

Consultations on the first full Draft Ministerial Declaration for the resumed session of UNEA-5

Position paper of the European Union and its Member States

Background document: [Note from the UNEA-5 Presidency on the draft Ministerial Declaration for the resumed session of the fifth session of United Nations Environment Assembly](#)

General remarks:

- The EU and its MS thank the UNEA-5 President for the opportunity to provide written comments on the first draft of the Ministerial Declaration for the resumed session of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. We support the inclusive consultation process proposed by the President as set out in the note on the 6th of December (updated on the 13th of December).
- The EU and its MS welcome this draft Ministerial Declaration. Considering the changes proposed, including on the structure of the document, the first draft declaration is an improvement on many points from the zero draft, released in October 2021.
- The following comments are preliminary positions and the EU and its MS reserve the possibility of formulating new comments later on, depending on the upcoming drafts which will be released.

Remarks per paragraph:

- **P3:** The EU and its MS welcome the reference to the One Health approach (as recently defined by the OHHLEP and endorsed by the Tripartite Plus). We still believe that a clearer emphasis to the role of healthy biodiversity and the importance of ecological restoration for ensuring healthy and resilience ecosystems and avoiding the transmission of infectious diseases would be relevant in this context. EU+MS also regret the substitution of the specific reference to **wild species and natural habitats** by the broader notion of “nature”, as this wording does not reflect well the interlinkages between pandemics and wildlife.
- **P5:** The EU and its MS welcome that the draft Declaration sets out the pressures on nature and environment and the urgent need to address them. The EU and its MS believe however that it is essential to explicitly mention **deforestation** as a major concern aside the loss and degradation of biodiversity.
- **P6:** As we expect that one of the main outcomes of UNEA will be the launch of an INC towards a legally binding global agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution, we would like to suggest making explicit reference to plastic pollution in this paragraph.
- **P9:** While we welcome that the declaration makes reference to the important outcomes of relevant MEAs, including the UNFCCC COP26 held in Glasgow, we would further encourage the inclusion of a paragraph dedicated to **climate action**. In such paragraph, the EU and its MS would like to reaffirm the commitment from UNFCCC COP 26, to pursue efforts to limit global

warming to 1.5°C by the end of the century, and the call for accelerated climate ambition and concrete action in the current decade, which is critical to keep this limit within reach. It is essential that Environment Ministers call all Parties to the Paris Agreement to revisit and strengthen the 2030 targets of their NDCs and communicate or update their long-term strategies next year, both aligned with the Paris Agreement temperature goal, urging Parties that have not yet communicated new or updated NDCs to do so as soon as possible, as agreed in Glasgow, in line with the best available science. It is also essential to call all Ministers to especially commit to rapid, deep and sustained climate action including the accelerated phase down of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuels subsidies, as agreed in Glasgow, while ensuring that “no one is left behind” in the shift to a sustainable path.

- **P10:** The EU and its MS take note of the introduction of the paragraph 10 welcoming the outcomes of the Kunming Declaration from the CBD COP15.1 High-Level Segment which took place in October 2021. The EU and its MS would like to recall that they see the Kunming Declaration as an outcome of the High-Level Segment to keep the political momentum high for an ambitious, transformative and effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the CBD COP 15. However, the EU and its MS would like to recall that the Kunming Declaration was negotiated in an unconventional way and it cannot prejudge the content of the Global Biodiversity Framework. The work of the open-ended Working Group, tasked with advancing preparations for the development of the GBF, provides the basis for these negotiations. In addition, the EU and its MS do not find it necessary to refer to the theme of COP CBD-15 as the theme was chosen by the host. The EU and its MS would therefore suggest to amend the paragraph accordingly to take into account these elements.
- **P11:** The EU and its MS are of the view that this paragraph should also include a reference to UNEP as “the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda”.
- **P12:** The EU and its MS regret the substitution of the wording “green and just recovery” by “inclusive and sustainable recovery” and would suggest a fallback to the original wording. The EU and its MS believe that emphasis should be made in the recovery plans on the crucial role of ecological restoration for ensuring healthy and resilience ecosystems and avoiding the transmission of infectious diseases. However, we note with concern that overall only very few of the worldwide recovery packages seize the opportunity for a resilient recovery, as evidenced and reported by UNEP on numerous occasions. We believe the Declaration could address this concern.
 - Gender equality and the reduction of pollutants could also be mentioned in this OP, as these issues are not mentioned in the text. The notion of both emissions reduction and “adaptation/resilience”, as well as “disaster risk reduction”, is to be supported. We also strongly welcome the language “**by reducing** carbon and non-carbon greenhouse gas emissions”, and would recommend to maintain it as it is.
 - Finally, we suggest including text on protecting key natural resources that are also vital for human survival and wellbeing. In this regard, the deletion from the previous draft of the mentions of “resource efficiency, environmentally sound business models”, “resilience” and “healthy and harmonious relationship with nature” and reference to “sustainable finance” makes the paragraph even weaker, and we would advocate for restoring such references.
- **P13:** In paragraph 13, the reference to biodiversity should be more ambitious and explicit in mentioning the aim to halt **and reverse** biodiversity loss by 2030 notably through enhancing the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of biodiversity, both within and beyond

protected areas, and in encouraging member states to increase the surface and the efficiency of protected areas. The EU and its MS also propose to include in this paragraph ‘illicit trafficking in timber’, in addition to deforestation and other illegal activities, and that these activities are effectively reaffirmed under the wider umbrella concept of “environmental crimes”. The EU and its MS consider that the notion of “environmental crime” must be further highlighted and that the current formulation is lowering the level of ambition with the dilution of “crimes” after the reference to undefined “other unsustainable activities”.

