



Make UNEA 5.2 a game-changer and act for Nature now

Joint Global Statement

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To The Presidency and Bureau of UNEA 5.2
To The Chair and Bureau of the CPR
To The Permanent Representatives to UN Environment
To The Environment Ministers

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Preamble

More than at any other time in history, humankind is facing the combined threat of **climate breakdown, exponential biodiversity and ecosystem loss** as well as **unparalleled levels of pollution**, including large amounts of waste not properly managed, which impact the remotest corners of the planet. These three crises are interconnected and exacerbate each other in a 'spiral dynamic' leading to a systemic breakdown of Nature which is unprecedented in its magnitude, pace and severity. They continue to threaten peace and human rights and infringe on the **right to life, to health and to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** for current and future generations. The undersigned Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) welcome the focus of UNEA 5.2 on the pivotal role that Nature plays as our live-support system. Our governments should **recognise the severity** of the multiple emergencies. Business as usual is not an option. They should come forward with **bold and courageous political leadership now** and make decisions to attain a sustainable future ensuring wellbeing for Nature, animals and people.

The UN Human Rights Council approved resolution 48/13 on 8 October 2021 recognising the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Governments should now transpose the **newly recognised right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment** into domestic law and concrete commitments. While the UN General Assembly should similarly recognise the right, adding **ecocide** as the fifth crime to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court would have a strong preventive effect on destructive actions.

As humanity we must reverse the environmentally destructive trajectory that we are currently on by rapidly transitioning to complete sustainability. We must shift away from the prevailing economic system which is dependent on **ever increasing GDP growth and unsustainable consumption**. Continuous economic expansion comes with the proliferation of extractive industries, large-scale agriculture, refining and manufacturing processes, the extensive use of chemicals and pesticides and ever-increasing amounts of waste. It drives deforestation, generates pollution and greenhouse gases and leads to antibiotic resistance and zoonotic spillover. **Continuous economic expansion and infinite GDP growth are systemic drivers** of natural resource extraction, environmental destruction and pollution and the overexploitation of wild and domestic animals.

We recognise the **urgent need to transform law, policies, attitudes and behaviours** and to turn from the paradigm of endless extraction and expansion where Nature is a commodity to one of coexistence recognising the inherent worth of Nature and wildlife. We need to defend and restore the natural world upon which our societies and economies depend. We call for **a new development paradigm and an alternative economic model** which must serve **the common good**. It is subordinate to higher objectives: human and animal wellbeing, the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, the need for humane, sustainable and regenerative food systems and the need to curb overconsumption and waste. The transition to an alternative economic model and a new development paradigm can only be **co-designed and realised through engaging with all stakeholders**, including the worldviews and ethics of faith communities, Indigenous Peoples and their communities, farmers and peasants, women, youth, civil society organisation and trade unions.

MGoS call on the international community and our governments to make the best possible use of the **Decade of Action to deliver the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs**, to **speed up global environmental decision-making-actions** with a proactive, inclusive and participatory approach, to increase the pace and scale of efforts to rebuild harmony with Nature, and to repair and restore the damage already perpetrated by human actions. Much **higher ambitious and committed action** are urgently needed, along with the **full implementation and achievement of all existing environmental agreements** in an integrated, cohesive and mutually reinforcing manner.

Strengthening environmental governance and law (Res 73/333 - UNEP@50)

At the **core of UNEP's and UNEA's mandate is to establish environmental policies and law and to guide their implementation at national level.** Developing, institutionalising and enforcing environmental governance and law is the core-business and right to exist of UNEP and UNEA. This horizontal topic should be core in the working plan of the secretariat and key objective in the negotiations with the member states.

Finding ways to strengthen environmental policies and law is the main objective of UNGA Resolution 73/333 and will be the topic of the negotiated outcome document of the UNEP@50 High-Level event. **Having a declaration is not enough:** we need a global framework to coordinate and better implement environmental governance and law. **This Framework should include concrete goals, targets, indicators, means of implementation as well as a strong monitoring scheme.** The monitoring scheme for member states can be inspired by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism established under the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR). UNEP and member states should establish a working group to negotiate such a framework to be adopted by 2025. **This commitment should be part of the political declaration to be adopted at UNEP@50.**

The undersigned civil society organisations and other stakeholders and rights holders strongly support the process following UNGA Resolution 73/333 (formerly known as Global Pact for the Environment). We must together **re-engage in the urgent discussion to close the gaps in international law and secure its enforcement** as identified, amongst others, in the UN Secretary-General's report on the subject. We want **2022 to be the year to kick off the process of establishing such a global framework** to strengthen and enforce (existing and new) environmental governance and law by 2025. The **UNEP@50 and Stockholm+50** commemorating the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment need to serve as a platform from which to **start building the above-mentioned global framework** for stronger environmental governance in full respect of human rights, strengthening environmental law including relevant criminal law and guaranteeing enforcement at the national levels. To achieve this, environment ministers need to ensure that the **environment is a "stand alone" topic in governance** and not only mainstreamed (*awaystreamed*) in other policies.

