

## **Draft UNEA 6 National Statement**

**For delivery on Thursday February 29<sup>th</sup> 2024**

Ireland continues to believe that multilateralism is the only solution to addressing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We need to move our relationship with nature from one of exploitation to one of rehabilitation and symbiosis and UNEP's ongoing work and leadership are crucial in underpinning our collective efforts.

However, multilateralism means nothing without action at a national level. In Ireland we are taking action on climate, biodiversity loss and pollution to support our shared global commitments.

Our Climate Action Act of 2021, provides the legislative framework for how we are combating the climate crisis and commits us to

achieving carbon neutrality no later than 2050. This is underpinned by the development of Climate Action Plans, that identify the policies, measures and actions that are required in every sector in society to turn this ambition into action and reality.

The best available science must continue to be the basis for our collective efforts. Ireland reiterates its support of the IPCC process and thanks them for the work on the sobering AR6 report. We look forward to work commencing on the AR7.

The loss of habitats and species continue at an alarming rate. At CBD COP15, Ireland was a proud to adopt the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. As part of our domestic implementation of this Framework, Ireland recently-launched its 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan, which will include the development of a National Nature Restoration Plan. The Government of Ireland has

also announced a €3.15 billion Climate and Nature Fund that will support environmental actions, including biodiversity measures.

As an island nation, Ireland is particularly conscious of the need to protect and restore our ocean ecosystems. We continue to take action to address this, both internationally and domestically. In order to meet our UN Convention on Biological Diversity Kunming-Montreal marine targets, Ireland will soon publish new legislation underpinning the protection of 30% of our maritime area by 2030.

Managing, protecting and restoring water and water-related ecosystems is a prerequisite to mitigate and manage the triple crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution - underlining the importance of integrated and dedicated actions in each of these areas. Ireland advocates for a re-enforced multilateralism on water, with the United Nations at its core, continuing the political momentum created by the UN 2023 Water Conference and keeping

water high on the political agenda across international processes and fora.

We acknowledge the impact our consumption and production choices have had on our environment. Since we took office in 2020, Ireland's Government has introduced several new policy initiatives that aim to create a much more sustainable and circular economy, most recently our deposit return scheme for plastic bottles and cans, which I was proud to launch earlier this month.

With estimates of up to 14 million tonnes of plastic ending up in our shared ocean every year we have no time to waste in tackling this problem. In this regard, Ireland remains strongly committed to progressing the work of the INC on plastic pollution, which is at a critical stage. We would like to express our gratitude to UNEP and the INC team for their excellent leadership in progressing this work

and call for a vital reduction in the production of primary plastic polymers.

Despite the work that that has already been done, continued and sustained action is essential if we are to be able to address the crises we face. Every step we take this week at UNEA 6 is important in moving us forward towards achieving our common goals and we can only do this working together.