

Norway appreciates the added time allowed to share written comments to the UNEA draft input to HLPF.

As far as we understand this is the first year with a new reporting format, with questions posed from Ecosoc to the UNEA president after the first full cycle of review of the SDGs has been completed at the HLPF. It seems to have caused some uncertainty in the process, resulting in delayed draft from the secretariat and limited time for review and input for member states and UNEA presidency. We foresee a process next year that would allow for informed expectations of format of consultations and enough time and possibility to provide input. To arrive at this situation, we are open to this issue being addressed in the context of the CPR review process 4.2 if others agree.

Our main comment relates to the length of the draft messages; the length is a challenge with regard to impact. Combined with input from other UN organs, UNEA's input risks "drowning". We would on this background propose either to make significant cuts, or to add a ten-point summary of highlights. With the short time available we tend to favor the latter option. This approach will be helped by the frequency of formulations in the current text saying "The HLPF should call for..." and then a quite clear message.

Furthermore, we would like to bring attention to the fact that this is a report from UNEA in an intersessional year, between UNEAs, and it calls for a slightly different approach. We welcome updated elements from the work undertaken this last year in preparation for the next UNEA, as UNEA president Ola Elvestuen already last year reported to the HLPF about the results from UNEA4. This year's report should therefore bridge the two UNEAs, and the UNEA president should update messages in light of important work undertaken this last year by UNEP and member states, and also highlight the focus of the approaching UNEA5. In particular, the agreed theme should be highlighted and its strong link to the SDGs brought out clearly.

On inter alia this background, we propose a few insertions to the text, and underline their natural place in the summary of core messages:

On page 9 it is necessary to convey the way in which the economy fully builds and depends on the continued provision of ecosystem services. It is also important to convey that we shall depend on our economies keeping resources in circulation. We trust the secretariat to identify acceptable language to this effect.

Ultimately, a green economy is founded on an economy which reuses resources and promotes resource efficiency (decoupling) minimizing wastage, pollution (detoxification), environmental degradation and carbon emissions (decarbonization). The HLPF should call all sectors of sustainable development to develop enabling economic policies and incentives to accelerate the transition to economies that protect biodiversity and ecosystem services, are low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive.

We are furthermore content with the phrasing on page 10 and is keen to maintain it and include it in main messages;

The HLPF should call for strengthened action to protect and restore nature and the nature-based solutions/ecosystem-based approaches to achieve the sustainable development goals in its three complementary dimensions (social, economic and environmental).

It is important that the text clearly conveys that the best and most decisive measure is to maintain existing nature as a primary approach. Restoration, though very desirable, is secondary in terms of its ability to underpin sustainable development. This is not clear from the first paragraph of page 10. We ask that reference to "such as large-scale afforestation" is taken out. Afforestation, planting forest where there have been none before, is very different from restoration in terms of ecological effects. Restoration is to seek to return the forest to its previous condition. The IPCC report on climate and land use was clear that afforestation is problematic, and it is hence especially difficult in the context of the paragraph on "Stressing the importance of nature/biodiversity as an essential requirement and key enabler for sustainable development".

New text which we are particularly glad to see and shall like to see retained is the page 4 reference to one-health approach. In the same para, we would like to see an addition ***intergrated oceans management and marine spatial planning***. On page 5 we are pleased to see references to open data, citizen science, use of new technology, simplification and digitalization. We furthermore value the inclusion of the reference to environmental crime on page 6 (para c) and page 9, as well as the page 10 reference to Rio principle 10.

With sincere regards,

Guri Sandborg