Transformative changes for human life in harmony with Nature

Respecting Nature is critical to our survival. We are part of Nature and not separate from it. Humanity must **cherish ecosystems and biodiversity** as life-support systems and learn to accurately interpret what Nature can teach us. We should introduce a greater understanding of Nature-centred stewardship for biodiversity and ecosystems through education and life-long learning. Independently of our human needs, we should acknowledge the **intrinsic value of Nature, biodiversity and wild animals** as recognised by the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). We recognise the role of indigenous belief systems that cherish Nature for its intrinsic value. A growing number of jurisdictions have started to codify the rights of Nature to be protected from destruction and pollution. Giving Nature its own legal entity can be a crucial tool to ensure its protection.

Business operations that systematically destroy, disrupt and pollute Nature and ecosystems must be stopped and held accountable. Governments should be in the driver's seat to manage and protect the environment and achieve environmental justice. We expect our governments to urgently address the key drivers of destruction identified in the 2019 Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services including changes to land and sea use, the often illegal exploitation of organisms for commercial trade, unsustainable diets and the agro-industrial systems that feed them, the steady increase in extraction of raw materials and the

use of pesticides, fertilisers and other chemicals that irreversibly decimate pollinators and insects and pollute soils and water sources. The destruction and pollution of ecosystems can regularly be traced back to specific types of corporations such as those producing 'forever chemicals,' mining giants, transnational corporations in the livestock, agro-industry and food and beverage sector and fossil fuel companies.

We need **legally binding measures**, such as the Binding Treaty on Business and Human Rights, which ensure transparency, oblige companies to act with due diligence, hold them accountable and make them liable for environmental and human harm across their value chains. This needs compliance mechanisms to hold business and government accountable. We also need the full enforcement of existing MEAs. Clear targets and goals are necessary to have the implementation monitored on the regional and national levels. On the financial level, **harmful incentives and subsidies**, including all fossil fuel subsidies, should be urgently eliminated and repurposed towards green and just transition measures which are humane, environmentally sustainable and equitable.

Guaranteeing environmental right and a just transition

A rights-based approach is fundamental to guaranteeing a green and just transition. This is not an option but an obligation under international human rights commitments. Environmental pollution and land degradation have disastrous impacts on our **rights to life, to health and to a healthy environment**. Certain populations including racialised communities, minorities and Indigenous Peoples, farmers, peasants and workers, women and children, young and older people, people with underlying health problems and low-income groups regularly face **disproportionate environmental burdens**. Those who contribute least to the environmental crises are often most harmed by degradation and pollution, and we need to ensure **environmental justice now**.

We need strong protection and support for those at the frontline, our **environmental defenders**, including land rights defenders, activists opposing harmful projects, rangers and others who are often threatened and even killed when opposing harmful practises. No environmental challenge can be addressed without full respect for and collaboration with the rights holders on ground today and of the future. Effective and equitable policies and regulations should recognise these **rights holders' group's governance, tenure rights and agency over their lands and territories** and the resources therein. It is in the interest of all that the work and initiatives of rightsholder groups be financially and politically supported to enable us all to jointly contribute to stronger global environmental policies, without fear of reprisals. And we should together stand strong for our **human and environmental rights to ensure full transparency, engagement and participation of the public and stakeholders in decision-making, access to justice, and for governmental accountability** for their policies and practices.

Those who contribute least to the environmental crises are not only regularly the most harmed by degradation and pollution, but are also likely to be impacted by policies, laws and measures around the transition. We need **Just Transition policies leaving no one behind** and measures to support those impacted most, including farmers, peasants, workers, their families and communities, women and youth. We need strong policies to tackle the root causes of existing and growing inequalities beyond temporary financial compensation and other short-term support. Just Transition policies should be developed based on social dialogue processes with social partners and all relevant stakeholders, as defined in the ILO Just Transition Guidelines.

