

Joint Statement of the Regions to the UNEA-6 Opening

Thank you Chair.

My name is Mariam Al Jaajaa, presenting the joint statement of the Regions of the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

We have been actively engaged during the Sixth Open Ended CPR and the 20th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum. We express our gratitude to the UNEA Presidency of Kingdom of Morocco and the UNEP Secretariat for the platform and for the commitment to engagement demonstrated during negotiations.

We would like to take the opportunity today to call on all of you to deeply and meaningfully consider the central importance of the respect of human dignity and of human rights.

We are living in a time where fundamental human rights are being violated on a daily basis, where freedom, safety, and justice for all cannot be guaranteed. We recognize the urgent need to dismantle systems of oppression, to end occupation, stop the destruction of working landscapes, to halt war crimes and genocide, and to support decolonization. We highlight the need to protect the rights to self-determination and non-violence. And we jointly call for ceasefire.

A non-negotiable commitment to respecting human rights is a necessary prerequisite to making progress on our common environmental agenda.

One fundamental human right we wanted to call out explicitly is the right to food security and food sovereignty, a basic human need. We collectively advocate for a socially responsible, inclusive, and equitable transformation towards sustainable food systems. We stress the need for participatory governance in the food system and enhanced accountability and transparency mechanisms for communities.

We endorse agroecology, regenerative and other innovative practices that improve soils, protect health and the environment, enhance livelihoods of small scale farmers, increase incomes, and promote resilience.

Finally, we urge you to move past a purely anthropocentric approach to environmental policy and to explicitly acknowledge, support, and safeguard the rights of nature. Nature most often has no legally enshrined rights. But nature is what sustains and connects us all. We now need champions across the planet to join forces and to collectively elevate this critical topic.

We see human rights and the rights of nature as both essential and interconnected. On behalf of the six UNEP world regions in this first ever united regional statement to UNEA, we beseech you to do the same.