

**Sixth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly -
New Zealand National Statement**

*(Delivered by Mr Glenn Wigley, General Manager, Ministry for the Environment -
Chemicals and Waste)*

Madame President, Excellencies, Executive Director, and colleagues.

Firstly, I would especially like to acknowledge our host government Kenya.

The past two years have been marked by an increase in multilateral activity on the environment. In this time, the global community has delivered several much-needed wins for environmental cooperation. To highlight just a few;

- the creation of a specific loss and damage fund to address climate effects;
- an ambitious framework to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030;
- a legally-binding instrument to conserve and sustainably manage marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction;
- and a global framework to minimise harm from chemicals and wastes.

This period has also seen UNEP make good headway towards programmes of work agreed at UNEA-5. These include;

- negotiations towards an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution;
- consultations on nature-based solutions and on enhancing the environmental sustainability of minerals and metals; and
- working groups on nitrogen and a science-policy panel to contribute to the sound management of chemicals and wastes.

New Zealand looks forward to further contributing to ongoing programmes of work.

These successes demonstrate the value of the multilateral system as a vehicle for coherent international cooperation on environmental issues.

However, these achievements are set against the worrying backdrop of the triple planetary crisis. The global impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution which are increasingly being felt (in our region particularly by the Pacific Island countries), and worsening at an alarming rate. Their devastating effects have been compounded by natural disasters, global conflicts, an escalating cost of living, and deepening inequality.

These effects present a stark reminder of the critical need to maintain the gains we have made and develop, accelerate and implement actions to address the interconnected challenges we face. To rise to these challenges we must support each other, developed and developing countries, in all of our efforts. To this end, New Zealand is pleased to announce a contribution to support least developed countries and small island developing States' participation at UNEA-6.

In te reo Māori, the indigenous language of New Zealand, there is a saying: "*Ko ahau te taiao, ko te taiao ko ahau.*" This can be interpreted as "**I am the environment and the environment is me.**" If we are to address the threats to earth's systems, we must focus on the health of our environment – as the foundation for our prosperity.

In doing so we must focus on practical actions that are inclusive, integrated, solutions-focused, and forwarding looking.

As Member States, we have a role in leading collective action. But it is not a task for governments alone - we must bring everyone along. We need to empower and encourage civil society, Indigenous Peoples, disabled peoples, women and girls, industry, the financial sector, and local and central governments all to play their part. And we need a strong and effective UNEP to set the global environmental agenda and provide technical expertise. In order to do so, UNEP needs the resources to fulfil its full potential.

In spite of the challenges we face, UNEA presents a unique opportunity to guide global actions to address them. As the highest-level decision-making body on the environment, we can drive coordinated multilateral environmental action in the critical remaining part of this decade. The achievements over the past 2 years demonstrate that tangible progress is possible.

The world is relying on us to make UNEA-6 a successful one focused on results. Under the leadership of Inger Andersen, and with its expert and committed staff, we know that UNEP will continue to deliver for the global community. We in New Zealand pledge our ongoing support.

Thank you.

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