Ensuring meaningful civil society engagement

Both UNEP@50 and Stockholm+50 require **close cooperation with Major Groups and Stakeholders**. We can emulate the lessons from the Rio+20 process which captured the voices and contributions of millions through transparent dialogues and consultations that informed the

development of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. **Co-creation of the agendas of leadership dialogues, sufficient civil-society lead side events and co-chairmanship by civil society**, in particular youth, should be guiding for the organisation process.

UNEP's future role depends on the support of people. Since UNEP's inception, a healthy environment has always been referred to as a prerequisite for socio-economic development. Sustainability and poverty eradication will be difficult to achieve without environmental policies and laws. We need a **powerful UNEP working closely with both governments and wider society** at all levels to tackle the delicate relationship between global wellbeing and the environment. Together, we must build a sustainable, new economic system to ensure well-being without the irreversible overuse of natural resources and the inevitable environmental degradation that follows.

In 2022, it will be 10 years since world leaders renewed their political commitment to sustainable development at Rio+20. They committed to strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development articulated in **paragraph 88** of the “**The Future We Want**”. However, ten years on, implementing “The Future We Want” remains woefully incomplete. This should change, and effective, transparent engagement between UNEP and civil society is key. **Stockholm+50 provides the opportunity for bold steps to accelerate global environmental action**, as core business for UNEP, with clear commitments such as agreements for a moratorium on geo-engineering and sea-bed mining and the items elaborated below, as well as a short-term timeline for the full transition to agro-ecology and enacting the human right to a healthy environment.

Promoting peace and environmental protection

Ongoing research and multilateral UN processes continue to underscore the **devastating environmental consequences of wars and armed conflict**. It is vital that the **legal framework to prevent harm is strengthened, including international criminal law**, and we urge states to welcome the International Law Commission's **draft principles on the Protection of the environment in relation to armed conflicts** at the UN General Assembly in 2022. It is also critical that **the environmental legacy of conflicts is properly addressed** in response and recovery work. We need to develop and implement actions for Nature that can **prevent, minimise and remediate conflict-linked environmental degradation** and strengthen climate resilience in conflict-affected countries.

Expected outcomes of UNEA 5.2

MGoS expect **clear solutions to emerge from UNEA 5.2 resolutions and the political declaration UNEP@50 including:**

- an agreement to **start negotiations for a legally binding global instrument to eliminate plastic pollution** throughout the plastic life cycle from production and product design to end of life and waste management with a strong human rights-based approach and the aim to significantly reduce the production and use of plastics.
- decisions for **Nature-centred and biodiversity-friendly approaches** that ensure human, animal and planetary health and well-being and that protect ecosystem integrity, including through proactive efforts to ensure the incorporation of Nature-centred approaches in the development of the proposed Pandemics Agreement under the auspices of the World Health Organisation.
- the passing of a **stand-alone resolution on the nexus between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development**.
- an agreement to **strengthen international governance of chemicals** as well as of **resource extraction and mining** that protects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and those communities disproportionately affected along with the health of all.

- a concrete commitment to develop a **global framework to strengthen and enforce global environmental law and governance** (following Res 73/333), which includes and is based on the development of specific **goals, targets, means of implementation, and effective monitoring schemes** while taking steps to carry out and integrate all the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Conventions in a mutually supportive and reinforcing manner.

It is bitterly disappointing that there is not even one resolution addressing the massively critical issue of **sustainable food systems**. Unsustainable agriculture, in particular industrial animal agriculture and the production of feedstock, destroys forests and biodiversity, squanders water, contributes significantly to pollution and releases one quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions. National strategies for addressing climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradations regularly pay scant attention to food and agricultural issues, despite their importance as root causes and drivers of these crises – as highlighted in many UN flagship reports. Sustainable agriculture is and can be an asset in mitigating climate change and reducing environmental pressures. There are many **farmers around the world who apply sustainable practises** (including but not limited to agroecological practises, organic farming, no-till, crop rotation or permanent soil cover) that result in the improvement of soil health, lower GHG emissions, carbon sequestration and reduction in water use. These practises need to be scaled up and **farmers and producers who know their soils, who walk and work their fields, must be given a central voice in agri-food system debates**. Sustainable food systems need to be considered and at the very least built into relevant draft resolutions, so it is not overlooked. The radical transformation of food systems is also crucial to the prevention of future pandemics.

