



ROYAL NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF  
CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

*The Minister*

Your ref

Our ref

Date

20/1566-

11 January 2021

## **President's letter on messages from UNEA-5 online meeting**

Dear excellencies, colleagues and friends,

Let me first of all wish you a happy new year, and allow me to express the hope that we shall see the current pandemic crisis gradually come under control in all countries of the world.

I refer to my letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2020, in which I outlined the process and character of a message from the virtual first part of the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) in February 2021, taking into account the decision that the Ministerial Declaration should be an outcome from of the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February 2022.

I am encouraged that Member States engaged actively with the initial proposal of a message circulated on 23 November 2020. I have taken note of general comments submitted in writing, in conversations, and not least of which, the feedback provided directly to me at the virtual *open-ended informal consultation on a draft statement from UNEA-5* on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December 2020.

It is my feeling that the proposal for a message from the online session of UNEA-5 has generally been welcomed by delegations. A dominant point made by Member States has been that they believe that the UN Environment Assembly should address the need for a sustainable recovery after the COVID crisis and provide a timely message to the world. There was also a strong sense that a message from the first virtual part of UNEA-5 will contribute to strengthening the role and visibility of the Assembly, an important goal we all share. Such a communication will clearly benefit the UN Environment Programme and the Environment Assembly, which is our responsibility to promote.

From the outset, a significant number of member states indicated clear misgivings that there be a message from the online session of UNEA-5. At the open-ended consultation on the 10<sup>th</sup> of December, a few member states still have strong reservations, but there was an increased support for me to continue my efforts. My strong feeling is that a critical mass of Member States are open or supportive of a message from the virtual session. I feel therefore a responsibility to continue towards identifying the substance that we can all nevertheless agree on, without prejudice to the final outcome.

To this end, I am pleased to circulate for your kind consideration a revised message for the online session of UNEA-5. In this draft, I have done my utmost to accommodate the feedback from member states at the open-ended online consultations. My objective is to strive for a consensus in the form of a short and compelling one-page message that calls for a sustainable recovery from the pandemic, for action in the implementation of 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and sets our expectations for a successful resumed session of UNEA-5 in 2022. All while avoiding issues of substance that is likely to inspire detailed textual feedback, which would necessitate online negotiations. I believe the paper before you represents common ground that all member states will be able to accept.

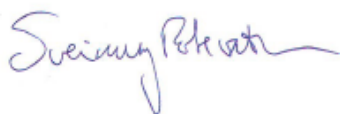
As President of the Assembly, it is my hope that we will finalise this document for the online session of UNEA-5 in the coming weeks through further informal, open and inclusive consultations with only very small adjustments to this draft.

To this end, this revised proposal will be presented to the UNEA bureau at its meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 2021 for its consideration and advice.

Following consideration of the guidance that will be provided from the UNEA Bureau members at our meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, and your comments and expressions of support which are welcome **in writing to [Postmottak\(a\)kld.dep.no](mailto:Postmottak(a)kld.dep.no) and [UNEP-SGB\(a\)un.org](mailto:UNEP-SGB(a)un.org)**, I will revert to you as soon as possible on the way forward.

Meanwhile, I thank you sincerely for your openness to work with me towards a consensual result, the very core of our joint business here at the United Nations.

Yours sincerely,



Sveinung Rotevatn  
Minister of Climate and Environment

Ministers responsible for the environment  
Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Representatives of the Major Groups and Stakeholders accredited to UNEP