

**Ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session
“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”**

Proposed preambular section

PP1 We, the world’s Ministers for the Environment, have gathered at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, under exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic to **take urgent action for** ~~strengthen actions for~~ nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

PP2 We recognize that **having a healthy natural environment and living in harmony with nature** a ~~healthy nature~~ is prerequisite and foundation for sustainable development in all its dimensions, and that we depend on nature, **given its interconnectedness with human, animal and plant health**, and the solutions it provides, for our health, wellbeing, resilience, economy and ultimately our existence **now and in the future**.

PP3 We note with profound concern the loss, degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems and habitats for biodiversity, affecting both life on land and life under water, due to multiple and interlinked threats such as unsustainable **use and** management of nature and its resources, unsustainable consumption and production patterns, climate change, **the spread of invasive alien species** and pollution ~~and littering~~ of water, air, and soil.

NEW We note with further grave concern that the 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals and waste **and our ambition to focus on a whole-life cycle approach**, has not been met with pollution thus remaining a threat to nature, **the climate**, and our health.

NEW [Placeholder for reference to outcomes from COP 26 Glasgow]

PP4 ~~Although we~~ **We** are encouraged by the strength of innovation, knowledge building, and investment in green technologies currently taking place which indicate that solutions exist or can be found, **we remain concerned about worrying long-term environmental challenges and so recognise that continued investment in research, development, and innovation will be required across all sectors in support of the transformational change we know is needed**.

PP5 We are deeply concerned about the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human lives and health, as well as on economies and societies, further threatening our ability to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and are aware that we face recurring risks of future pandemics **and other health threats** if we maintain the current patterns of interaction with nature **and do not take a One Health approach moving forwards**.

PP6 We recognize the need for transformative and systemic changes and ~~could have the opportunity to achieve more~~ **the increased opportunities presented** by policies and investments that address several environmental challenges simultaneously through innovative holistic approaches that truly value nature, **biodiversity and the services they provide on a fair and equitable basis**.

PP7 We reaffirm, as United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) celebrates through a special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly 50 years since its establishment, its continued

great importance as advocate for the global environment and express our support for the further strengthening of UNEP.

Proposed operative section

OP8 We commit to supporting a green and just recovery, with the goal of revitalizing our economies and livelihoods, contribute to poverty eradication, by mainstreaming **biodiversity, climate and environmental concerns** into all policies and tools promoting economic recovery; **unlocking sustainable finance** and making use of green economy pathways that emphasize ecosystem and knowledge-based management, **to support the** and by reducing **reduction of** greenhouse gas emissions, **while adapting** **adaption** to climate change **in line with the Paris Agreement. and protection and restoration of biodiversity, putting us on a trajectory towards a Paris Agreement aligned and nature-positive future.'**

OP9 We commit to working across sectors and levels of government to halt **biodiversity the loss and increase the area, connectivity and integrity** degradation, and fragmentation of ecosystems, focusing on areas of particular importance for biodiversity, through sustainable land **and sea use to achieve land degradation neutrality, protection of at least 30% of land and of the ocean globally and,** effectively managing protected areas, safeguarding especially vulnerable habitats, **types of nature** and eco-systems **such as coral reefs,** and addressing illegal deforestation, **illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing,** and **illegal** wildlife trade, **illegal** mining, and other **activities and** crimes that have serious impacts on the environment.

NEW We commit to pursue and join **innovative** ~~untraditional~~ partnerships across **society and** sectors, and work with youth, indigenous peoples **and local communities,** ~~private~~ **the business and finance** sectors and all of civil society, to develop actions that strengthen and **improve our interactions with** nature **at all levels, to** and turn around the persistently negative long term trend for the environment described by recent scientific reports from UNEP, the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

OP10 We commit to **a science and evidence-based approach to the design and implementation of policies on** ~~rethinking our approach to~~ the use and management of nature and its resources, to advance sustainable consumption and production patterns, including through resource efficiency and circular economy policy approaches, and by integrating the proper valuation of nature and the assessment of nature-related risks **within** policymaking.

OP11 We commit to promote, **scale up,** and strengthen nature-based solutions by actively protecting, sustainably managing, and restoring degraded ecosystems that provide us with **ecosystem services such** as food, water, and energy, are habitats for biodiversity and provide carbon storage and sequestration, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, for example natural forests, wetlands, and mangroves, thus underpinning our efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

OP12 We commit to cooperate across sectors and levels of government to **realise untapped opportunities** ~~transform our food systems,~~ **and to develop comprehensive strategies influenced** ~~inspired~~ by the UN Food Systems Summit vision of sustainable food systems that deliver enhanced

food security and resilience while reducing emissions, biodiversity loss and freshwater use, as an essential solution to accelerate actions on all the Sustainable Development Goals, ~~and we underline the natural role of UNEP in the Summit follow-up processes.~~

OP13 We will promote comprehensive land **and coastal** use planning **and shift policies away from environmentally harmful practices for land and marine ecosystems and promote sustainable land and forest management** backed up by robust national enforcement as an invaluable tool for sustainable development and help create a conducive business environment that stimulates investments in sustainable production and value chains.

OP14 We commit to safeguarding life under water, and **ensuring** a clean, healthy, and **resilient** ~~productive~~ ocean **with improved biodiversity** capable of providing food, livelihoods, and storing carbon, through strengthening efforts to sustainably manage ~~all~~ our oceans, as well as by sustainably using, **conserving** and protecting **the** oceans ~~seas and coastal~~ and **particularly vulnerable** ecosystems **such as coral reefs**, while acting to prevent pollution, ~~and prevent~~ marine temperature **increases**, and ocean acidification, by keeping our efforts in line with the Paris agreement.

OP15 We maintain our dedication to act in line with the implementation plan towards a pollution-free planet to protect nature and human health from adverse impacts from chemicals and waste and support an ambitious framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

OP16 [Placeholder for text with reference to recent developments and outcomes on Marine Litter] *We commit to enhance our efforts against plastic pollution of the ocean and our environment, and to take further steps to strengthen the global framework and to honour our ambition from UNEA-3 to eliminate all discharge of plastic litter and microplastics into the ocean in the long-term.*

OP17 We reaffirm the continued need to strengthen actions for nature and **acknowledge the messages from the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity, the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, the work of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and the Global Ocean Alliance. We further reaffirm** our commitment towards the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and call for an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity that inter alia includes a set of clear and robust goals and targets to address the direct and indirect drivers of biodiversity loss, **supported by increased finance for nature and strengthened reporting and review mechanisms** as a key instrument to reach the Sustainable Development Goals **and achieve the 2050 Vision of 'Living in Harmony with Nature'**.

OP18 We call for ~~the adequate and coherent~~ **comprehensive** implementation of the actions, commitments and resolutions adopted by the fifth United Nations Environment Assembly as well as previous UNEA outcomes, and further recognize our role, as Ministers of the Environment, in following up on these commitments within our own governments, contributing to coordinated action across sectors and levels of government and promoting effective implementation.

OP19 We recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires ~~enabling and~~ coherent policy frameworks **and scientific cooperation** at all levels, good governance and law enforcement at all levels, to be supported by effective means of implementation from all sources of finance, including domestic, international, private sector and innovative sources in line with the

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Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as further capacity-building, environmentally sound technologies, dedicated development partnerships, and a renewed and strong commitment to multilateralism.