

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

My name is Sharon Mutende from Kenya speaking on behalf of The Children and Youth Major Group.

On the 17th and 18th of February, we convened more than 450 young people from across the world for the Global Youth Environment Assembly, graciously hosted by UNEP here at the UN Office in Nairobi. During 17 sessions over two days, young people learned about technical topics such as ozone and sustainable finance, built negotiating positions, and developed a better understanding of UNEP and the UNEA process.

We welcome the proposal in the Draft Ministerial Declaration to acknowledge the Youth Environment Assembly. We seek your support in formalising intergenerational equity within UNEP's processes, including codifying the Global Youth Environment Assembly before subsequent sessions of UNEA.

We further call on Member States to strengthen UNEP's role in the science-policy interface, taking into account the perspectives of communities most affected by the environmental crises. We welcome the resolutions on climate justice and sustainable lifestyles as being essential components of a trust-building process that enshrines these important principles at the world's highest decision-making body on the environment.

Excellencies, the world is watching.

We emerge from OECPR without a single resolution agreed ad ref, and many texts have lost the ambition found in earlier drafts. This is not good enough when planetary systems are on the brink of collapse.

We see the broken promises, the empty rhetoric, and the increasingly dire consequences of inaction. The young people of the world call upon you to ensure that we leave this UNEA more ambitious, more hopeful, and more aware of our collective responsibility in environmental governance.

We ask you to contribute to a global framework for environmental governance that is robust, comprehensive, and enforceable. This framework must ensure every stakeholder is held accountable for their actions, placing the well-being of our planet and its inhabitants above financial gain. We ask you to ensure that succeeding generations do not inherit a world facing depleted resources, rampant pollution, and destroyed ecosystems.

This week, we ask you to work with a long-term perspective, ensuring that your words are nothing less than a promise to future generations to protect our collective home through the best way we know how - multilateral governance.

It is our hope that as the gavel goes down later this week, we can restore trust in multilateralism and demonstrate that the spirit of Nairobi, embodying fraternity and a commitment to our environment, remains alive and well.

Thank you.