

**ICCA Feedback on “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”:  
Note on the preparations for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.”**

ICCA supports incorporating the response to the COVID-19 pandemic into the theme of UNEA-5. The role of chemistry and plastics is particularly important during the pandemic, as chemicals and plastics enable countless products that will be needed to treat those who are infected with the coronavirus in the weeks and months ahead; ensure the safety and health of healthcare workers through personal protective equipment; and support good hygiene, sanitation, and cleaning in all countries.

UNEA-5 should consider the response to the pandemic in the context of “United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need” and the UN Development Programme’s socio-economic response to the crisis.

ICCA supports the action area of “Nature for Health.” In particular, ICCA notes the importance of two discussions in the context of UNEA-5: global action on marine litter, and development of a new global chemicals management framework as a successor to the U.N. Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. It is important to balance the discussion of taking action to support nature with a discussion of how these products and chemistries essential to promoting good health and sustainability can be produced, distributed, processed, and disposed of appropriately. In that vein, UNEA should consider broadening its discussions of these transformative action areas.

For example, while a new global chemicals management framework is critical because pollution from chemicals and waste can be a strong driver of ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, sound chemicals management promotes employee safety, enables innovation, improves public health, etc. UNEA should not limit its discussion of support for a new global chemicals framework to only the unsustainable use of chemicals and negative impacts of chemicals on nature.

Similarly, it is critical to consider marine litter in a broader context. As we have seen throughout the pandemic, there are critical health and hygiene needs for key single use plastic products. A focus on hygienic plastic waste management systems is critical for these products. Building on the action plan “Towards a Pollution Free Planet”, UNEA-5 should consider efforts by other multilateral forums to address plastic waste in the environment in addition to the work of the ad-hoc open ended expert group. Enabling a more circular economy for plastics, harnessing innovation and technology, and developing waste management infrastructure to reduce the generation of plastic waste and properly manage waste that is created will improve human health, the environment, and the economy. The UNEA-5 discussion should encompass the broad context in which plastics are produced, used, and disposed of, including the relevant work of other organizations.

ICCA looks forward to providing additional feedback as more information on UNEA-5 planning is developed and made available.