

EU and its Member States input to zero draft Ministerial Declaration of UNEA-7

20 February 2025

I. General remarks:

1. The Ministerial Declaration of UNEA-7 should be a powerful political statement of overarching character with strong messages to the global community and all the stakeholders - in the spirit of the theme for UNEA-7: **“Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet”**.
2. The Declaration should focus on addressing the planetary emergencies we are facing in a concise, forward-looking, ambitious, transformative and action-oriented manner. It should reflect that environmental multilateralism is more important than ever, in times of global turmoil and geopolitical divisions, in order to cope with these emergencies.
3. Commitments made in the Declaration should be accompanied by clear pathways for national-level implementation, ensuring that global declarations translate into effective and measurable national actions.

II. Main messages to be included in the Ministerial Declaration:

4. In line with the theme of the UNEA-7, the Declaration should send a strong message of the need to accelerate sustainable solutions and effective responses to the multiple and interconnected environmental crises and related global challenges, as highlighted in the 2030 Agenda, its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the Pact for the Future and its annexes, while bringing forward the interlinkages between environmental protection, social development and inclusive sustainable development. It should recognise that building healthy and well-managed ecosystems ensures a resilient planet with ecosystem services benefiting everyone among others in a *One health approach*.
5. The Declaration should stress the role of science in advancing knowledge along all dimensions of sustainability, promoting cross-sectoral, knowledge-based actions, being a requirement for effective dialogue between stakeholders at all levels. The Declaration should recognise the findings of the seventh Global Environment Outlook report (GEO-7), and welcome UNEP’s Medium - Term Strategy (2026-2029), as an important element to address the issues raised by the GEO-7. In addition, it should highlight other important scientific reports¹, give due recognition to the science-policy interface, strengthening a scientific foundation for good decision-making, with particular reference to the establishment of the Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Prevention of Pollution. The role of environmental education, awareness raising at all levels, knowledge of Indigenous Peoples as well as local communities should also be captured and built upon.

¹ Namely the reports of Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), in particular the Nexus and Transformative Change Assessments, the IPCCAR-6, the UNEP Emission Gap report, the Global Resources Outlook 2024 (GRO24) of the International Resource Panel, and the Global Waste Management Outlook (2024) as well as the UN-Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR) 2024.

6. The development of innovative solutions in sectors such as energy, as well as sustainable, inclusive and circular bio-economy and safe use of biotechnology are particularly important. It should be noted that reliable, high quality and interoperable data is essential to establish sound environmental policies and regulatory frameworks that facilitate the implementation of circular, resource-efficient and low-impact solutions and business models. Data should also be used for comprehensive risk assessments. These elements should be highlighted in view of the development of UNEP's Global Environmental Data Strategy. It is also critical to stimulate capacity building to support countries in their efforts to address environmental challenges. Promoting scientific research and the development of standards to limit their environmental impact are key elements for the development of sound science-based policies, technological innovations, digital technologies and artificial intelligence, which in turn need to be used to advance sustainable development, with due consideration to the precautionary approach and their potential environmental effects.
7. The Declaration should highlight efforts and express support to reduce social inequalities and to promote gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment. Women play a pivotal role in sustainable development, including by providing environmental solutions. Commitment to environmental justice, equity, gender equality and reduction of inequalities in environmental governance will further contribute to the achievement of our shared global goals. It is also important to emphasise that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, as well as other MEAs frameworks and the UNEA resolutions, is crucial for exercising the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all (the UNGA resolution 76/300).
8. The EU and its Member States support a solution-oriented Declaration which focuses on key thematic areas, including relevant areas that are not fully covered by other international fora and existing multilateral agreements, that contribute to global environment related challenges and questions, reinforcing relevant decisions and actions. The Declaration should focus on environmental solutions that contribute to effective promotion of a resilient planet, and cover public interest and private sector, including key industries and economic sectors. In this context key industries and high impact sectors would need to be addressed, including energy, water supply/provision, mining, manufacturing, transportation, real estate, construction, food and beverage, agriculture (including farming and fisheries), forestry, minerals and metals, raw materials, textile, waste and chemicals with the aim to ensure a sustainable use and management of environmental resources.
9. In the context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, previous UNEA Resolutions and UNEA-7, reorienting consumption and production patterns towards sustainability, strengthening the circular economy and promoting sustainable extraction, use and management of resources to halt natural resource depletion and to flight climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, as well as land degradation, malnutrition and health-related issues is critical. In line with the UNGA Resolution 79/202 the transition to a circular economy should be recognised as a driver of environmental, social and economic resilience, highlighting inter alia the importance of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. There is also a need to decouple growth from resource use and its impacts by stimulating technologies and

business models that make it possible to reduce resource demand at all production and consumption stages. Acknowledging the UN SG Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals and its principles and actionable recommendations, should be taken into account.

