

BASEL, ROTTERDAM AND STOCKHOLM CONVENTIONS

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Excellency,

Many thanks for the opportunity to provide some initial thoughts, key topics and issues to be considered for inclusion in the zero draft of the ministerial declaration of UNEA-7 (8-12 December 2025), noting the official theme of the session "**Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet**".

Below are some suggestions responding to the three questions outlined in your letter:

1. What would Ministers for the Environment propose as the most important elements and or key messages that would enable the ministerial declaration to take forward the UNEA theme in the most impactful manner?

- Pollution is one of the most significant barriers to sustainable development. Air, land and water pollution due to exposure to toxic chemicals and hazardous waste cause major health risks, create harmful living conditions, and destroy ecosystems. Pollution not only hampers economic growth but also deepens poverty and inequality in both urban and rural areas, and significantly contributes to climate change.
- The exponential growth of waste generated worldwide as well as its environmentally unsound management is a major source of pollution. Each year, two billion tons of municipal solid waste are generated globally—a figure expected to double by 2050. Among the most critical waste streams are plastic waste and electronic waste (e-waste), both of which have grown dramatically in recent decades. Plastic waste generation more than doubled between 2010 and 2019, while e-waste is one of the fastest-growing solid waste streams, with an estimated 62 million tonnes produced globally in 2022. Alarmingly, only 22.3% of this e-waste was formally collected and recycled.
- This growing waste crisis is deeply tied to our unsustainable consumption and production patterns. The global economy is dependent on intricate supply chains, which are fuelled by over 100 billion tons of raw materials entering the system each year. This intense material consumption not only depletes natural resources but also leads to significant environmental damage throughout the entire lifecycle of products—from production, trade and use, to disposal.
- The declaration could highlight the current unsustainable material extraction and resource use, and their dramatic environmental and health impacts, and advocate for sustainable solutions in this domain, for instance by enhancing the circularity of metals and minerals. The declaration could recognize the current initiatives and work in this area, including the contributions of chemicals and wastes multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Basel Convention which, through the waste hierarchy, plays a critical role in promoting the reuse, repair, recycling and recovery of end-of-life electrical and electronic equipment containing critical minerals and metals.
- The illegal trade in chemicals and wastes continues to be a concern for some countries. To combat this, there is a critical need for mechanisms such as prior informed consent, which ensure that countries are fully aware of and able to control their imports. The Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions play a pivotal role in addressing these issues by regulating the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and the international trade of hazardous

chemicals, including persistent organic pollutants. However, despite these efforts, further strengthening of implementation is required to fully curb illegal trade and enhance global cooperation in environmental protection.

- Sustainable solutions for a resilient planet come from the commitments, initiatives and advancements occurring under relevant multilateral environmental agreements, including the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions. The Basel Convention promotes the environmentally sound management of wastes, aims at reducing their generation, and restricts their transboundary movements; the Rotterdam Convention promotes shared responsibility in trade of hazardous chemicals and contributes to the environmentally sound use of those chemicals by facilitating information exchange on their characteristics; and the Stockholm eliminates or strictly controls the production, trade and use of persistent organic pollutants.
- In light of the above, the declaration may emphasize the continued need to promote the environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes at all levels and advocate for sustainable solutions to address pollution from hazardous chemicals and wastes.
- Additionally, recognizing the One Health approach, Ministers could call for policies that integrate environmental health, human health, and biodiversity considerations to mitigate the interconnected risks posed by pollution and hazardous chemicals.

2. What key messages or conclusions from recent scientific reports would the Ministers for the Environment recommend for consideration in the ministerial declaration?

In the area of pollution and waste, we would like to highlight the following messages or conclusions:

- 64 percent of global agricultural land is at a risk of pesticide pollution by more than one active ingredient, and 31 percent is at high risk of pesticide pollution from three or more active ingredients.¹
- There is a need to scale up efforts to prevent waste generation; to extend adequate, safe and affordable waste management to everyone worldwide²; and to ensure that all unavoidable waste is managed in an environmentally sound manner.
- In 2050, it is estimated that the costs of waste management in a business-as-usual scenario would amount to USD417 billion, an increase in cost of 65% compared to today's costs. The application of circular economy approaches could save USD 100 billion annually, by reducing the waste generated; increasing resource efficiency by recovering secondary resource materials; creating jobs and business opportunities and reduce pollution and GHG emissions.³
- While some chemical pollutants are decreasing in humans and the environment, new ones continue to emerge^{4,5}, including PFAS, which is widespread and leads to significant contamination in several countries. This underscores the need to continue concerted efforts to eliminate the production and use of these chemicals; in line with the efforts undertaken under the Stockholm Convention.

¹ Tang *et al.* (2021)

² Global Waste Management Outlook 2024: Beyond an age of waste— Turning rubbish into a resource, UNEP.
<https://doi.org/10.59117/20.500.11822/44939>

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://chm.pops.int/Implementation/GlobalMonitoringPlan/MonitoringReports/tabid/525/Default.aspx>

⁵ <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/press-release/some-chemical-pollutants-reducing-humans-and-environment-new-ones>

3. What proposed collective actions and policy solutions should the Ministers for the Environment recommend for consideration in the ministerial declaration?

- Ministers for the Environment may wish:
 - To underscore the importance of universal participation in global legally binding instruments such as the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions to address pollution issues of concern to all;
 - To welcome recent significant outcomes and progress achieved by major environmental conferences related to pollution and wastes, such as the 2025 meetings of the conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions (28 April to 9 May 2025);
 - To recognize the need for continued efforts to tackle pollution at the national, regional and global levels to reduce its impacts on the environment and human health, and to promote and ensure environmentally sound management of wastes, including plastic wastes and e-wastes, to prevent illegal traffic and trade in hazardous waste and chemicals, and to eliminate or restrict production/use of POPs and promote safer alternatives;
 - To emphasize the need for increased financial support and capacity-building for developing countries and countries with economies in transition to enable them to implement policies and obligations on environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste. Strengthening technology transfer and South-South cooperation will be key to ensuring inclusive and effective implementation;
 - To acknowledge the mutual benefits deriving the implementation of the climate, biodiversity and pollution actions at the national, regional and global levels and that addressing pollution can amplify efforts to protect ecosystems and mitigate climate change, while improving human health.

Many thanks.

Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions
