



# EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF ERITREA NAIROBI

2EEK-774/UNEP-SGB

The Embassy of the State of Eritrea in Nairobi, in its capacity as the Office of the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and, with reference to a letter 19/1039- dated 24 April 2020 by which the Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway, in his capacity as the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, calls for initial inputs and ideas of value addition to the process of the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration to be adopted at the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the UNEA, has the honour to submit hereby Africa Group's contributions.

The Embassy of the State of Eritrea, in its capacity as the Office of the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the United Nations of the Environment Program the assurances of its highest considerations.

The Embassy wishes to recall that as highlighted by the theme: *"Strengthening Actions for Nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals"*, Nature is the foundation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, as the world's population is growing, the needs also continue to grow. And, we overexploit our available natural resources, which leads to major environmental challenges that we are facing nowadays, such as Climate Change, Biodiversity loss, waste Mismanagement, Pollution in all its forms, etc.

The African Group, through the Office of the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, taking into consideration all environmental challenges mentioned above, would welcome a Ministerial Declaration at the fifth session of the UNEA, which includes the following *elements and key messages*:

- The Ministerial Declaration should recognize the economic and social impacts of the corona virus disease (covid-19), in particular, to Developing Countries, and taking into consideration the issue of poverty as per the recent predictions by the international community indicating that over 30 millions of people in Africa will face extreme poverty as a result of covid-19;
- Through their Declaration, the Ministers should reaffirm their commitments of working to protect the environment by addressing emerging challenges, in the field of the environment, including Climate Change, Biodiversity loss, Chemicals & waste Management, Pollution, land degradation:
  - a) *On Climate Change*: The Ministerial Declaration should reaffirm the commitment of African Countries to the full implementation of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, ensuring balance between adaptation and mitigation and taking into consideration the availability of adequate support for African countries to enhance their efforts to combat climate change, including the swift transition to clean renewable energy sources and rapid adoption of energy-efficient solutions, and the phase-down of hydro fluorocarbons under the Kigali Amendment ;

- b) **On Biodiversity loss:** The Ministerial Declaration should emphasize the need to support the biodiversity economy through legal, regulated and traceable trade in flora & fauna, and emphasize management of biodiversity loss in order to proffer sustainable use and transforming the undesirable trajectory of species loss. And, furthermore, it should be a momentum to highlight the urgency of action, at the Ministerial level, in support of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework;
- c) **On land degradation:** The Ministerial Declaration should reaffirm the commitment to the 2018 – 2030 Strategic Framework of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. And, it should recognize the value of land degradation neutrality and its potential to improve development and prosperity;
- d) **On Chemicals & waste Management:** The Ministerial declaration should encourage the global community to move beyond minimizing the adverse impacts of toxic chemicals and stockpiles on human and ecosystems. It should also encourage efforts to be made to mainstream Chemicals management issues into development plans and strategies;
- The Ministerial Declaration should consider to stressing the nexus between illegal trade of natural resources and biodiversity loss in order to bring about transformation changes by reducing the trend of biodiversity loss;
  - It should address the importance of the UNEP mandate, which is relevant to the nexus between Human Health and Healthy Environment, including an emerging trend of increasing outbreaks of zoonotic diseases, such as SARS, EBOLA, avian influenza, swine influenza and, currently, corona virus pandemic. There is a correlation between these outbreaks and ecosystems degradation;
  - It should avoid backtracking of previous commitments relating to the means of implementation provided to Developing Countries, in terms of finances, technology, capacity building;
  - The Ministerial Declaration should express its recognition to the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the establishment of the UNEP since 1972, in Stockholm, Sweden;
  - In light of the result of the ongoing covid-19 pandemic crisis, any support provided to Developing Countries in addressing environmental challenges should not be compromised in favor of any potential support or emergency aid aimed at the recovery of covid-19;
  - National recovery of Member States should consider environmentally friendly approaches, such as Green Growth Technologies and, also recognize that covi-19 impacts will vary from one country to another



With regard to making *a significant contribution of the Environment Assembly to the theme, the meeting of the Assembly, its conduct and follow-up* (of the outcomes), the African Group would further welcome a United Nations Environment Assembly that can ensure the following proposals:

- The Environment Assembly should ensure that there are actions to be taken post-UNEA5 to implement Resolutions adopted by Member States, including a follow-up mechanism and performance, in line with Resolution 4/22 on implementation & follow-up of all UNEA Resolutions;
- The UNEA-5 can provide, under such theme, a platform to capture the potential of transformative “Actions For Nature” to bring together contributions from different fora, in particular from relevant Multilateral Environment Agreements (MEAs);
- Resolutions to be adopted at UNEA-5 should complement Resolutions & Decisions of the various multilateral environment fora, such as UNCCD, UNCBD, UNFCCC among others with the aim of addressing the theme of UNEA-5. And, the theme of UNEA-5 should also be shared with the Bureaus of these MEAs for their consideration in preparation for the upcoming meetings respectively. In this regard, the Ministerial outcome Declaration should highlight the main outcomes of the resolutions with an emphasis a measurable progress indicators;
- UNEA-5 Resolutions should recognize the status of other Intergovernmental processes, such as Climate Change (IPCC), Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework (IPBES), etc.

The Embassy is taking this opportunity to express the support of the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi to the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly in his task to prepare the fifth session of the UNEA and would like, hereby, to ensure him Africa Group’s full support and commitment for a successful upcoming Environment Assembly.

The Embassy of the State of Eritrea in Nairobi, in its capacity as the Office of the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Nairobi, avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the United Nations of the Environment Programme the assurances of its highest considerations.

Nairobi, Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2020

The Secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme  
Nairobi