Recommendations regarding specific UNEA 5.2 themes

Beat plastic pollution now (Resolution Cluster Marine and Plastic Pollution)

Since its inaugural session in 2014, UNEA has seen progressively stronger calls to take action to stop the ever-increasing problem of pollution from plastics. Plastic pollution and waste is a global crisis, and a common concern of humankind that requires global and urgent solutions. While we recognize the importance of continuing and developing work at national and regional levels without delay, we call on members to take decisive action by **establishing an intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) at UNEA 5.2** with a mandate to negotiate a **new legally binding global agreement to address pollution from plastics in all environments and in all forms**. Such an agreement should include time-targeted, measurable, and binding commitments with effective enforcement mechanisms and be predicated on human rights and full enforcement of the polluter pays principle.

The mandate for the INC should take a **life cycle approach** covering both upstream and downstream measures and addressing the health, human rights and climate impacts of plastic pollution. It is critical that the focus of the legally binding instrument is on **reduction and prevention - especially the elimination of single-use plastics and the pervasive pollution of the environment from plastic production and transportation of pellets** - to move our global system towards sustainable production and consumption. Such an instrument must include a process for coordinating and aligning with other existing instruments that cover portions of the plastics life cycle and supply chain in addition to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recycling alone will not solve the plastic crisis. It is important to take note of and **avoid false solutions** to the plastics crisis, including false claims of recyclability, bio-based or biodegradable plastics, or chemical recycling. National, regional, and international action plans should promote

the innovation of toxic-free refill and reuse systems in ways that are maximally beneficial to the environment and the economy and should engage citizens in data collection, education, and the development of solutions. The treaty should include standard criteria for applications of plastic as a material, for transparency and limitations on hazardous additives to plastics, and for evaluating innovations to address the crisis to facilitate informed decisions on a non-toxic circular economy for all life stages of plastics.

The mandate adopted by UNEA 5.2 should also guarantee meaningful and effective participation of stakeholders in the negotiation and implementation process. This process must be predicated on a just and robust system for ensuring stakeholder participation and meaningful implementation at all levels under a human rights-based approach. The negotiations need to include **those communities most harmed by plastic pollution along its life cycle**, including people exposed to pollution from plastic feedstocks and petrochemical production, people negatively affected by dumps, landfills, open burning of plastics, chemical recycling facilities or incinerators, Indigenous Peoples who offer expertise for alternative systems, formal and informal workers along the plastic supply chain who must be guaranteed just and safe working conditions, consumer voices and those communities dependent on marine and riverine resources harmed by plastic pollution.

All three resolutions in this cluster have strengths that we welcome. All three:

- make clear that urgent action is required;
- recognize the importance of financing and technology mechanisms with international collaboration and cooperation;
- recognize the importance of circular economy;
- highlight the role of national action plans and potential regional coordination in their development;
- encourage multi-stakeholder action.

However, one resolution clearly sets the strongest and most ambitious mandate for an INC to craft a global agreement that will sufficiently address the plastics crisis: the resolution presented by Rwanda and Peru. It has already garnered support from several dozen more countries, showing its strength, feasibility and popularity.

Draft resolution from Rwanda and Peru on an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution

The MGoS support the Draft Resolution presented by the governments of Rwanda and Peru to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee with an open, broad and clear mandate and we ask that member states join Rwanda and Peru through co-sponsorship to support and strengthen this resolution. Anything less than what is included in this resolution would not be enough to meet the ambition required for even the existing scale of plastic pollution.

Draft resolution from Japan on an international legal instrument on marine plastic pollution

While the Draft Resolution presented by the government of Japan recognizes the **transboundary nature of the plastic pollution** problem and calls for the creation of an INC, the mandate **does not sufficiently address the plastic pollution crisis** by focusing too narrowly on the problem of marine plastic pollution. Furthermore, the Japanese resolution proposes a rigid and closed mandate for negotiations disallowing an INC from considering relevant aspects. The MGoS instead support the Draft Resolution from Rwanda and Peru.

Draft resolution from India on single use plastics

The Draft Resolution presented by the government of India recognizes the **need for immediate action and the importance of circularity in addressing the plastics crisis**, but the scope of the resolution seeks only a **voluntary framework to reduce single-use plastics** and plastic product pollution. The MGoS encourage supporters of this Draft Resolution to also support the Draft Resolution presented by the governments of Rwanda and Peru.

