

Looking ahead to the resumed UN Environment Assembly in 2022 - Message from online UNEA-5, Nairobi 22 – 23 February 2021

The United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, have gathered online for the first part of the fifth session of the Assembly 22-23 February 2021, under exceptional circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We acknowledge the urgency to continue our efforts to protect our planet also in this time of crisis, and to strengthen our support for the United Nations and for multilateral cooperation, and remain convinced that collective action is essential to successfully address global challenges.

We are deeply concerned about the devastating global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating new and serious health- and other socio-economic challenges, and compounding existing ones, especially in developing countries, undermining our common efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We realize that human health and wellbeing are dependent upon nature and the solutions it provides, and we are aware that we shall face recurring risks of future pandemics if we maintain our current unsustainable patterns in our interactions with nature.

We are deeply concerned by the continuing loss of biodiversity, especially through the degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats for wildlife; the threats to lives and livelihoods from climate change, as well as from pollution and poorly managed waste and chemicals jeopardizing our environment and our overarching objective of sustainable development.

We reaffirm the mandate of the UNEP as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and 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 2022-2023. We commend UNEP for its swift contribution to the environmental dimension of the socio-economic response to COVID-19.

We are dedicated to supporting a green, just and sustainable recovery from the pandemic to revitalize our economies and create decent and sustainable jobs, and to make real progress in eradicating poverty while enhancing our future resilience to similar crises.

We will enhance our efforts to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and reaffirm that urgent efforts are required to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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

We will reconvene in person for the resumed fifth session of UNEA5 in Nairobi in early 2022 to continue our joint efforts, to *strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*, and to make further progress in the implementation of resolutions and decisions 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 are dedicated to commemorating the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP through General Assembly resolution 2997 of 1972, and to contribute to its impactful celebration in Nairobi in early 2022.

We call for joint, science-based and urgent action, through our work and decisions in the fifth UN Environment Assembly, in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.