

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

May 20, 2019

Co-chairs, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen: we thank you for your continued thoughtful leadership throughout the deliberations of this ad hoc open-ended working group, established by General Assembly resolution 72/277 of May 10, 2018 and entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”. We would like to thank our co-chairs in particular for developing draft elements for recommendations to providing a base for discussion during this third and final session of the working group. We appreciate several of the suggestions given in these elements, such as the proposal to explore further ways for member states to make full use of the Montevideo IV program for the review of international environmental law, as well as the encouragement of UNEP to develop system-wide strategies to support member states in the implementation of international environmental law. It has been reiterated time and time again in the sessions of this working group that what will be most effective in addressing the issues at hand is for us to utilize and build upon already-existent strategies, without having to reinvent the wheel. The delegation of Saudi Arabia believes that member states can come together to support such proposals, in order for this working group to come to an effective and meaningful conclusion.

However, we strongly disagree with the co-chairs’ suggestion with regards to “elements related to the process”, in Part 3 of their non-paper. This delegation would most definitively not support any recommendation to the General Assembly to consider adopting a new international instrument, or to open up any process to develop such an instrument, and we believe that we are not the only delegation to have this stance. What has characterized each of this working group’s sessions so far is a lack of consensus on highly important matters, particularly concerning the existence of gaps in international environmental law and its related instruments, as well as differences in conceptualizing the most appropriate ways to address any gaps where they may be present. It does not seem likely that any consensus will be formed in the next few days over such a contentious issue as proposing an entirely new international instrument that may impede or duplicate the role of existing multilateral environmental agreements, or the existing processes that seek to streamline and foster the implementation and further development of environmental law at all levels.

In conclusion, we wish to reiterate our proposal to continue to support existing instruments of international environmental law, with an emphasis on their efficient and sustainable implementation, and we remain positive towards continuing our deliberations in these matters to lead to pragmatic and effective solutions for the benefit of people and planet. Thank you.