

## Intervention from Major Groups in Closing Plenary of the OECPR-6 23 February 2024

**Speaker: Patrizia Heidegger (Regional Facilitator, Europe)**

Chair, distinguished delegates,

**Thank you** for giving us the opportunity for a joint statement at the end of the OECPR week. I am delivering this statement on behalf of all 9 Major Groups and stakeholders from the six UNEP regions.

We would like to **thank the cluster co-facilitators** for their support for meaningful stakeholder engagement. Negotiations have **not proceeded at the pace required**. We appreciate the delegates' hard work and call on you to progress and conclude on strong solutions. The urgency of the planetary crisis **requires action and multilevel collaboration now!**

We will highlight **a few points** from the negotiations this week:

**On chemical pollution, MGs** - with reservations from BMG – stress: it threatens our right to a healthy environment. We call for urgent **legislative measures** and an **integrated approach** to ensure the **sound management of chemicals and waste**. This requires the consistent implementation of MEAs such as **BRS and Minamata**, of the **Global Framework on Chemicals** including its resolutions on **gender**, the **Science Policy Panel**, and the **alliance on highly hazardous pesticides**. It requires a rapid agreement on a strong **global treaty to end plastic pollution**, a phase out of **'forever chemicals'** and **Highly Hazardous Pesticides** and finally a **ban of chrysotile asbestos**.

We **welcome the resolution on Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals** and we hope member states can agree to ensure a strong collaboration between UNEP, Member States and Major Groups and stakeholders, through an **open-ended expert group** with a clearly defined mandate. We strongly support the language on the rights of **Indigenous Peoples** and **just transition** and welcome the **Precautionary Approach** with regards to deep seabed mining. We appreciate the synergies with the **circular economy resolution** highlighting the **importance of sufficiency and efficiency** in resource use.

With regards to **nature-based solutions**, we need an **inclusive and transparent process to develop** criteria, standards, and robust social, environmental, and animal welfare safeguards to prevent misuse. NbS must prioritise **ecosystem integrity, human rights, and rights of Indigenous Peoples, for both rural and urban populations**. In line with the Global Biodiversity Framework and UNFCCC decisions, NbS must support ecosystem-based approaches.

MGs (with reservations from Business and Children and Youth) **believe that Solar Radiation Modification** does **nothing to tackle the root causes of the climate crisis**. Most SRM technologies involve the **intentional release of pollutants on a planetary scale**. The Human Rights Council's Advisory Committee has warned it "could seriously interfere with the human rights of millions and perhaps billions of people". The *de facto* moratorium on all

geoengineering under the CBD is informed by extensive research and expertise. The proposed resolution on SRM risks undermining this moratorium, legitimising SRM and delaying the phase out of fossil fuels. UNEA6 should focus on upholding the precautionary principle, (rights of) Free Prior and Informed Consent, access to information, public participation, access to remedy, and the obligation not to cause transboundary harm. We welcome the African (Environment) Ministers leadership in **calling for an international mechanism for Non-Use of SRM** and urge Member States to follow suit.

We express our unwavering support for the adoption of the draft resolution on **environmental assistance and recovery** proposed by Ukraine. With its initial intention, the text would be a valuable step towards **better protection of ecosystems and the communities** dependent on them from the devastating impacts of armed conflicts. We call on states to preserve the draft's strong language on **state responsibility for conflict-linked environmental and (working) landscapes damage**, its support for the wider legal framework, its suggested use of the multilateral environmental agreements as a tool for recovery, and the important (and timely) proposed consultative process on guidelines for data collection.

We call on Member States to **support environmental justice and the resolution on climate justice**.

Let me finish by saying: **There can be no sustainable development without peace, and no peace without sustainable development.** We call on all member states to do everything they can to end armed conflicts and to embrace non-violence and respect of human dignity. Only through a collective commitment to peace and sustainable development can we pave the way for a more secure, just, and harmonious world for present and future generations.

Thank you for your kind consideration!