- **P14:** The EU and its MS appreciate that sustainable consumption and production (SCP) patterns are being given prominent attention in the declaration. However, the use of resources must be considered at all stages of the value chain. The EU and its MS believe it is important to recognize that unsustainable use of resources are a key driver of biodiversity loss and climate change.
- **P15:** The EU and its MS strongly support this paragraph on nature-based solutions. We support the recognition that specific ecosystem-based approaches can be considered under the wider umbrella concept of nature-based solutions. Furthermore, it is important to the EU+MS to include a reference to strong social and environmental safeguards in order to enable effective implementation of NbS. The EU and its MS also suggest introducing explicitly the soil as an essential resource and the need to protect and restore degraded land according to Agenda 2030 target 15.3. In parallel and building on UNGA resolution 76/L.28, adopted in December 2021, which “proclaims 2022 the International Year of Sustainable Mountain Development”, the EU and its MS would support the addition of “mountains” alongside other ecosystems that are mentioned in this paragraph. (“for example natural forests, **mountains**, wetlands, peatlands, mangroves and coral reefs (...)”)
- **P17:** This paragraph could constitute an opportunity to “commit to protect water quantity and quality as the source and indispensable support for life” as water issues are insufficiently reflected in the text. Indeed, the protection and effective sustainable management of all water resources should be highlighted, along with a reference to a need for accelerated climate change adaptation measures and integrated resource management taking into account future generations. This integrated resource management should be fostered for the protection and restoration of freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems. We would also welcome a reference to the 2023 UN Water Conference.
- **P18:** The EU and its MS support the explicit mentioning of soil as an essential resource and the need to protect and restore degraded land and achieving land degradation neutrality. Forest and trees are central to many of the over 120 countries who have committed to setting voluntary targets for land degradation neutrality (LDN), the countries recognize the need to increase and enhance forest cover. We furthermore suggest including the relation between land degradation and climate change as well as adding text on the potential of land degradation neutrality for climate change mitigation (see IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land).
- **P19:** The EU and its MS welcome this OP focused on ocean conservation and would see merits in mentioning **sustainable fishing practices and the protection of coastal and marine areas in line with SDG14**, and add a reference to the role of the upcoming second United Nations Ocean Conference in Lisbon in achieving SDG14.
- **P20:** The EU and its MS believe it is important to recognize that unsound chemicals and waste management is a key driver of biodiversity loss and climate change. We should call more

precisely for the adoption of an ambitious framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 at the 5th ICCM of the SAICM and for a stronger engagement in the ongoing negotiations. Also, the EU and its MS regret the deletion of the mention “detoxify land, ocean and freshwater” as the only reference to the protection of nature seems too vague for triggering a proper implementation.

- **P21:** The EU and its MS would see the need to draft the intended paragraph, currently as a placeholder, to reflect the current intentions and expected results on this topic.
- **P22:** As regard to the reference to the IPBES and IPCC report in this paragraph, an appropriate formulation should be used: “joint workshop of IPBES with IPCC report”. The EU and its MS would also like to propose to add a sentence or a separate paragraph addressing the science-policy interface and the need for an increased cooperation between the existing (e.g. IPCC, IPBES, IRP) and potential future (Chemicals/Waste/Pollution) panels and the renewed GEO, as the UNEP’s flagship.
- **P23:** Concerning the transition to sustainable food systems, we believe that references to the need to halt and reverse land use conversion, as well as deforestation, should also be added. The EU and its MS suggest including the halt of ‘deforestation and land degradation’ in addition to biodiversity loss and freshwater use. Also, the Paris Agreement and the CBD should be mentioned alongside 2030 Agenda.
- **P24:** The EU and its MS support the call in paragraph 24 for the adoption of an ambitious and transformative post-2020 global biodiversity framework at the CBD COP 15. Improving biodiversity mainstreaming across all sectors, as well as other reinforced implementation mechanisms will be crucial for the achievement of the goals and targets to be set in such Global Biodiversity Framework.. When referring to the adoption of this framework, the text shall not only refer to the “clear and robust goals and targets” it sets, but also to the “robust transparency and responsibility mechanism” it must contain to “ensure implementation”. The EU and its MS would also like to add “and a robust and effective implementation mechanism which includes improved instruments for monitoring, reporting, reviewing and preventing backtracking” after goals and targets as implementation is a key element besides the goals and targets of the GBF.
- **P26:** The EU and its MS would like to strengthen the wording of this OP by clearly demonstrating the adherence to the concept that the protection of the environment should be subject to continual advancement in the implementation of laws, commitments and policy frameworks, at the global, regional, national, subnational, and local levels. Proposed text: “We further recognize that the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling, coherent, **ambitious and continually improving** legal and policy frameworks at all levels, good governance and law enforcement (...)”.
- **P27:** The EU and its MS welcome the paragraph supporting the upcoming international meeting Stockholm+50. We would welcome additional language to highlight that Stockholm+50 could contribute to accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2030 and the MEAs with actions to address the triple planetary crisis and to foster a green and sustainable recovery. Lastly we are supportive to regard the ministerial declaration as input to Stockholm+50.