Transformative change for life in harmony with Nature and animals (Resolution Cluster 2 Nature-Based Solutions and Biodiversity)

It has never been clearer that humanity should adopt a systems approach to the relationship between human and environmental health and well-being and that protecting and restoring ecosystems is vital for our survival. **Systems thinking** including **One Health and One Welfare** models that help us to understand how wildlife is displaced, becomes extinct or disturbed by human disruption and how climate change facilitates the spillover of diseases into humans. It helps to understand how intact ecosystems can prevent this by providing space for wild animals avoiding human or livestock contact. It allows us to understand how the massive and increasing trade in wild animals and intensive animal agriculture pollutes water, land and air, and raises stressed animals with poor welfare, creating the perfect conditions for antimicrobial resistance and zoonotic disease evolution and transfer. And it helps us understand how good governance and stability can create the capacity needed to develop, implement and monitor environmental regulations, and identify and act on emerging health threats.

In practice, this means enabling the public health, environment and animal health sectors to collaborate effectively to prevent health impacts and improve welfare and well-being, curbing activities that are exploitative of Nature and animals and which simultaneously put human health at risk. It means environmental impact assessments that go much further in exploring and understanding the relationships between ecological factors and human and animal health and wellbeing.

Holistic and systemic approaches include:

- mainstreaming and integrating the concept of One Health and One Welfare as a method for preventing as well as responding to zoonotic disease outbreaks, pandemics and other health threats linked to environmental degradation and which address human, animal and environmental health and well-being in a coherent and coordinated manner.
- ensuring that ecological and health protection policies also consider the underlying cultural and spiritual values of Nature.
- incorporating new mechanisms for deeper dialogue with diverse communities of thought to include holistic transdisciplinary knowledge, wisdom and methods of Indigenous cosmologies, spiritual, ethical and values-based perspectives and academics across disciplines.
- creating new vegetation systems modelled on rewilding or species rich ecosystems, as opposed to single species farming, monocultures and forestry plantation ensuring improved health effects and healthy and sustainable ecosystems?

Actions for biodiversity and ecosystems health include:

- strengthening criteria for environmental impact assessments by ensuring that they account for all wild animals with particular care given to threatened species, critical areas for biodiversity, and the current network of protected areas, made obligatory in development planning at all levels.
- prioritising the decisions and works of Indigenous Peoples and their Communities.

Indigenous Peoples are important guardians of the ecosystems which belong to them or where they live freely, and their removal from national parks and sanctuaries has been shown not to improve the conservation of those ecosystems.

- emphasising the need to restore and reconnect natural systems to maximise human, environmental and animal health and well-being and minimising the interface between wildlife, livestock and humans, taking note of the Decade for Ecosystem Restoration.
- integrating into food and energy systems measures to promote healthy ecosystems, cultural and biological diversity, especially genetic diversity.
- facilitating just transitions away from the trade in wild animals and consumption of their meat where possible and reducing consumption of farmed meat and dairy to both directly improve human health and reduce pressure on land from intensive agriculture as well as problems related to animal welfare; promoting the shift towards plant-based diets; eliminating highly toxic agrochemicals.
- restricting the mixing of wild species with captive animals, including in situations such as fur farms, and promoting agricultural systems using landscape level planning that strengthen the integrity of ecological boundaries, minimise the need for wildlife to use agricultural areas, and enable them to access the resources they need within their native habitat.

Nature-positive economic measures include:

- Eliminating harmful subsidies and incentives that support sectors and activities driving environmental degradation and pressures upon animals and their habitat, and thus harming human health and wellbeing; redirecting, repurposing and reforming these to support the transition towards humane, sustainable and equitable solutions.
- Developing economic and legislative incentives to encourage, promote and induce sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Addressing the growing debt burden of lower income countries - whether bilateral, multilateral or private - which impacts their ability to invest in environmental protection measures, for instance, through debt relief (including debt swaps) and lower interest rates.
- Unlocking societies data collection capacity through supporting open-source citizen science initiatives, e.g., creating economic rewards for volunteer data collectors.

