

Thanks chair.

My name is Djatougbe Aziaka, cofacilitator of NGO MG, speaking on behalf of 9 major groups and stakeholders

During UNEA, particularly UNEA 6, we witnessed significant attention given to environmental multilateralism and the synergy between Secretariats responsible for the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). We welcome the progress made in implementing previous UNEA resolutions. However, more efforts are needed to adequately address the planetary crisis, and as Major Groups and Stakeholders we highlight:

1. We stress the importance of using the correct language for civil society engagement. Terms like "stakeholders" or "observers" undermine the official mechanism established in 1992: the Major Groups and Stakeholders that includes everyone and highlights those in the most vulnerable situation. We request the inclusion and recognition of the Major Groups as the official mechanism for civil society engagement within UNEP, ensuring the participation of those most affected by biodiversity loss, pollution, climate change, and land desertification.
2. **Establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group:** We recommend creating an entity to assist in evaluating the progress of the adopted decisions and proposing ways to improve coordination between existing and future Secretariats. This Ad Hoc Working Group should be tasked with designing a strategy for enhancing coordination between Secretariats, ensuring more effective and streamlined implementation of environmental agreements.
3. **UNEP Funding for Sustainable Development:** Adequate funding is key to UNEP's role in achieving sustainable development. We hope to see more funds directed towards supporting the Major Groups and stakeholders, enabling effective participation in addressing global challenges. Increased resources are necessary to ensure greater representation of vulnerable groups,
4. We support the nexus of human rights in advancing the increasingly inseparable linkage between human rights and the environment and we hereby welcome the need to support and protect environmental defenders. We highlight the need for increased protection and support for environmental defenders who face significant risks and challenges. We propose establishing a fund or support mechanism to ensure their safety and enable them to continue their vital work, in line with the UNEP's Defenders policy.
5. Within UNEP, cities and subnational governments were included in biodiversity COP15. During COP28, a powerful initiative, CHAMP was launched. A resolution is needed towards UNEA7 on multilevel action within UNEP to ensure that environmental ministers actively engage on urbanization, and multilevel governance matters while being integrated into UNEP's already visionary work.

6. One of the most commendable developments has been the introduction of the new Youth and Education program in UNEP's program of work, and we reiterate the enhancement of equity in follow-up programs such as the young talent pipeline.
7. Finally, we are hopeful that the Group of Friends will be a successful initiative, fostering more effective and inclusive participation of the Major Groups in the lead-up to UNEA-7

Thank you