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21 February 2025

IUCN's inputs on the key elements and issues to be included in the draft ministerial declaration for the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7)

IUCN welcomes the opportunity to provide inputs on the key elements for the draft ministerial declaration for UNEA-7, being convened under the theme “*Advancing sustainable development solutions for a resilient planet*”, noting also the theme of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development “*Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind*”.

Key elements and issues:

- 1. Commitment to multilateralism and cooperative approaches to environmental challenges.** In these geopolitically challenging times, the multilateral environmental agreements concluded to address the range of interrelated crises our planet is facing provide important avenues for continued and enhanced cooperation. IUCN therefore proposes that UNEA-7 send a clear political message to Member States that the triple planetary crisis cannot be solved without open and just multilateral cooperation, and that the political will exists to tackle these challenges together.
- 2. Accelerated implementation of existing frameworks and agreements.** UNEA-7 should send a clear signal for Member States to accelerate the effective and equitable implementation of the many frameworks and agreements that have already been negotiated and adopted. Among others, this should include:
 - The mobilisation of adequate resources and building capacity and partnerships for the implementation and monitoring of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF) to ensure all targets are met by 2030.
 - The universal ratification of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) for it to enter into force as soon as possible.
 - The [finalisation/adoption/implementation] of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. This bracketed language should be adjusted pending the status of negotiations in December, following the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) later this year.
- 3. Climate:** With toppling temperature records and unprecedented extreme weather events, climate change is wreaking havoc and devastation across the planet, with mounting losses and damages on people and nature. There is an urgent need to accelerate progress across all the pillars of the Paris Agreement, guided by the latest science and building on the agreements reached under the first global stocktake at COP28, and on finance at COP29. It is particularly critical for all countries in 2025, ahead of COP30 in Belém, to submit Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of the highest possible ambition that are fully aligned with the 1.5°C goal and anchored, where possible, within national legislation and regulatory frameworks. UNEA-7 must reinforce global commitment towards cutting emissions and limiting global warming to 1.5°C, including through the rapid and equitable phase-out of fossil fuels, supporting long-term and transformational adaptation, and building synergies and investing in nature-based solutions, to address the interlinked challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation.
- 4. One Ocean:** The triple planetary crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change, and pollution is critically affecting our ocean and the livelihoods of billions of people. As SDG 14 remains the least funded of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is essential that greater financial flows be channelled toward the resilience of marine ecosystems, coastal communities, and an ocean-positive sustainable economic transition at scale. Furthermore, ocean conservation should be underpinned by science-based tools and standards that measure nature-positive outcomes and clearly inform the policy-making process.
- 5. Land degradation.** Land degradation is the forgotten global crisis, despite affecting more than 3 billion people, among whom are many of the most vulnerable. UNEA-7 should underscore the urgency of this

crisis and make a firm commitment to take action to halt and reverse land degradation by 2030, and to mobilise the resources necessary to do so. This should emphasise the importance of transitioning to sustainable and resilient agrifood systems, as well as the sustainable management of rangelands and pastoral systems, noting that 2026 will be the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists.

6. **Water:** People's lives and livelihoods depend on access to water. We have long overstretched this precious resource, with freshwater ecosystems disappearing three times faster than forests, and many countries now facing water shortages. The world must equitably and sustainably manage water to provide water security for all, protect life on land and in freshwater ecosystems, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. Urgent action is required to enhance transboundary water cooperation, including through mapping water security risks as well as scaling up monitoring and protecting freshwater species and ecosystems. This will include assessing the extinction risk of species and identifying Key Biodiversity Areas.