

Thank you Chair for giving me the floor.

I will be brief.

The NGO major group is looking forward to UNEA as a watershed moment when the international community as a whole will place its eyes on UNEP to lead on environmental issues.

For decades, many have considered the environment as a backwater of international policy-making. UNEA fundamentally transforms this reality. After decades of debate, we now recognize the environment as the infrastructure of human society and the basis for a life of dignity. We now recognize the earth as our shared, single home, and we further recognize our responsibility to the totality of life in an inter-temporal dimension.

If we look back in time and focus our eyes on the Stockholm 1972 Conference on the Human Environment, we can see that this was the first UN Conference that involved civil society. Since then, UN Summit Conferences and UN bodies, including UNEP, have increasingly allowed for the active participation of a broad range of stakeholders.

Over the years, the changing nature of inter-governmental processes, as well as the changing nature of global politics, have had an impact on the relations between the UN and civil society. But the UN has always found mechanisms to harmonize its procedural system with changing political realities while ensuring the integrity of its inter-governmental character.

UNEA represents the culmination of more than forty years of intense work to establish the environment at the forefront of global politics. UNEA thus represents the result of the combined efforts at multiple levels of countless individuals who believe in a global dialogue as a means to resolving the critical problems of humanity.

We have great expectations for UNEA. And we are fully committed to making of UNEA that moment in time when the international community comes together to respond to the hopes and aspirations of the billions of people in our planet who demand a clean and healthy environment.

I thank you.