

*Meeting of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP*

*(Nairobi, 12 September 2019)*

*Comments of the EU and its Member States on the future theme of UNEA-5*

- The EU and its MS thank the President of UNEA-5 and the members of the Bureau for the very constructive first meeting of the Bureau and for the inclusive and participatory process that has been decided to shape the content theme of the next UNEA.
- In line with UNEA-5 President Mr Ola Elvestuen's letter of 8 July, the EU and its MS fully support the objective of ensuring an action oriented Assembly with a politically relevant and focused theme that will lead to concrete outcomes and advance the global environmental agenda while also addressing wider society and public mobilization, thus helping to boost the political direction and priorities
- The EU and its MS welcome UNEP's "*thought starter*", updated following the first meeting of the Bureau. The initial three thematic areas present a well-aimed basis for further discussion and we believe that consensus can be reached by integrating the linkages between the management of natural resources, biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, Sustainable Consumption and Production and integrated landscape planning.
- The EU and its MS also agree that the theme needs to allow for focused and results-oriented discussions that can bring tangible and transformative outcomes.
- The EU and its MS support the approach to build up on the success of UNEA-4 and its momentum to select a theme that will help ensure a successful UNEA-5 with an outcome that will be as visible and connected to societal priorities as UNEA-4. The EU and MS also wish to point out the importance of recalling the previous adopted decisions and taking into account the commitments taken in previous UNEA meetings and to be delivered at UNEA-5, for instance the development of a report on the impact of pesticides and fertilizers on the environment and health, requested by UNEA-3.
- The EU and its MS would like to recall the importance which they attach to the following priorities that should be taken into account while selecting the content theme of UNEA-5: a) the need to preserve/restore the Earth's natural capital, hence halting/preventing further biodiversity loss and boosting restoration efforts; b) the importance of good environmental quality for the health of humans, flora and fauna c) the need to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation and to shift to more sustainable practises; and d) the need to manage and use the Earth's natural resources in a way which allows present and future generations to meet their needs, within the planetary boundaries.
- The EU and its MS would like to propose that the UNEA-5 content theme provides the opportunity to identify bold transformative actions and collect commitments, especially in nexus areas (climate – biodiversity – resources management, also taking into account quality/pollution related issues), and that it works to define/quantify the contours of our

planetary boundaries that must not be transgressed to allow humanity to continue living sustainably for generations to come. Enabling mechanisms, such as sustainable finance and natural capital accounting, could form an important part of these considerations.

- In summary, the EU and its MS would like to support, as the main building block for UNEA-5, the content thematic area 1 (Nature-based solutions) while also taking into account elements of thematic area 3 (Water-energy-food nexus for sustainability), as proposed in UNEP's *thought starter*. It should also take into account the pollution agenda, as relevant. The EU and its MS believe that this would help build on the results of UNEA-4, reconnecting to the follow up work of UNEA-3. This includes making the link to a hopefully successful CBD COP 15 in Kunming in 2020 and the launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration in 2021, and hopefully a successful agreement on a new SAICM beyond 2020 for the sound management of chemicals and wastes at ICCM 5 in Bonn in 2020.
- The EU and its MS support a wide and engaging consultation process to ensure ownership of all member states, participation of the civil society and the scientific community, enabling a final decision in early December.

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