

UNITED KINGDOM SUBMISSION: UNEA-7 MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Overarching areas of focus

- The UK believes in a strong emphasis on science-based policy making on environmental issues. We recognise UNEP's position at the science-policy interface and believes the Ministerial Declaration should have a strong science and evidence-based approach throughout the text.
- The Ministerial Declaration should recognise the importance of addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Presidency Guiding Questions:

1. What would the Ministers for the Environment propose as the most important elements and or key messages that would enable the ministerial declaration to take forward the UNEA theme in the most impactful manner?

- The UK Government is committed to reducing waste by moving to a **circular economy**. We would therefore strongly support the draft Ministerial Declaration prioritising this area, where multilateral cooperation and funding have the potential to bring effective and lasting change:
 - *'It is time to rethink how we design, produce and consume products across economic sectors - to move away from the linear "take, make, throw" model we know causes environmental and social harms. Transitioning to a circular economy will support economic growth, deliver green jobs, promote efficient and productive use of resources, minimise negative environmental impacts and accelerate progress to Net Zero. A circular economy could address the global funding gap for transforming food systems to achieve climate mitigation and adaptation targets, and other Sustainable Development Goals.'*
- The UK would like to see the importance of mobilising more quality and accessible finance for nature from all sources and aligning financial flows reflected in the Ministerial Declaration:
 - *'Mobilising more quality and accessible finance for nature from all sources and aligning financial flows with the goals and targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is vital for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement and GBF. We must integrate nature into decision making at all levels, tracking nature finance mobilisation, supporting investments in Nature-based Solutions and accelerating the development of innovative finance mechanisms.'*
- The UK believes the Ministerial Declaration should recognise that **tackling environmentally harmful subsidies** is crucial to closing the biodiversity finance gap. The Ministerial Declaration should note the need for all countries to identify subsidies harmful to the environment, and then work to eliminate, phase out or reform them, and welcome the work of BIOFIN, the World Bank and the GEF in supporting countries to do so.
- The UK believes the Ministerial Declaration should highlight that we must halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, in line with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, by ensuring swift, inclusive and effective implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF). This should include developing and implementing ambitious National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, coordinated and aligned with

Nationally Determined Contributions, National Adaptation Plans and national development plans.

2. What key messages or conclusions from recent scientific reports would the Ministers for the Environment recommend for consideration in the ministerial declaration?

- The UK would like to see the two assessments adopted at the 11th IPBES (IPBES-11) meeting, the Nexus Assessment and the Transformative Change Assessment, referenced within the ministerial declaration. These outcomes from IPBES-11 are the result of years of work, including multiple expert and Government reviews, providing key recommendations to tackle the biodiversity crisis and other global environmental challenges and crises.
- The Transformative Change Assessment provides a roadmap for addressing global environmental challenges and crises, such as biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution, to achieve a just and sustainable world. Given the theme of UNEA-7, ‘Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet’, the Transformative Change assessment is particularly relevant and important through its options for fundamental, system-wide changes to achieve a just and sustainable world.
- While the Nexus Assessment provides 71 specific response options, which have benefits for sustainably managing the nexus elements: biodiversity, water, food, health and climate change. These are highly relevant, since 24 of these simultaneously advance more than 5 of both the SDGs and KMGBF targets, as well as the Paris Agreement. Additionally, they have direct and tangible nexus-wide benefits to local communities and some, such as farmer-led regreening, have been shown to be highly cost-effective.

3. What proposed collective actions and policy solutions should the Ministers for the Environment adopt to advance the UNEA theme and promote effective and inclusive environmental governance?

- The UK is committed to achieving an ambitious **treaty on plastic pollution** by UNEA-7 that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, from production and consumption to waste management. This treaty will provide a once in a generation opportunity to move towards a circular economy for plastics – we believe the draft Ministerial Declaration should contain a placeholder, which welcomes the treaty once agreed.
- The UK believes the Ministerial Declaration should include a placeholder to welcome agreement on the intergovernmental **Science Policy Panel (SPP) for chemicals, waste, and the prevention of pollution** and the **Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC)**.
 - *‘The UNEP and UNEA has a critical role to play in supporting the development towards further chemicals and pollution action globally, and [we welcome the new intergovernmental science-policy panel (SPP) to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution. The [SPP] will play a vital role in furthering global efforts to tackle pollution, working alongside other intergovernmental science-policy platforms to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.] We will resolve to deploy greater efforts towards the sound management of chemicals and waste, including by enhancing implementation of the Global Framework on Chemicals and its vision, objectives and targets.’*

4. Any other messages(s) would the Ministers for the Environment wish to be considered or included in the ministerial declaration?

- The UK supports the Ministerial Declaration referencing **the importance of IPLCs, women, girls, children and youth, and persons of disabilities** – in particular their equitable and participatory approaches and respecting their rights over lands, territories and resources, their knowledge, including traditional knowledge associated with biodiversity, innovations, worldviews, values and practices, in line with the CBD Global Biodiversity Framework.
- The UK believes in the importance of the **Quadripartite One Health Alliance** and the critical role UNEP and UNEA must play within this to succeed, must be reflected in the Ministerial Declaration:
 - *‘UNEP and UNEA must play an impactful role within the Quadripartite One Health Alliance, recognising the deep interconnection between environmental change and pollution to environmental, plant, animal and human health, food security, infectious disease emergence and antimicrobial resistance and the need for research, and application of One Health principles.’*
- The UK is committed to working with international partners to negotiate a **Pandemic Accord** to strengthen global pandemic prevention, preparedness and response, with a deadline of May 2025. Pandemic prevention, which will be a key pillar within the Accord, is inextricably linked to the human-animal-environment interface. We believe the draft Ministerial Declaration should contain a placeholder, which welcomes the Pandemic Accord once agreed, and notes UNEP’s role in supporting implementation, as part of the Quadripartite.
- Additionally, the Ministerial Declaration should recognise **antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** as a global threat and welcome the UNGA Political Declaration on AMR from September 2024, and the way in which UNEP played an important role in securing this and its delivery going forward. UNEP also has an important role in the Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR and the draft Ministerial Declaration should contain a placeholder, which welcomes the establishment of the Independent Panel for evidence for action on AMR, which should be established prior to UNEA-7.
- The UK’s continued priority is to keep attention focused on delivering the international commitment to halt and reverse deforestation and forest degradation by 2030 and we think the Ministerial Declaration should also reflect this ambition and action to protect, restore and sustainably manage global forests, which is essential to delivering climate and nature ambitions and the SDGs.
- Lastly, the UK considers our mission is unachievable without **action on the ocean** and coasts and we support a focus on the implementation of international agreements pertaining to the ocean and meeting Sustainable Development Goal 14 – life below water.
 - *‘The ocean is 70% of the Earth’s surface, 95% of the biosphere, and home to 80% of all biodiversity. It is vital to climate security – absorbing 90% of excess heat in the climate system and more than a quarter of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions, while also regulating the global climate and providing livelihood and food security for 3bn people. Our mission is unachievable without action on the ocean and coasts through implementation of international agreements pertaining to the ocean, including the Global Biodiversity Framework, and the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement, supporting the delivery of SDG 14 – Life Below Water and ensuring rigorous Ocean science informs policymaking.’*