

UNEP CYMG Intervention covering “framing the opening” and “update of UNEP report & request support”.

Thank you for the floor.

Madam Chair, Executive director and member states.

I am Alphonse Muia from Kenya from a youth organisation CYNESA, and part of the Steering Committee of the Children and Youth Major Group.

We would like to express our appreciation to the UNEP Secretariat for actively supporting the engagement of major groups and stakeholders in the commemoration activities; and also congratulate the African group for leading consultations on this. We also welcome and appreciate the leadership of Juan Bello in the UNEP team.

Youth have been preparing for the UNEP@50 at various regional foras this year. African Youth Dialogue on UNEP@50, UNEP@50 consultation at the Asia Pacific Youth Forum and LAC Youth Consultation.

We are also leading the UNEP@50 Task Force together with the Science and Technology Major Group. This Task Force will produce an independent report under the working title of “**The UNEP We Want**”. We are delighted today to hear support from member states on the presentation of outcomes of the report at the Special Session.

The last 20 years have taught us that, while integrating environmental, economic and social considerations into action is necessary; there is a strong need for a distinct and strong advocate for the environment as such in all processes. UNEP should be strengthened through a more effective mandate. A UNEP upgrade also needs to come with increases in funding and with greater autonomy on how this funding is spent. In that regard, we welcome the proposal from the Executive Director on the **3 thematic funds**.

In preparation for the science-policy proposal on the global environment in the lead up to the special session, we call for an active use of the contributions from the Major Groups and stakeholders.

On the theme of the Special Session, we suggest that the phrase *the UNEP WE Want* could be part of the title for diversity of discussions to take place.

On the agenda of the UNEA Special Session, we are glad that some initial inputs from the youth were taken into account. It is indispensable that the agenda includes spaces dedicated to Major Groups and Stakeholders. Furthermore, the plenary and leadership dialogues should **happen back to back and not simultaneously** to the extent possible.

From the youth constituency, we are pleased to announce our intention to host a UNEP@50 Youth Plenary as part of the Global Youth Environment Assembly, a youth-led hybrid event from Nairobi, prior to UNEA; and to present key messages to the Special Session. We thereby request that the leadership dialogue on “the next 50 years” - should be framed **as an inter-generational dialogue** in a regionally balanced manner.

Finally, since this is the first-ever Special Session of UNEA, we suggest that it also discusses when and how the future special sessions of UNEA could take place.

We continue to emphasize the importance of inclusive and universal involvement in the UNEA Special Session, where grassroots groups and those on the frontlines of environmental crises will be able to participate effectively and meaningfully.

Thank you!