



Contributions of Colombia for the Preparation of the Ministerial Declaration of the UNEA5
“Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”

1. What would you, as government/organization/stakeholder, welcome as the most important elements and/or key messages from the Ministers in the declaration to address the theme in an impactful manner?

Governments must recognize that climate change represents the main threat to life on earth and is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss. As such, it is a challenge that needs to be tackled collectively, immediately and with actions based on the best available science. The last three special reports of the IPCC (1.5°C; land use; oceans and cryosphere) provide fundamental information both on causes and solutions to the current crisis.

Governments cannot ignore the call of science, of civil society and the youth. We must commit to pursue every effort to limit the rise in average global temperature to 1.5°C. Economic growth shall not be achieved at the expense of nature and future generations. There is no dichotomy between development, economic growth, social justice and environmental protection. Development has to be low carbon and climate-resilient in order to be sustainable and leave no one behind.

Every measure to address the global sanitary, economic and climate crisis must be aligned. There should be a call to all governments, stakeholders, financial and economic sectors to make financial flows consistent with the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement, to invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and technology that allow a just transition and create green jobs. The response to one crisis should not exacerbate other crises, threats and challenges but rather provide opportunities to address them in an integral manner.

Governments should remember and be aware that oceans, seas and coastal areas are key to achieve sustainable development because they are a big component of the earth's ecosystems and its biodiversity. Oceans cover more than two-thirds of the earth's surface, they contribute to poverty eradication by creating modalities of work, sources of food for millions of people in the world, and have a critical role in securing human health. No less important, oceans are the primary regulator of the global climate and a very important sink for greenhouse gases. All of the invaluable importance of the ocean such as its biodiversity, ecosystem services, and processes that it involves has been already recognized, but Governments must recognize that their efforts and actions taken so far are still insufficient.

Marine litter seems to be the biggest threat posed to oceans because it is a transboundary challenge, that is caused by unsustainable production and consumption patterns that require not also to build partnerships, alliances and joint work between states; but also claims strong and committed action in every country of the world to shift their vision of production and consumption patterns to a sustainable one that prevents that waste including land-based sources arrives at the oceans. Concrete and rapid actions are urgently needed at the local level to substantially reduce the production and consumption of single-



use plastic, severe restrictions on the production of products made of plastic and replacement by other sustainable products, cleaning of beaches and coastal areas, cleaning of garbage in deep waters, strict regulation to avoid contamination of oceans accompanied by drastic penalties for violators, while states continue improving collective action in regional or global partnerships or alliances.

Additionally, we propose:

- Rebuilding the economies with a sustainable development focus.
 - The importance of having health and environment working together.
 - Ensure that science is the main input for decision-making.
 - Express the relevance of achieving sustainable consumption and production towards a circular economy.
 - Call upon the phase out of single use plastics.
 - Ensure the protection and conservation of strategic ecosystems.
 - Address deforestation with an integral perspective.
2. How can the environment Assembly make a significant contribution to *Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals* at a global scale? In doing so, you may take into account the preparation for the meeting, its conduct and follow-up, as well as its relationship to other meetings and processes.

The assembly is an opportunity to catalyze action and secure political will for a green recovery. It could invite governments and private actors to present concrete quantifiable additional goals for lowering emissions, adapting to climate change, protecting ecosystems and enabling just transition worldwide, especially in developing countries. Likewise, the assembly could invite governments to present concrete quantifiable additional goals for reducing the production and use of plastics, cleaning oceans, coastal areas, and deep waters from the waste that is actually in, and control the waste that arrives to the oceans from all sources.

UNEA-5 should seek to coordinate actions between the different regional groups. For example: UNEP is promoting a regional coalition of circular economy in LAC. We understand that the African Group is actually working through the circular economy alliance and the European Union has its own regional policy. In this manner, UNEA should be a platform for the three regional groups to meet and seek to invite other regional groups in order to work together and develop global definitions.