

National statement (3 min)

Minister of Climate and the Environment, Mr. Kai Mykkänen, Finland

at 6th UN Environment Assembly, 29th February (12.00-13.00 hours)

Your Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

According to the World Economic Forum, climate change, biodiversity loss and natural disasters will be the biggest threats we face this decade.

At the same time, armed conflicts worldwide are having a devastating impact on humans and the environment. We have seen that drastically over the past two years in Ukraine - following the launch of Russia's full scale war of aggression during our last UN Environment Assembly – and more recently in Gaza and in many other areas. Finland reaffirms its commitment to supporting UNEP's work on disasters and conflicts, as demonstrated by our voluntary contribution.

More than half of the world's GDP is dependent on nature. It is our duty to take action to mitigate environmental threats in an urgent manner.

The good news is that we have political commitments and technological solutions to tackle the planetary crises. While governments bear the responsibility of maintaining high levels of ambition, true progress can only be achieved by investors and the private sector. Financial sector can accelerate this transformation.

Finland stands committed to leading by example. We are dedicated to increasing private investment in biodiversity and leveraging nature data to inform decision-making and budgetary allocations.

Furthermore, we are committed to become climate neutral by 2035, in close collaboration with the private sector. We want to increase our carbon handprint with new green transition solutions, but also stand ready to provide our expertise related to positive nature handprints.

Finland is a long-term supporter of the multilateral system. We recognize the pivotal role of the UNEA as the highest-level decision-making body in environmental matters. It is important that the UNEA-6 will send a strong message to the forthcoming Summit of the Future on the urgency of finding tangible solutions to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. To succeed, we also need to ensure all financial flows are in line with our commitment and encourage more countries with the financial means to join the contributor base.

Over the years, we have made many important decisions in UNEA. The on-going negotiations for a binding plastic treaty is a prime example of how UNEA can move the environmental agenda forward.

We believe that effective multilateralism and environmental governance thrive when environmental agreements complement one another, and their implementation remains coherent. Finland is pleased to support UNEP's work in this regard.

In conclusion, we must listen to the messages from young people, including from the Youth Environment Assembly. Equally, we need to hear the voices of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities, and those who are left furthest behind. The right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment belongs to everyone.

Thank you.