

UNEA-6 opening plenary

(5 minutes)

Web title: UNEA-6: Global unity through environmental diplomacy

Your Excellency Leila Benali, President of UNEA-6 and Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco,
Your Excellency Soipan Tuyu, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry of Kenya,
Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of UNON,
Excellencies, distinguished guests, and friends.

Welcome to the Sixth United Nations Environment Assembly, taking place here in Nairobi, the environmental capital of the world. My thanks go, as ever, to the government of Kenya for decades of commitment to UNEP and international environmental governance. My thanks also to Minister Leila Benali for your excellent leadership over the last year.

This assembly knows all too well that we are living through an intensifying triple planetary crisis: the crisis of climate change, the crisis of nature and biodiversity loss, which includes land degradation and desertification, and the crisis of pollution and waste. This crisis casts its shadow over every person on this planet, regardless of nationality, colour, faith or gender.

This forum, the world's most-influential decision-making body on the environment, has consistently shown this unity we need to overcome this crisis. And this year, the assembly is more powerful and united than ever. I often say at these assemblies that the world is watching. Well, this year world isn't just watching. The world is here. We have a record number of delegates, a record number of countries represented, a record number of ministers.

We have the voices of the younger generation – who, at the Youth Environment Forum, issued a declaration asking for intergenerational equity and strong backing for environmental multilateralism. We have the voices of civil society, Indigenous Peoples, women, businesses and more feeding in through the Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum. And we have the Multilateral Environmental Agreements here in Nairobi to reimagine how to work together for accelerated action.

So, as you, the Member States, negotiate, I ask you to consider these perspectives and deliver resolutions and decisions that work for everyone, everywhere. This is the real inclusive multilateralism that we all seek.

Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

Through the tireless work of the Open-Ended Committee of the Permanent Representatives, 19 resolutions and two decisions are on the table. This would have not been possible without the dedication of the Chair and Bureau of the Committee, and the co-facilitators of resolution clusters debated during last week's Open-Ended Committee. My thanks.

Before you are resolutions that can speed the transition to net-zero. Improve the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink. Equip ocean and sea governance to tackle the threats ahead. Build the resilience of people to drought. Support international efforts to restore degraded land – such as the new World Restoration Flagships we will honour at tomorrow evening's Gala of Hope.

There are resolutions that will boost multilateral actions to deliver climate justice. Spark a global conversation on emerging technologies that will equip nations with the science and wisdom to make the right choices for people and planet. Help to usher out the culture of take, make and waste that is the twisted heart of the triple planetary crisis – as highlighted by the 2024 Global Resources Outlook from the International Resource Panel, which is being launched this week.

Friends,

Time and again, the Nairobi spirit has delivered on environmental multilateralism. Two years ago, this Assembly gavelled a historic decision to launch negotiations towards a global instrument on plastic pollution, a process that should conclude this year. You gave the world a much-needed dose of hope. And you showed the world environmental multilateralism is alive. It works. And it is here to stay.

So, I ask you to be united once more and craft strong resolutions. Resolutions that can bring real impact. That address the needs of many people already struggling under the burden of the triple planetary crisis. And that shore up the environmental foundations upon which a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future will rest.

Thank you.