10. Reliability and dependability are crucial to energy security. We need to ensure that citizens and businesses have consumer-friendly access to energy in sufficient quantity and quality, at affordable prices, without discrimination between different types of zero-emission energy sources. International community should encourage actions to enhance the sustainability, circularity, and security of the supply of rare earth elements and critical raw materials as a prerequisite for the timely implementation of the energy transition.
11. The Declaration should emphasise that sustainable water resources management is critical to achieve a resilient planet. Particularly, it should point to the importance of addressing transboundary aspects through cooperative and inclusive approaches, including nature based solutions. We would like to recall that during the first SDG Summit of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development leaders declared their commitment to address water scarcity and stressed that water is a sustainable resource, and the need to ensure the equitable and universal access, quality and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, based on a human-rights approach. In terms of actions, the Declaration should recall UNEA-6 resolution on effective and inclusive solutions for strengthening water policies (UNEP/EA.6/Res.13), especially in the view of the 2026 UN Water Conference and recognise the need to strengthen international cooperation on water, at all levels. It should urge for an integrated UN approach in line with the UN system-wide strategy on water and sanitation. Keeping in mind the objective of the UNEA-7 to focus on sustainable solutions, the Declaration should further send a strong message about the importance of stepping up efforts at all scales to enhance resilience and promote efficiency in managing water resources, to limit the variability of the global hydrological cycle.
12. The Declaration should enhance outcomes of the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (to be held in 2025) and send out a strong message on the need to build a sustainable blue economy for maintaining marine ecosystem services and to ensure ocean protection, in line with the UNEA resolution 6/15, and notably the call for the swift ratification and rapid and effective implementation of the BBNJ Agreement. The Declaration should further emphasize the source-to-sea approach for integrated water resource management, stimulating synergies between the 3rd UN Ocean Conference, as well as the outcomes of the Third World Ocean Assessment (to be published in 2025) and the 2026 UN Water Conference, supporting its preparation in line with the implementation of the EA6/13 resolution, while capitalizing on the momentum of the One Water Summit.
13. It should also potentially highlight individual topics that are not explicitly dealt with by UNEA-7 resolutions, in particular calling for broad and active participation from all sectors at the first International Conference on the GFC, as well as calling for their active role in implementing the GFC.
14. As the planet faces an unprecedented biodiversity collapse, the Declaration should stress the importance of full and swift implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM GBF), halting and reversing biodiversity loss and land

degradation, safeguarding healthy ecosystems, and urging solutions to protect and restore our ecosystems, and ensure the sustainable use and management of natural resources, including through combatting deforestation. In preparation for the first global review of the implementation of the KM GBF at COP17 in 2026, the Declaration should urge Member States, according to national circumstances and capabilities, to submit their National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) and to produce national reports on the implementation of their NBSAPs by February 2026, respecting the KM GBF monitoring framework and its indicators as much as possible.

15. The Declaration should send a clear message on climate change, notably to urge Member States to enhance efforts to ensure deep, rapid and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, improve resilience and adaptation to ever more severe impacts of climate change, recognizing that healthy and intact ecosystems are crucial for both climate mitigation and adaptation, and implement the decision on the new collective quantified goal agreed at COP29 and make all financial flows consistent with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
16. The Declaration should also further include a call of action on the global fight against different types of pollution, in particular plastic pollution and notably, depending on the progress of negotiations on the ambitious international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. The Declaration should make a strong call for the swift finalisation of negotiations and ratification, as well as implementation of the treaty.
17. To ensure progress towards sustainable development, it is important to continue the joint work of Member States, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders, UNEP, UNEA, and the wider UN system as well as MEAs and other relevant international organisations and fora on strengthening synergies and cooperation on environmental issues (for instance on environmental crime, in order to better prevent and combat it, and strengthen international cooperation and technical assistance in this field). The Declaration should make a commitment to environmental multilateralism and call for implementation of agreed MEAs, including by using synergies and peer-learning, exchange and reporting on progress. The Declaration should reaffirm UNEP's and UNEA's leadership in shaping the global environmental agenda, ensuring coherence and coordination among multilateral environmental efforts. Close partnerships with other UN organizations, are important to effectively mainstream the environmental agenda across the UN, implement the UN Reform agenda, achieve the SDGs and address the environmental planetary crises.