

THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY'S INPUT/ STATEMENT DELIVERED ON 21 JULY 2020

Despite the challenges imposed by Covid-19 pandemic, we welcome this opportunity to have an open exchange with participants around the world on the implementation of resolution 73/333.

We have to admit to the fact that the task ahead of us will be challenging, although we trust constructive approaches from all sides will help us to deliver.

We would like to express full confidence with Co-facilitators in steering this process to the right and consensual direction.

With regards to way forward, we agree with those who demanded a lean and streamlined process for implementation of the Resolution 73/333 . For that purpose, we have to achieve some level of convergence at this first session and start working on a draft declaration in the next meeting.

When it comes to the timeframe, we are open to both options of adopting the declaration at UNEA-5 or at other occasions up until UNEP+50, Stockholm+50. However, we have questions in mind whether we will be able to deliver in February 2021, given the heavy agenda awaiting us at the UNEA-5. We should also take into account unforeseen developments that can take place between UNEA-5 and the event planned for 2022 which may impact the content of political declaration. Therefore at this stage, we believe it is too early to commit to a February 2021 target for finalizing the document.

Let me briefly summarize our views and expectations regarding substance of the declaration.

Firstly, we are expecting that the declaration will be truly political, concise and general in nature. A declaration that would avoid technical details to the extent possible and send encouraging messages would be more accessible for the public.

Secondly, we believe five objectives stated in the resolution 73/333 provide us a very solid ground to ensure consensus among member states, so we perceive them as inseparable part and parcel of an eventual political declaration.

Thirdly, UNEP's mandate should also be a central element of the declaration. We support further strengthening the mandate of the programme with an aim towards ensuring sustainable development without undermining our environment. For that purpose, UNEP should be more effectively utilized to enable exchange of experiences in implementation of national environmental law and MEAs.

Fourthly, the declaration should adhere to a rights-based approach to development, as well as to sustainability and resilience. In that regard, we agree with those that called earlier for a focus on means of implementation, rather than prolonged discussions to re-identify normative gaps. In that regard, we would prefer to find right language on practical measures to be taken, such as how to promote educational activities, develop projects to protect vulnerable sections of our societies, how to effectively mobilize climate diplomacy, how to better explain to public the robust link between environment and human security.

The declaration should encourage member states to incorporate, in their own environmental laws regulations and laws at the national level, provisions for environmental rights, environmental information and inclusive mechanisms. Such a bottom-up approach, rather than top-down approaches, would provide for strengthening international environment law and governance which is indeed broad objective of this exercise.

Finally, the declaration shall also take into account the Covid-19 pandemic context. Even if we pray for and sincerely hope that the pandemic do not occupy the headlines when we finalize the declaration, it will certainly leave traces on our lives. Our efforts to build back as well as prevent should both have stronger environmental and developmental foundation. Issues like protection of ecosystems, conservation of biodiversity, sustainable & climate friendly agricultural practices, carbon emissions will have to feature in policies and programmes to be developed at national & international scale.

Declaration could be utilized to explore how the implementation of international environmental law and international environmental governance could be strengthened with a view to assist the development of these policies and programme.