

## **MGS Joint Closing statement UNEA 5.2**

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Dear colleagues,

I am Ayman Cherkaoui with the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection. I am Regional Facilitator, Major Groups and Stakeholders, Africa.

I am speaking on behalf of all the Major Groups and Stakeholders:

As we close this UNEA, we, as a global community, do so with significant progress having been made on important issues for the people and the planet.

The triple planetary crises that we are confronted with do not leave us much time. We need to implement the decisions as soon as possible, on the ground, with solidarity, positive impact, and leaving no one behind. Indeed, as a critical example, very few representatives of the Indigenous community were able to join in person here, even though they have more than 80% stewardship of nature and biodiversity.

Regarding the Ministerial Declaration, it is a shame that it does not refer to the human right to a clean, sustainable and healthy environment which was recognised by the UN Human Rights Council only last year. The recognition was a victory for humankind and for nature, and it is very strange that UNEA is ignoring this fact. Ministers of the Environment meeting at UNEA should applaud this ! Fortunately, the UNHCR decision will influence the work of UNEP in any case and governments everywhere should be fully prepared for that.

We appreciate all of the work that went into the proposed plastics resolution, and are excited about the change that it represents. We are indeed writing history today. Civil society and science have played a tremendous role in achieving this win. We encourage member states to maintain the spirit of cooperation from those negotiations into the meetings to come in the proposed Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. We welcome the historic resolution adopted on the nexus between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development. Dedicated action to protect animals and their welfare in the UN policy process has been insufficient to date, with devastating consequences for biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and global public and environmental health. With this resolution, UNEA is now providing much needed leadership to catalyze intergovernmental action for the environment.

The 3 chemicals resolutions being adopted are very important to address the global crisis of chemical pollution, and protect and support groups that are most impacted by unsustainable chemicals use such as women farm workers and waste pickers. Independent science on chemical and waste pollution is key to support the implementation of the BRS and Minamata Conventions. And that it values traditional, women's and indigenous knowledge is essential. The Major Groups and Stakeholders are ready to engage. We do regret, however, that no coordinated global action was taken on pesticides which poison 385 million farmers and workers every year.

We welcome the progress made on Sustainable Nitrogen Management as it will make a difference to the health of the planet and its people. However, we regret that the goal to halve nitrogen waste globally by 2030 was lost in the negotiations.

Regarding the resolution on mineral and metal resources, we are disappointed to see the lack of support at UNEA to together develop global mineral resource governance. The use of secondary materials needs to be the absolute priority and we need strict criteria for no-go areas for extractive industries and democratic control and transparency over resource use. It is a missed opportunity not to set up an intergovernmental working group, but Major Groups and Stakeholders are happy to actively engage in the foreseen regional consultations.

In conclusion, we congratulate Member States, UNEP and all participants on the adoption of many groundbreaking resolutions, but NOW THE REAL WORK BEGINS. It is crucial to start implementing the resolutions adopted. Agreeing here on language is one thing, implementation and enforcement on the national levels is often not happening. Major Groups and Stakeholders could build the bridge between words and practice, holding governments accountable, but for that we need your trust and support.

We call on all, to ensure that implementation of all resolutions, including in particular on plastics, chemicals, minerals and Nature-based solutions, is not dominated by narrow and short term interests driven by greed, but instead fully respects and builds on the rights and knowledge of indigenous peoples, women and small farmers through the lens of intra and intergenerational equity.

As an African, as a Moroccan, I am excited by the nomination by the African Group of the Kingdom of Morocco as the candidate for the presidency of UNEA 6. We, as Major Groups and Stakeholders, are happy about this nomination and look forward to our collaboration in that context. However, tonight is not about packing our bags and reconvening in 2 years. Preparing UNEA 6 starts tomorrow, and we, the Major Groups and Stakeholders, are ready to engage with you through an open, transparent and participatory process.

Thank you.