

Republic of Argentina

29/05/2017

Of my highest consideration;

I am pleased to address you in your capacity as President of the Assembly and for your kind note of the 8th of May, referring to the upcoming meeting of the Assembly in December 2017, under the theme "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet".

In the same means, I refer to the process to finalize the declaration, (and) offer my inputs to the compilation of the future Declaration. It is an honor to participate, and in that sense, we propose the contributions included below.

In this vein (sense), although the proposal is of a general nature, and aligned to the objectives of the sustainable development goals and the conclusions of the 2nd UN Environment Assembly, we raise some questions that we refer for your consideration:

List "initial points":

Point 2, on "Pollution is an individual and collective concern the world over, threatening the health and well-being of all of us, whether we live developed or developing countries. Urgent action is our responsibility."

In this section, we consider to mention the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities.

Point 3, First paragraph says/provides "More people will leave poverty behind; safer and cleaner technologies will drive our economies":

We recommend not only referring to safe and clean technologies, but also to the rational management of natural resources.

Point5, "We recognize that both, our UN Environment Assembly and UN Environment Programme, cannot tackle the challenge of pollution alone and in this regard, we urge other United Nations inter-governmental bodies, UN specialized agencies, funds and programme, and all other stakeholders, including business leaders, to contribute towards our effort."

We believe this item is not sufficiently clear. If it is intended to raise a paradigm (position) for participation of all international organizations, consider that the current wording seems to limit environmental actions and the initiatives of UN Environment and the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), diluting the central role of governments.

Point 7, on "We invite all Governments, businesses, communities and people, and all other stakeholders to make a pollution free planet a reality by 2030 and support our call to action by determining their own contributions and commitments to achieve our vision":

We propose to think of (consider) a different version of the concept of a “Pollution-Free Planet” since this objective for the planet represents a difficult compromise to achieve, especially by the year 2030.

Point 7, First paragraph “Transform our societies to become sustainable and able to support the needs present and future generations, including through reduction of waste, increased reuse and recycling of materials, innovation, and improved transfer of access to clean technologies. ”:

Following the line in point 3, we would like to mention the rational management of natural resources. In addition it is proposed to include the promotion of resource efficiency though, inter alia, among other measures, a technological change that allow the production of goods, with lower demand, and in turn generate less waste throughout their life cycle.

As the aspect of transformation of our societies, besides contributing to changes in the ways of production, we understand the text should reflect the importance of also pointing to a change in patterns of consumption (consumers, end users).

We believe that there should be a clear reference to renewable energies, unless they are understood to be included in the term “clean technologies”.

Point 7, Third paragraph “Work with the private sector to identify and implement market based solutions and alternative to end all forms of pollution”:

It suggested to add the public sector.

Point 7, Sixth paragraph “Eliminate major sources of marine litter, such as microplastics and the excessive, wasteful usage of single-use plastic by the year 2022”:

Consider that you should eliminate the reference to a specific date since the determination of such has not been subject to any negotiations between countries until now.

Point 7, To be added to a new point/subsection:

“Strengthen the implementation of multilateral agreements on chemicals and waste management such as the conventions on Basel Rotterdam and Stockholm, and also the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which share the same goal of protecting health and environment from the effects of these hazardous substances.”

Point 7, To be added to a new point/subsection:

The wording should aim to favor a balance of topics (genres) in all sectors.

Point 7, To be added to a new point/subsection:

The wording should reflect the idea in order to achieve the aforementioned goals in cities, it is fundamental to use models of sustainable urban planning.

On the other hand, we would like to suggest the inclusion of the following contents, which we consider relevant:

Principle 10:

In harmony with what was agreed in point 27 of the Cartagena Declaration (2016), we consider that it is indispensable to promote the full implementation of principle 10 of the Rio Declaration and it is therefore recommended to incorporate text that carries the suggested considerations.

All persons (physical or legal, private or public) must provide information regarding the environmental quality of the activity they develop, unless it is legally configured as reserved.

Each individual should have appropriate access to the information held by the public entities, and at the same time, the opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes.

States must facilitate and promote awareness and participation of the population by making information available to all. In this sense, access to environmental information will be free and free for anyone requesting (such information) and it will not be necessary to prove reasons for interest. Also effective access to administrative and judicial procedures (to obtain such information) must be provided to that end.

The participation of civil society organizations with issues related to the environment (will be promoted).

Means of implementation

We consider that the inclusion of references to adequate means of implementation for the creation of capacities in order to reach the content discussed during UNEA.

Climate Change

Although climate change is not directly linked to the theme of pollution, both are related in different aspects. In many cases a common origin can be identified: The current energy model based on burning of fossil fuels, that among other examples, emits CO₂ (carbon dioxide) and fine particles (particulate matter). Therefore it is essential to remember that extremes of climate phenomena have a direct effect on the quality of air and in particular, on the water (supply). On the other hand, the fight against poverty is an essential way to reduce vulnerability to (both of) these two problems (Pollution and Climate Change). We therefore believe that it is necessary that the Declaration reaffirm the fight against global warming, (and) adaptation and mitigation policies, as essential elements to improve the planet's environmental situation, and in line with the motto (theme) of UNEA 3, (in order to facilitate) the reduction of pollution.