

Proposal from the UNEA-5 President

[Political messages from the virtual session of UNEA-5][Joint statement from UNEA-5 February 2021]

We, the ministers for the environment, have gathered virtually at the UN Headquarters for the United Nations Environment Programme in Nairobi for the first part of the fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, x February 2021, in these exceptional circumstances of the devastating COVID-19 pandemic, which underscores more than ever the value of the United Nations and multilateral cooperation;

We reaffirm the mandate of the UN Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, that promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and that serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

We welcome the Medium Term Strategy for UNEP for 2022-2025, as well as a work programme and budget for the next biennium.

We are dedicated, as UNEP approaches 50 years since its establishment through General Assembly resolution 2997 of 1972, to contribute to its impactful celebration in Nairobi February 2022.

We note, however with profound concern, the continuing loss, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats for biodiversity; threats to lives and livelihoods from climate change as well as from pollution and poorly managed waste and chemicals; resulting in an overall negative trajectory for the environment and so our common sustainable development.

We are furthermore deeply concerned about the way that the COVID-19 pandemic adds additional and serious challenges, compounding existing ones, and are aware that we shall face recurring risks of future pandemics if we maintain the current unsustainable patterns of interaction with wild species and encroachment on natural habitats.

We are determined to uphold efforts to protect our planet throughout this pandemic period and beyond, reinforced in our conviction that human health and wellbeing is dependent upon nature and the solutions it provides.

We commit to supporting a green and just recovery to revitalize our economies and create decent jobs, and make real progress in eradicating poverty while enhancing our future resilience to crises.

We underscore the crucial importance of making further progress in other multilateral fora for the environment, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the implementation of the Paris Agreement, the negotiations in the Convention on Biological Diversity on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, as well as negotiations on the Beyond 2020 Framework on Chemicals and Wastes in the context of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

We look forward to reconvening in person for a substantial fifth session of UNEA5 in Nairobi in *[dates to be agreed]* February 2022 to continue our joint efforts to *strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*, and to address relevant existing mandates from previous sessions of the Environment Assembly, including on the future of the Global Environment Outlook and on identifying action to address marine litter and micro plastics.

We will increase our efforts to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and reaffirm that urgent efforts are required to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and we do not need to wait until we resume our meeting in February 2022 before we act.