

Inputs by Egypt
to the second draft outline document for the Ministerial
Outcome of the 2021 United Nations Environment Assembly
(UNEA 5)

1. Egypt would like to thank the President of UNEA5, H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, for initiating the consultations process on the draft outcome document of UNEA5 in a timely manner, despite the difficulties resulting from the COVID-19 situation. Egypt assures the UNEA5 President of its support, and looks forward for participating in and contributing to this process in a transparent, inclusive, and comprehensive manner.

2. Egypt believes the draft outline document circulated by the President of UNEA5 on July 3 2020 to be a satisfactory basis for further consideration and consultation. Egypt had already responded to the President's initial call for submissions, and recognizes that some aspects of its earlier submission have been included in the current draft. Nevertheless, the document still requires extensive readings and successive iterations, before reaching a state where it would be ready for adoption, addressing the concerns and priorities of all Member States in an inclusive and comprehensive manner.

3. On a more general note, and while we welcome the references to the COVID-19 situation in the draft outline, we still believe that a more specific reference to the negative impacts of the pandemic on developing countries is needed, especially as it relates to its effect on their efforts to protect the environment, prevent the loss of biodiversity and combat climate change. Hence, more emphasis is needed on the aspect of support to developing countries in areas of addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, desertification, pollution, chemicals, and waste management, among other environmental challenges. The declaration should also explicitly include the commitment from Ministers on not backtracking on any previous commitments on means of implementation from developed to developing countries, especially with regards to finance, technology transfer, and capacity building, not only in accordance with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, but also in line with the relevant provisions and previous commitments in other multilateral environmental agreements, political declarations and resolutions.

4. The declaration should also emphasize that support provided to developing countries in relation to addressing environmental challenges should not be compromised in favor of any potential support related to recovery from COVID-19, and shall remain independent of any such support.
5. The draft outline should include Ministers reaffirming the basic principles governing sustainable development and the environment, including the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR).
6. The declaration should recognize the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP, provide political support and directives to the Executive Director and the Secretariat, especially concerning addressing its mandate and headquarters functions, including on issues that are becoming increasingly relevant such as the health-environment nexus and biodiversity and wildlife loss and their impact on human.
7. On a more specific note, Egypt believes that the reference to “invasive species” as one of the major environmental challenges on par with climate change and pollution is misplaced, as the phenomenon of invasive species is but one of the negative impacts of climate change rather than a standalone environmental challenge. Egypt believes that addressing the phenomenon of invasive species should be through addressing its root causes, including increased water temperatures and acidification as a result of climate change, marine pollution, and habitat loss, among others.