, land degradation and drought, we urgently need to reinforce global inclusiveness and solidarity, **in line with the international obligation to provide international cooperation and assistance**, and to provide new, additional, and adequate means of implementation.

9. We are strongly committed to urgently address the challenges before us through effective, inclusive, Sustainable, transformative, **gender-responsive**, intra- and inter-generational, science- and knowledge-based **and human rights consistent** actions together with all relevant actors and partners including civil society, **human rights defenders**, academia and philanthropies, Indigenous Peoples and local communities, the private and public sectors, as well women and girls, children and youth and those at risk of being left furthest behind; and we therefore decide to take the following actions, taking into account the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities, as well as the special needs and circumstances of vulnerable regions and the specific challenges faced by developing countries, including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS):

a. Deploy sustained global efforts to address climate change, in line with the goals and objectives of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, towards achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and keeping a limit of 1.5°C temperature rise within reach, including by addressing the urgent need for scaled up action for mitigation, adaptation and resilience. **To this end, we commit to a full, fast and fair phase out of all fossil fuel use and production**, We will prioritise **human rights**, equity and social justice to achieve more sustainable outcomes and co-benefits and reduce trade-offs while sparing no effort to advance climate resilient development and protect our communities against disasters induced or exacerbated by climate change, such as drought, heavy rains, heatwaves, famine, and flooding, which undermine the ability of all countries to achieve sustainable development.

b. Halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, by urgently reversing ecosystem decline, conserving at least 30% of terrestrial and inland water areas and marine coastal areas and ensuring that at least 30% of the world's degraded ecosystems are under restoration, **while fully protecting**

human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples, in affected areas. We will do so by accelerating the implementation of strengthened national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the alignment of national targets with the GBF, whilst driving a transition to nature-positive economies which mainstreams biodiversity in all sectors. We will promote human rights-compliant nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based approaches, support the sustainable use of biodiversity while ensuring the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources, including traditional knowledge.

c. Cooperate for a just and sustainable energy transition that seeks to achieve an energy secure future for all, while guaranteeing rights of impacted workers and communities, respecting national needs and priorities, defining clear actions to address climate change, maximizing on the social and economic opportunities of climate action and promoting effective dialogue and cooperation among all stakeholders.

d. Develop an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, as resolved in UNEA resolution 5/14. We call on all 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, effective and ambitious legally binding outcome of the INC that is consistent with States' human rights obligations by the end of 2024.

e. [Enhance broader cooperation on air pollution, recognizing that air pollution is the leading environmental risk factor for enjoyment of the right to the highest attainable standard of health, contributes to negative impacts on ecosystems, does not stop at national borders and can impact regions in different ways and that addressing air pollution results in multiple benefits to the economy, ecosystems, climate and the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health.]

f. Deploy greater efforts, including mobilizing and allocating adequate resources, for the sound management of chemicals and waste to reduce negative human rights and environmental impacts, and the [implementation] [adoption] [progress toward adoption] [other relevant language to be inserted subject to outcome of ICCM5] of [a new chemicals and waste management framework] [name of new framework to be inserted] following the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM-5) held in September 2023. We also strongly support the process to establish a new Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, as per UNEA Resolution 5/8, and we call on Member States to engage constructively in its ongoing negotiations towards completion by the end of 2024.

g. Incorporate climate, biodiversity and pollution considerations into disaster risk management policies and actions to mitigate and prevent the adverse impacts of natural and human-made hazards on the enjoyment of human rights, including the right to health and on the environment, strengthen the resilience to global risks and shocks and promote a sustainable and inclusive recovery to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This will be done in consultation with meaningful participation of marginalized communities, including women and girls, LGBTI people and persons with disability, who will also be involved in monitoring progress and suggesting changes as necessary, and with the free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous Peoples.

h. Promote gender equity and the empowerment of all women and girls, in line with existing international commitments and human rights obligations, to ensure the full, equal, effective and meaningful participation, representation and leadership of women at all levels of environmental decision making, and promote the collection

and use of gender-disaggregated data and statistics across all policies and actions, in our pursuit of inclusive solutions for the three environmental planetary crises to leave no one behind.