Draft resolution from Indonesia on Sustainable Lake Management

We welcome the draft resolution and stress the significance of **multi-stakeholder involvement** with priority given to the voices of local communities, scientists and their representatives. Such involvement is of high importance for anchoring **lake management issues in the development plans and strategies** as part of strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to prevent environmental and social risks. We highlight the role of **lakes as a climate change indicator**. We suggest putting more emphasis on **scientifically validated ecosystem-based approaches** to manage lakes, especially as part of aquatic climate adaptation, with the aim to establish a symbiotic human-Nature relationship instead of exploitation. We also suggest that the resolution may mention and address the impacts on lakes stemming from desertification and land degradation, disruption of small and large scale natural water cycles, unsustainable agricultural practises and the fact that in many countries 90% of waste water still flows back into the natural environment untreated, and request that UNEP provide a report on such impacts and assist governments in determining how they might best address them.

Finally, we point out the need for **funding for research and innovations** for sustainable lake management. We urge UNEA to come forward with the **governments' commitment to ensure sustainable lake management** and elaborate action plans.

Draft resolution from the EU on a draft resolution on Nature-based Solutions for supporting sustainable development

While synergistic action to achieve our global goals on nature, climate and people is critically needed, MGoS have **major concerns how the draft resolution on ‘Nature-based Solutions’ may be interpreted and what kind of activities may be supported**. It is essential that the resolution is **either fundamentally reconsidered or withdrawn**.

The draft resolution may be interpreted in a way to contribute to the **further financialisation of nature**, to provide a renewed **justification of intensive agriculture** and so-called ‘sustainable intensification,’ including new gene technologies and a **massive growth in carbon markets** and offsetting schemes that do not reduce emissions but harm communities. ‘Nature-based Solutions’ can convey an understanding of **Nature as being a service provider** for offsetting corporations’ pollution, protecting the profits of those corporations most responsible for climate chaos. Therefore, hundreds of organisations mobilised against NbS in November 2021 in the context of CoP26 and the demands of those groups have not changed since then.

MGoS call on UNEA 5.2 to **address structural challenges through ecosystem-based approaches** and to pave the way for **changes that stop the destruction of Nature** and preserve human, animal and planetary health and wellbeing. There should be **safeguards and clear principles** for the types of activities and practises it seeks to promote, including supporting standards endorsed in the context of the CBD. Activities supported under this resolution should **never be substitutes for the rapid phase-out of fossil fuels** and decarbonisation. No activities should ever be designed or implemented without **full respect of Indigenous Peoples** and their communities, farmers and peasants, women and young people and local communities, generating **local benefits**. Any activity must enhance biodiversity and ecosystem health.

Some sections of the resolution present a **distorted view of what needs to be done to truly address the multidimensional crisis**. For instance, the document is misleading in portraying “Nature-based Solutions” as “addressing other environmental challenges and major socio-economic and societal challenges” when many of them could potentially lead to massive dispossessions and reduce the remaining living spaces of Indigenous Peoples, peasants and other forest-dependent communities exposing them to more violence and less access and control over their lands. It is thus essential to **ensure strict safeguards as highlighted above to prevent such violations** and to **fully address these**.

A clean, healthy and sustainable environment is a right and Nature is not a means to an end. We need an urgent transformation through **deep and immediate cuts to corporate carbon emissions and polluting activities**. We need **loss and damage reparations** for the Global South. We need support for **systemic pathways, including rights-based conservation and ecologically and socially sound practises** such as agroecology, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, ecosystem restoration and water retention land management. Such systemic approaches need financing for civil society to participate in their design and implementation. The rights of communities, in particular Indigenous Peoples, must be ensured and protected.

Draft Resolution from Ghana on the Animal Welfare, Environment and Sustainable Development Nexus

MGoS fully support the resolution tabled by Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Pakistan requesting UNEP’s Executive Director to carry out an analysis and report on the **interlinkages between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development**. This will help UNEP and Member States to assess how improving animal welfare could support them in delivering on their mandate of protecting the

environment and achieving the SDGs – and conversely, to understand how their environmental policies and programmes impact animal welfare.

Food production systems that have a negative impact on animal health and welfare are the dominant drivers of biodiversity loss and zoonotic disease emergence and contribute significantly to climate change and environmental pollution. Therefore, it follows that an understanding of the interrelationships between animals and the environment is needed to help reshape our consumption and production patterns towards sustainability, and to support the restoration and regeneration of ecosystems and planetary health.

This draft resolution **should stay as a stand-alone measure, and not be merged with any other resolution**. It is short and targeted and deals with an issue which is new to the UN system. It does not fit into the remit of any of the other draft resolutions. It is minimal for its purpose and should not be further weakened or doctored. Nor should it be delayed. It is long overdue. And it fits perfectly into this UNEA theme. Also, it is vital that important nexus issues which are already known continue to be actioned and not stalled during the preparation of the report. Clearly pressing issues such as food system transformation and pandemic prevention must not be delayed.

