

**UNGA 73/333**  
**November 17-19, 2021**  
**USA Opening Remarks**

Co-chairs the United States thanks you for your efforts to-date and we would like to take this opportunity to respond to the co-facilitators' Draft Political Declaration.

If we are serious about reaching consensus and concluding this process at UNEP@50, our efforts should be grounded in the few areas of consensus that emerged from months of previous discussions, closely following to the substantive recommendations developed by the 72/277 Working Group and endorsed in UNGA 73/333. Regrettably, the co-facilitator's draft text goes well beyond those areas of consensus and even seems to propose ideas that Member States have not discussed at any of the preceding meetings.

In particular, we are concerned that the draft political declaration overstates UNEA's role in the UN system. Collaboration in the UN system is encouraged but we should not expect this declaration to assert UNEP's or UNEA's primacy over other legally distinct bodies. This includes prejudging the secretariat location for future multilateral or regional agreements.

The United States has been one of UNEP's largest financial contributors year after year. Any calls for increasing core contributions must begin with the 110 countries that have not provided any resources to the Environment Fund. Universal membership in UNEP requires a universal commitment to funding the program.

The United States is committed to taking ambitious action to address environmental challenges, including continuing our work with international partners to share our experience with concrete domestic actions to protect the environment. We also recognize that climate change and environmental degradation impact the enjoyment of human rights and affirm that when taking action to address environmental challenges and climate change, States should respect their respective human rights obligations. The United States has consistently said in multiple UN fora that there are no universally-recognized human rights specifically related to the environment, and we do not believe there is a basis in international law to recognize a "right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment," either as an independent right or a right derived from existing rights. This position continues even with the recent Human Rights Council decision on this matter.

Our delegation sincerely hopes these meetings will lead us to a consensus-based outcome at UNEP@50. As we stated earlier, now is not the time to introduce new concepts that will drive us further from consensus. We add our voice to the other delegations who have called for this declaration to stay within the UNGA 73/333 mandate. In that regard, the United States wishes

to make it clear that we do not support several new concepts that have been proposed over the course of this meeting.

- We do not support adding a theme for UNEP@50
- We do not support the means of implementation gap analysis
- We do not support the so-called clearinghouse for technical assistance
- And we do not support singling out any particular principle of the Rio declaration, especially CBDR

Finally, esteemed co-chairs, we appreciate that this meeting has been organized in a hybrid manner and the United States urges you to continue such a practice to enable capital-participation from around the world.

Thank you.