

Reference: Law/ILU/AR/eww

15 April 2020

Dear National Focal Point and Stakeholder,

I am writing to provide an update on the implementation of the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V) as adopted by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in its resolution 4/20 of 15 March 2019.

From the outset, please let me echo the statement of our Executive Director that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) stands in solidarity with member States and the billions of people around the world that are suffering the impact of the global pandemic of COVID-19. Recognizing that the virus requires a sound environmental response, we stand ready to support Member States and frontline UN partners in response measures.

In this context, I want to express the strong commitment of UNEP's Law Division to supporting the implementation of the Montevideo Programme V, despite the significant challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Sound environmental laws effectively implemented and enforced are essential to achieve a healthy environment and the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNEP's offices remain open, though virtually, to assist member States in implementing this important programme.

You will recall our earlier notification about the postponement of the First Global Meeting of National Focal Points (Montevideo Meeting) to a future date. Subject to any COVID-19 related developments, including travel restrictions that may be imposed by the host country, we have tentatively scheduled the Montevideo Meeting to be held on **7-9 September 2020** at UNEP's headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. Invitations and meeting documentation will be sent to national focal points and stakeholders in due course. We will keep the COVID-19 situation under careful review and will reschedule the meeting to a later date if necessary.

In the meantime, we continue to develop strategic products and initiatives in support of the implementation of the programme. For example, we have developed a UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform (UNEP-LEAP) as a central coordination and delivery mechanism to help implement the programme. UNEP-LEAP is an online platform that contains a clearing house mechanism through which Member States can submit requests for support to UNEP and partners. Amongst other features, it has a knowledge platform consisting of all relevant legislation, environmental cases, model laws and other guidance products for use by Member States. We intend to hold virtual consultations in the coming months to present the platform and receive your input before the formal launch at the first global meeting of national focal points.

You have also received a draft legislative guide for the regulation of single use plastics developed in collaboration with the World Resources Institute for your review and input. We intend to publish this as soon as we collate and incorporate your feedback. In addition, we are developing a global report on air quality legislation which we will share with you for input.

As we navigate this challenging period, please let me reiterate again our commitment to implementing the Montevideo Programme V and to working with you to make it a success. Please do not hesitate to contact us at any time at unep-montevideo@un.org with any questions or requests for support.

I look forward to hopefully seeing you in Nairobi in September 2020.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arnold Kreilhuber', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Arnold Kreilhuber
Acting Director