

**NATIONAL STATEMENT TO THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF UNEA6 BY H.E. HIGH COMMISSIONER MJ MAHLANGU OF SOUTH AFRICA, 29 FEBRUARY 2024**

*Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It is an honour to address you at this 6<sup>th</sup> Session of UNEA. I would like to extend our appreciation to the Government and people of Kenya for the warm hospitality extended to our delegation.

As an international community, we meet to strengthen the collective multilateral response to critical issues affecting our planet and people. The theme of this 6<sup>th</sup> Session of UNEA: “**effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.**” is particularly relevant, important, and timely. This UNEA must instill the necessary urgency and propel actions that we need now to prevent the destruction of our planet and the devastation of our societies.

Our delegation here at UNEA6 has actively participated in the negotiations on more than twenty resolutions and we would like to convey our appreciation to the co-facilitators of the five clusters.

Our overall assessment is that good progress is being made, although critically important cross-cutting messages are still not coming through.

The common theme in addressing all the environmental challenges addressed under these clusters is how to unlock meaningful and transformative support and means of implementation for developing countries, addressing all three pillars of sustainable development.

Our view is that we need a new approach to technology, where people and planet-saving technologies are regarded as a common good and are not hoarded. However, we must avoid the temptation of potentially dangerous technologies, such as altering solar radiation, for experimentation in Africa and other developing countries, without the knowledge and consent of the host governments.

The outcome of this UNEA6 should embrace the important issue of critical minerals and rare earths required for the green transition. The key issue is that the new economy needs to be different from past economies and that the countries providing the resources need to reap the benefits of people-centred sustainable development.

We are concerned by the way UNEA6 underplays critical issues for developing countries. This gathering cannot be a platform to negate key principles such as the principle of CBDR, mandates of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, and the provision of means of implementation for developing countries in addressing environmental challenges. We call on our partners to play a constructive role with a robust set of outcomes that will keep us on track to restore harmony with nature.

In conclusion, allow me to once more call on the international community, in the spirit of solidarity, to fulfil our mutual undertaking made during the Rio Conference and subsequently the 2030 Agenda, to leave **no one** behind, South Africa would like to add to this that we should also leave **no place** behind.

**I thank you.**