Draft Resolution from African Group on Biodiversity and Health

MGoS strongly support the Biodiversity and Health resolution tabled by Eritrea on behalf of the African group. It recognises the need to adopt a **preventive policy and to shift from short-term political responses to long-term political commitments** to secure human, animal and environmental health through a trans-sectoral One Health approach. It calls for greater international awareness on the **linkages between biodiversity loss, animal exploitation, and the increase in zoonotic diseases** and support for member states to mitigate the risks posed to human, animal and environmental health. We particularly welcome the calls for Member States to cooperate on efforts to **prevent future zoonotic pathogen spillover, disease outbreaks and pandemics** by taking proactive measures, including efforts to close sections in markets selling live animals as well as birds for human consumption. This should be strengthened by **increasing the fight against the illegal and unsustainable trade in wildlife and wildlife products**.

It is crucial that this **resolution is not weakened but strengthened**. The pandemic has shown how our destructive relationship with Nature and animals has reverberating effects for our health and wellbeing. It was indeed a “predictable and predicted outcome of how people source and grow food, trade and consume animals, and alter environments,” and it is vital that all these factors are addressed in the resolution.

In her foreword to the UNEP/ILRI report on preventing the next pandemic, UNEP’s ED refers to the need to **radically transform food systems**. This aspect needs to be strengthened in this draft resolution. The report refers to seven drivers of pandemics, and the first three are:

- 1) increasing human demand for animal protein;
- 2) unsustainable agricultural intensification;
- 3) increased use and exploitation of wildlife.

The third has been addressed in the resolution, but not the first two. These should be covered.

There should be measures to **tackle food waste and ensure dietary change towards higher consumption of plant-sourced proteins** and a reduction in the consumption of animal-sourced proteins. Food systems should be transformed away from the dominant industrial model and towards regenerative agriculture.

Ensuring safe chemicals and resource justice

Resolution Cluster 3 Chemicals and Waste

Pollution, from chemicals, pesticides and waste, is one of the three interlinked environmental crises, next to the climate and biodiversity crises. Chemicals have key functions in nearly all production and manufacturing processes, as fertilizers, pesticides and processing chemicals and in finished consumer products. They have **potential direct negative impacts on human health and biota** including toxic effects. Potential indirect impacts result from habitat and ecosystem destruction in food and raw material production, extraction of raw materials, product manufacturing, and climate change from soil destruction and open waste dumping and burning. Most chemicals are still based on fossil fuel and minerals and are therefore drivers of extractive operations.

The life cycle of chemicals and material life cycles are inseparable. **Sound chemical management is a prerequisite for toxic-free material cycles** that allows us to maximise material resource efficiencies without compromising human health and the environment. It diminishes the need for virgin raw materials and the need for process chemicals, process water, and energy.

Only few hazardous chemicals are regulated at the global level, through the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, the Minamata Convention and the Montreal Protocol of the Vienna Convention. These Conventions need to be strengthened and better implemented, for instance, through a push to phase out all **highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs)** or to end all mercury use in small-scale gold mining. Much **progress is still needed to globally regulate highly hazardous chemicals and waste**.

Despite the FAO and WHO calling for action to detoxify agriculture and protect health from **HHPs**, and the concerns expressed through the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) about HHPs, we are extremely worried about the **continued growth in pesticide production and use**. An estimated **385 million** farmers and farm workers are unintentionally poisoned by pesticides each year. The UNEP report “Environmental and Health Impacts of Pesticides and Fertilisers and Ways of Minimising Them,” amongst others reports, shows the association between occupational and residential exposure to pesticides and adverse health outcomes including cancers. It identifies pesticides as a key driver for the decline of biodiversity. Many countries have banned HHPs, but **companies headquartered in these countries continue to export banned substances to countries in the global South**, for example from countries in the EU and the UK. It is appalling that **one in five of the world’s suicides** involve pesticides with the good news being that banning some HHPs has resulted in the significant reduction in suicides without a fall in agricultural productivity.

The UN strategy on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 is currently under revision and is expected to also include waste once adopted. While this is only a voluntary framework that provides guiding targets, indicators and milestones for implementing stakeholders, it is still an important instrument to address chemicals and waste through a multilateral multistakeholder process.

