

## **Saudi Arabia's Input for the Zero Draft of the UNEA-7 Ministerial Declaration**

### **1. Advancing the UNEA-7 Theme: Key Messages and Priorities**

We believe UNEA-7 must embrace a pragmatic, inclusive, and technology-driven approach to environmental governance in alignment with nationally determined approaches and pathways. To this end, Saudi Arabia emphasizes:

#### **A. Just and Equitable Transitions for Sustainable Development**

- Transitions must be just, equitable, and nationally determined in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.
- The global transitions toward sustainability must be just, gradual, equitable, and nationally determined, integrating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced and integrated manner ensuring poverty eradication
- Policies must ensure that economic stability, energy security, and environmental action are pursued in parallel.
- The transitions must be technology-neutral, allowing countries to pursue GHG emission reduction strategies suited to their national circumstances and contexts.

#### **B. The Role of Innovation and Technology in Climate Action**

- Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS), Direct Air Capture (DAC), and clean Hydrogen must be integrated into global climate strategies.
- Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) should be recognized as a holistic, science-based approach to emissions reduction and removal.

#### **C. Addressing Water Scarcity**

- Water security is a global challenge—innovations in desalination, wastewater recycling, and sustainable irrigation must be prioritized.

#### **D. Addressing Land Degradation**

- Increase protected areas to reach the 30% target, helping combat land degradation.
- Establish gene banks to support biodiversity and restore soil health.
- Promote health and well-being by addressing the impacts of land degradation.
- Encourage sustainable economic development linked to protected areas.
- Empower women through involvement in land restoration initiatives.

- Enhance ecological connectivity with transboundary MPAs, supporting resilience against degradation.
- Desertification and land degradation require urgent international cooperation, particularly in dry regions like the Middle East.
- The Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) and Middle East Green Initiative (MGI) serve as models for large-scale afforestation and land restoration.

### **E. Addressing Desertification**

- Address desertification by implementing strategies for sustainable land management and restoration.
- Enhance soil health through practices that improve soil quality and promote vegetation cover.
- Mitigate impacts by adopting national initiatives
- Build resilience in affected areas through targeted environmental interventions.

### **F. Addressing Drought**

- Address drought management to achieve food security and ensure water availability.
- Develop early warning systems to predict and mitigate drought impacts.
- Improve water management practices to optimize usage and conservation.
- Invest in drought-resistant crops to enhance agricultural resilience.
- Enhance community capacity to respond to drought through education and resource management.

### **G. Addressing Waste Management**

- Address waste management that are nationally determined to promote sustainable development.
- Promote awareness of waste disposal.
- Implement recycling programs to minimize waste.

## **2. Key Scientific Findings for Ministerial Declaration Inclusion**

Saudi Arabia advocates for a declaration that reflects the latest scientific and economic realities, including:

### **A. Balanced Energy Transitions Strategies**

- IPCC's scientific reports emphasize that a diverse energy mix is necessary to meet global energy demand while reducing emissions.
- CCUS and hydrogen technologies are essential tools for achieving countries' net-zero targets.

#### **B. Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience**

- Scientific reports confirm that large-scale afforestation, mangrove restoration, and regenerative agriculture improve carbon sequestration and biodiversity.

#### **C. Advancing the Circular Carbon Economy (CCE)**

- The CCE approach, endorsed by the G20, provides a comprehensive framework for effective emissions utilization and removal, while promoting economic growth.

#### **D. Waste Reduction and Management**

- Research indicates that implementing waste reduction strategies, such as source separation and composting
- Studies demonstrate that the integration of nationally determined plans and strategies is essential, as they enable countries to customize their waste management approaches according to their unique social and economic capabilities and circumstances, ultimately ensuring more effective and equitable outcomes.

#### **E. Advanced Recycling Technologies and Knowledge Transfer**

- The advancement of innovative recycling technologies is critical for enhancing waste management practices globally. Research shows that technology and knowledge transfer can significantly improve recycling efficiency and effectiveness. This transfer not only facilitates the adoption of best practices but also empowers developing nations to build local capacities, thereby promoting sustainable development and reducing environmental impacts

#### **F. Land Degradation and Drought Resilience**

- Scientific studies indicate that land degradation and increasing drought conditions pose significant threats to food security and biodiversity. Effective land management practices, including agroecology and soil restoration, are essential for enhancing resilience against these challenges and ensuring sustainable agricultural productivity.

### **3. Collective Actions and Policy Solutions for Effective Governance**

To ensure that UNEA-7 delivers tangible outcomes, Saudi Arabia proposes:

## **A. Establishing a Global Framework for Circular Carbon Economy (CCE)**

- UNEA-7 should promote CCE as a viable, technology-driven approach to emissions management.
- International cooperation on carbon capture projects and low-emission energy solutions should be prioritized.
- UNEA-7 should support circular economy approaches for plastics, including advanced recycling technologies and sustainable material innovations.

## **B. Strengthening Regional Cooperation on Water Security**

- Nations should collaborate on sustainable water resource management, particularly in regions facing extreme water stress.
- UNEA-7 should endorse investments in desalination, efficient irrigation, and water reuse technologies.

## **C. Enhancing Climate Finance Mechanisms**

- UNEA-7 should call for increased funding for developing countries, ensuring that climate action does not come at the expense of economic growth and energy security.

## **D. Promoting Sustainable Waste Management Practices**

- Emphasize the importance of knowledge transfer and cooperation among countries to enhance capacity building in waste management.

## **E. Addressing Land Degradation and Drought Resilience**

- Implement policies that promote sustainable land management and restoration practices to combat land degradation and enhance resilience against drought.
- Global efforts should promote partnerships like the Riyadh Global Partnership for Drought, established during Saudi Arabia's hosting of the UNCCD COP16, focusing on sustainable land management, ecosystem restoration, and community resilience.
- Support capacity-building initiatives for vulnerable communities to adapt agricultural practices that improve food security.

## **F. Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Environmental Solutions**

- Encourage the use of AI technologies to optimize resource management and enhance waste recycling.

- Promote international collaboration to ensure all countries can access AI tools for sustainable development.

#### **4. Additional Messages for Consideration**

Saudi Arabia urges UNEA-7 to include the following strategic messages:

- Energy security and sustainability must be achieved together. Climate policies must recognize the global need for reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy sources.
- Climate solutions must be inclusive and realistic. Developing countries must be empowered to pursue their nationally determined pathways context of sustainable development
- Technology will drive the future of sustainability. Innovation, not just regulation, will determine the success of global climate efforts.
- Highlight that plastics, when managed sustainably, play a critical role in sustainability, economic development, and innovation.
- Artificial Intelligence is essential for sustainable development and needs to be explored further.
- Effective waste management is crucial for a sustainable future. Global collaboration is needed to develop best practices and technologies like advanced recycling technologies that minimize waste and promote circular economy approaches.
- Addressing land degradation, drought, and desertification requires urgent action. Strengthening international partnerships and initiatives like Riyadh Global Partnership for Drought, established during Saudi Arabia's hosting of the UNCCD COP16 will enhance community resilience and promote sustainable land management practices globally.