i. Address climate related displacements including internal displacements in manners that respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of both the displaced and the host communities throughout humanitarian response and relocation processes; by enhancing safe and regular migration pathways that respect, promote and realize human rights, including labour rights, in line with international law, and provide a wide range of mobility opportunities, such as work visas and visas for educational purposes or family ties; and by co-operating to adopt adequate mechanisms and mobilize new and additional finances to provide means, support and remedy, including compensation, to people, communities and Indigenous Peoples, who have been displaced or may be relocated as the result of loss and damage caused by the climate crisis in climate-vulnerable developing countries.¹⁷

j. Take additional steps to protect human rights defenders, including environmental defenders working on climate, biodiversity loss and pollution, and to create a safe and enabling environment for their essential activities, including by reporting, investigating and seeking accountability and redress for reprisals against them, and making public information about the actions taken to do so, as well as public recognition of the importance of their work.

10. We will leverage digital transformations as an enabling tool to support sustainable economies and societies through bridging existing digital divides, **progressing the right to** equal access to environmental information and harnessing emerging technologies for environmental sustainability, while ensuring that digitalization remains inclusive, equitable and sustainable **and does not violate fundamental human rights, including the right to privacy.**

11. We commit to continue to advocate for a whole-of-society approach that can effectively empower societies at large, and particularly vulnerable and low-income populations, to accelerate research, innovation, education and behavioural change, facilitate their just transition to sustainable consumption and production and move towards the implementation of circular economy models along value chains and sustainable lifestyles, in line with the 10 YFP Global Strategy for Sustainable Consumption and Production 2023-2030.

12. We call upon Member States, International Financial Institutions, international development banks, private foundations and funds and other actors to promote further synergies and coherence in financing action to address the three environmental planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, aligning relevant policy and regulatory measures with international goals and targets, **and States' human rights obligations.** We will engage domestic, international, and private sector actors towards a rapid mobilization of accessible means of implementation, **mainly in the form of grants, not loans,** 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, **the global tax system, and to address debt sustainability** including **by** reshaping economic governance models and decision-making to better

¹⁷ Amnesty International, *Stop burning our rights! What governments and corporations must do to protect humanity from the climate crisis*, 7 June 2021, (Index: POL 30/3476/2021), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol30/3476/2021/en/> pp17-18

account for the environment in measuring progress beyond GDP.

13. We reiterate our recognition of UNEP's role in strengthening the science-policy interface and to undertake strategic foresight and horizon scanning, in collaboration with existing science-policy platforms to improve the capacities of Member States and stakeholders at all levels to prioritize scientific research and stimulate and encourage decision making and actions that can anticipate trends and risks, and prevent and respond to emerging and future environmental issues.

14. We note the increasing necessity and catalytic role of UNEP and its Regional Offices in strengthening regional cooperation, including through the Regional Ministerial fora, to tackle context-specific environmental challenges. We also recognize the increasing demand for environmental support at the country level and UNEP's engagement with Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams to support the environmental dimension of sustainable development in Common Country Analyses and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and invite the strengthening of UNEP's role within the UN Development System at the regional and country level, with an increase in resources, including from the Regular Budget.

15. 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, including at the country level, in the implementation of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the UNEA outcomes.

16. We look forward to the adoption of a Pact for the Future at the Summit of the Future in September 2024, as an opportunity to further advance our collective environmental commitments, urge all Member States as well as relevant NGOs, Major Groups and stakeholders, UNEP, MEAs and other relevant international organisations to advocate for the implementation of the relevant actions set out in this statement during the consultation process, and to ensure an ambitious outcome that will reinvigorate environmental multilateralism, stimulate the implementation of existing commitments, strengthen synergies between the work and implementation of the MEAs and agree on concrete **and human rights-compliant** solutions for a better tomorrow with greater effectiveness, inclusiveness and confidence. 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.

17. 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.