

STATEMENT OF HUNGARY

by Dr Anikó Raisz Minister of State for Environmental Policy and Circular
Economy, Hungary

UNEA6

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Madam/Mr Vice President
(Madam Executive Director)

Excellences,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, let me express my appreciation to the UNEA6 president Her Excellency Leila Benali and her presidential team for their guidance through the preparatory process, similarly to the UNEP Executive Director and her team for running this UNEA. Thank you!

Our National Sustainable Development Framework Strategy, adopted by the Parliament more than a decade ago, states that sustainability is built on four pillars: besides on environmental protection and economic development, also on demography and cultural heritage. So we want our children to inherit a land with thriving nature, flourishing economy and our spiritual knowledge gathered throughout the centuries. We continuously work on that, realizing we can only accomplish these objectives together, with wide-spread cooperation of the economic actors and the people themselves.

It is my honour to represent here – in the environmental capital of the world – Hungary, a European country with 7 neighbouring states, which is situated in the middle of the most international catchment area of the world, the Danube river basin. From what I have just said one can easily realise how vital international cooperation, including in the framework of multilateral agreements, for my country is, with special attention to transboundary management of shared resources, particularly waters.

Based on our long time experience we are well aware of the necessity, benefits and also the challenges of international cooperation at different levels, which can and shall build and strengthen each other.

Multilateral and global institutions like UNEP can substantially facilitate this work, like does the UNEP's regional presence in the Carpathian Convention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Besides reaffirming the advanced developments in climate and biodiversity actions, also the topic of waste and pollution requires increased attention from us. To this end we strongly hope to reach a legally binding global plastic treaty – in which process riverine and terrestrial aspects need to be also given due attention. We need to act responsibly, and set to ourselves ambitious, but at the same time realistic targets.

But international objectives are not the end of the road. National policies and actions are preconditions of international success. The Hungarian government attaches great importance to the protection of our environment and natural resources, as a basis of the family friendly policy, and is therefore committed to promoting circular economy and green transition. Our strategic goals include, among others, improving resource efficiency and increasing competitiveness. Over the past years we have adopted a number of measures to this end. We introduced a revised extended producer responsibility system as well as a mandatory deposit return scheme and started the separate collection of bio-waste. Hungary was one of the first countries to adopt an act on climate neutrality for 2050. Our National Strategy for the conservation of Biodiversity until 2030 is also in place already, in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. But we also work in the field: in Hungary, in harmony with our already mentioned extended understanding of sustainability, we plant ten trees for every new-born child; so the so-called 'Forest of Newborns' grows by a million trees every year. And it's not only the trees that we want to give to our children: Hungary has decades of experience in environmental education and awareness raising based on specific programs from green kindergartens to eco-schools. As we consider our children and their mindset to be one of our most precious national treasures.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As throughout history, again, in the field of environmental protection, we have to share our good practices and wisdom in order to come forward. Knowing that a number of other countries also have environment or

sustainability mentioned in their constitutions, allow me to refer to three dispositions from our Fundamental Law. According to them:

“Natural resources, in particular arable lands, forests and the reserves of water; biodiversity, in particular native plant and animal species; [...] shall form the common heritage of the nation, it shall be the obligation of the State and everyone to protect and maintain them, and to preserve them for future generations. [Art. P) sec. (1)]

We commit ourselves to promoting and safeguarding our heritage, along with all man-made and natural assets of the Carpathian Basin. We bear responsibility for our descendants and therefore we shall protect the living conditions of future generations by making prudent use of our material, intellectual and natural resources.

...To achieve the sustainable development of humanity, Hungary shall strive for cooperation with all the peoples and countries of the world. [Art. Q) sec. (1)] ” End of quote.

President Benali in her opening speech mentioned mutual respect. In this context, if we all could respect these mentioned principles not only in our own countries, but also in the others, if we strived for meaningful cooperation, I am sure we would get close to tackling the challenges we are facing. Because we are capable of doing that.

Please let me conclude with the words of the late Ottó Herman, Hungarian nature scientist and polyhistor of my hometown, “Let us be proud of who we have been, and let us try to be better than who we are.”

Thank you for your kind attention!

