

STATEMENT BY FINLAND, UNEA 1 OPENING SESSION, 26.6.2014 10:00-13:00

Delivered by Minister for International Development Mr. Pekka Haavisto

-Mme. Chairman, Dignitaries, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues,

-First I would like to thank the host Government of Kenya and the UNEP for the hospitality shown to us here in Nairobi.

-I also want to express my sincere condolences for the victims of recent terrorist attacks here in Kenya. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families.

-Mme. Chairman,

-This first meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP is an important milestone in UNEP's history. It is also a significant step forward in the global environmental politics. The universal membership of UNEA provides an excellent basis for global action on the environment.

-The Rio+20 Conference kicked off a number of institutional and policy reforms aiming at strengthening UNEP as the leading global environmental authority.

-As for Finland, our vision is a strong and efficient UNEP, which works in close collaboration with Member States, other UN bodies and international actors and has its doors open to civil society. Strengthening the regional presence of UNEP is a key factor for bringing UNEP closer to countries and increasing ownership for environmental issues, including development of green economies, which we think are a sustainable response to poverty and inequality.

-Mme. Chairman,

- Finland very much welcomes the briefing of the Executive Director highlighting the latest global environmental challenges and science-policy interface.

-Finland places great emphasis on UNEP's role in keeping the world environmental situation under review. UNEP's assessment processes and the work of the UNEP hosted scientific panels should be better utilized to support policy-relevant decision making.

-The past years have demonstrated that the international environmental community is able to deliver tangible results by using and developing global instruments for this purpose.

-UNEP has played and will play a significant role in this.

Mme. Chairman,

-As the global authority on the environment, UNEP has a key role in advocating positive synergies between poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. In this regard, I am very much looking forward to our discussions on the SDGs and Post 2015 Development Agenda in this meeting.

-UNEA should more than a discussion forum: we have arrived here to give strategic policy guidance and deliver joint messages to the world. Through our own input we will make the first UNEA a success.

-Mme Chair, as a sign of our belief in the importance of strengthening UNEP as the prominent international environmental authority, Finland is almost doubling its annual contribution to UNEP up to 6 million euros.

-Finally, I want to associate myself with the EU intervention.

-Thank you, Mme. Chairman.