

Dear Chair, delegates,

I can speak on behalf of all the major groups in welcoming this proposal from Africa and the EU. We see it on the whole as a good draft resolution.

I present initial comments based on a statement that was produced by all the Major Groups together.

Illegal wildlife trade, including in timber and fish, has surged to an extent that no single institution, instrument or national response can now individually deal with it.

We need a combined set of strengthened responses across all institutions and countries and the UNEA is absolutely the place to call for this.

This is not just about trade in listed endangered species, it is about rapidly expanding security challenges, illegal finance, depleting biodiversity and affecting local communities in large parts of the world.

We call on all governments to support this resolution, and to make it even stronger in several areas:

1. To have an explicit reference to tackling illegal financial flows
2. On demand: To ensure there is due diligence and verification in trade by companies and in public procurement.
3. To call on the UNGA to consider or explore the advisability of adding a fourth protocol to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime
4. To explicitly include poaching and illegal harvesting in several paragraphs referring to origin.

We will submit our suggestions in writing and would be pleased if member states would support us in them.