

UNEA – 7 - “Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet”

Proposed issues to be considered for inclusion in the zero draft Ministerial Declaration of UNEA-7

The triple crisis of climate disruption, biodiversity loss and pollution are looming on our planet as a result of humans’ exaggerations in production and consumption. Sustainable solutions to these global problems are imperative before we reach a point of no return and this planet becomes unlivable. ‘**Nature to the rescue of humankind**’ should be the motto and the world should seek natural solutions to human-induced problems.

Some proposals from the Mauritian Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change are as follows, for consideration:

- 1. Use of Artificial Intelligence and other digital tools for smarter environmental management** – for example in environmental monitoring, assessing the impacts of development, keeping track of the state of the environment as well as providing sustainable solutions and innovative strategies and concrete actions for pollution avoidance, environmental protection and management, amongst others.
- 2. Making Circular Economy happen** – Given the world’s unsustainable patterns of consumption and production today, we have no choice but to adopt a circular economy approach. This will help to reduce waste and promote repair, reuse, recycling amongst others. In this regard, global cooperation and a whole-of society perspective involving Governments, private sector, consumers, producers and other stakeholders should prevail.
- 3. International legally binding instrument on plastic pollution** – UNEA 7 could advocate for the finalization of the Plastic Treaty and its early ratification/adoption for ending plastic pollution including in the marine environment, which is based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, including its production, design and disposal.

There is an urge for international collaboration to facilitate access to technology, capacity-building, financial assistance as well as scientific and technical cooperation to end plastic pollution at the earliest, with special consideration given to SIDS.

There should be a push towards a circular plastic economy approach, to:

- a) reduce the problem of plastic pollution by eliminating problematic and unnecessary plastic;
- b) promote a reuse society and shift from adopting the conventional throw-away model;
- c) redesign plastic product materials to enable recycling; and

- d) reorient and diversify, by shaping the market for plastic alternatives to enable safe and sustainable substitutions.

4. Nature Conservation as an integral part of Multilateral Environmental Agreements

- Given the fact that nature is our very life support system and provides valuable services for all living beings, people should not have the right to destroy nature, disrupt natural cycles, and destroy ecosystem services at the expense of physical, social and economic development. Any development for human welfare should be in harmony with nature. In this regard, it is proposed that nature conservation and protection of ecosystem services should be an integral part of all Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

5. Environmental Consciousness - There is need for enhanced access to environmental information and data through better informed citizens as well as evidence based decision making towards improved environmental governance and adaptive management.

6. Soil Management for Food Security – The diverse human activities relating to social and economic development have led to significant land use change that have resulted in the transformation of the natural landscape and natural cycles within the soil.

Thus, the protection of productive land and sustainable soil management for food security is imperative through the application of best practices.

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MAURITIUS

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