



October 1st, 2020
CPR subcommittee meeting

Women's Major Group comment on the options for UNEA-5 in view of COVID

Thank you, Chair.

Dear excellencies, I am Damaris Uja from the Women Environmental Programme, speaking on behalf of the Women's Major Group.

The Women's Major Group met to discuss the proposed options for organizing UNEA-5 in times of COVID. After critically examining the options, we would like to share the following recommendations:

- Firstly, In order to allow meaningful participation, we call on the need to have **more members from Major Groups in the meeting than the 2 currently proposed by the Secretariat's background document**. Especially if UNEA-5 will be partially or fully online, 2 slots given to the Major Groups would be too limiting. As it would be in a physical UNEA, we would certainly insist on the possibility to rotate the 'seats' between several participants, and to have spaces outside of the plenary room in which more civil society representatives can take place.
- Secondly, if UNEA-5 will take place in February 2021 either fully or partially online: UNEP should make sure all Member States' delegations and Major Groups have access to the meeting. We have seen many technical and internet problems in previous online meetings. To **address issues posed by the digital divide**, and to ensure effective participation of ALL member states and Major Group representatives, we suggest that provisions should be made by **opening national UN offices (or other spaces with good internet) to host national delegates and major groups**. Thus UN offices could provide the video conferencing to ensure quality access to the UNEA's virtual meetings for delegates from the country. This will enhance more effective and meaningful participation.
- Thirdly, if UNEA 5 is partly taking place online in February 2021 and partly postponed: we call on you to make sure that the **funding for Major Groups participation** is sufficient to fully cover our participation in both parts.

Finally, certain issues cannot wait, such as the work on protecting ecosystems and on preparing Stockholm+50, and will need to be on UNEA's agenda in 2021.

Thank you.