General recommendations on the sound management of chemicals and waste

First, building on the UNEP report “Environmental and Health Impacts of Pesticides and Fertilisers and Ways of Minimising Them” and in line with target 12.4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on minimising adverse health impacts of chemicals, we call for an overarching instrument that comprehensively addresses the **sound life-cycle management of pesticides and fertilisers at a global scale** with the objective to **phase-out highly hazardous pesticides** from agriculture and aquaculture **by 2030** and **by 2025 halt the export of pesticides** that have already been banned for health or environmental reasons in one or more of the UN member states.

Second, it is expected that under resolution cluster 4, UNEA 5.2 will adopt resolutions that **confirm the importance of a sustainable, toxic-free circular economy** to reach the sustainable development goals, in particular SDG12 on sustainable consumption and production. It is important to end business practises that assume products can be made, used and thrown away, including planned obsolescence, with no end-of-life solutions. However, the current **draft resolutions on circular economy fail to recognize the need not to recycle toxic materials**. The positive effects of a circular economy in terms of resource efficiency, potentially leading to a lower need for virgin raw materials and less climate impact, will be undermined if the chemicals in the life cycle of the materials are not handled correctly. The WHO has pointed out the risks of blindfold recycling of materials with hazardous chemicals. Numerous real-life studies have shown that recycled materials may contain hazardous or banned chemicals, notably plastics. Therefore, a basic prerequisite for a sustainable circular economy to be safe to human health and the environment is **transparency for the chemical contents of materials**, to allow for informed decisions for all life stages of the materials and products and to support accountability processes. We urge countries to adjust the text in the resolutions dealing with or mentioning a sustainable circular economy to reflect that sound management of chemicals and materials are inseparable. Efforts to fulfil SDG target 12.4 should be considerably stepped up also through higher ambition in the work on the Issue of Concern Chemicals in products in the current SAICM. We urge states to consider for **UNEA 6 to propose a resolution on a cross-sectoral, globally harmonised transparency standard for hazardous chemicals** to lay the foundation for a sustainable, toxic-free circular economy safe to human health and the environment.

Revised draft resolution from Sri Lanka on Sustainable Nitrogen Management

This draft resolution sets the **ambition to halve nitrogen waste from all sources by 2030**, supported through the establishment of the **Inter-Convention Nitrogen Coordination Mechanism (INCOM)** to address **Sustainable Nitrogen Management (SNM)**. This resolution follows up on UNEP/EA.4/Res.14 and the progress made through the Colombo Declaration. It suggests operational dimensions to define the INCOM's mandate and action on SNM to be advanced between now and UNEA 6.

To run the industrialised, global food and feed production and industrial animal agriculture, excessive quantities of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers (reactive nitrogen) are applied. A great part of them remains unabsorbed and are lost to the environment. This poses an **array of interconnected environmental problems** such as biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water and air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions with **detrimental impacts on human health**. Therefore, a resolution on reactive nitrogen waste management and elimination is globally relevant and urgently needed.

Recommendation 1: The **ambition to halve nitrogen waste** from all sources by 2030 **should be strengthened**. Reactive nitrogen waste is a key driver of many environmental and human health challenges and requires national, regional and global coordination among an array of stakeholders.

Recommendation 2: With regard to the facilitation of communication and coherence across existing nitrogen policies as well as the close collaboration with relevant UN agencies and other stakeholders, as listed in operative paragraphs b and c, we would like to stress the **importance of enhancing synergies and reducing inefficiencies** so that INCOM's work and the implementation of the Colombo Declaration, can proceed in a timely, consistent and coherent way. We would like to suggest the following operative paragraph: *“Urges further enhanced cooperation between the Convention on Biological Diversity and all relevant international conventions, organisations and bodies, strengthening and building on existing cooperative arrangements to enhance synergies and reduce inefficiencies in a manner consistent with their respective mandates, governance arrangements and agreed programs, within existing resources.”*

Recommendation 3: Regarding the mention of circular economy in operative paragraph c, we would like to note that the use of the notion of **circular economy should be better defined** in this context to reflect the principles of sustainable nutrient management and recycling opportunities through **agroecological practises that promote the natural nitrogen cycle**.

Recommendation 4: Regarding the production of a comprehensive Global Assessment on quantitative and qualitative nitrogen cycling (operative paragraph d), we strongly believe that there should be **references to the role of agriculture in nitrogen waste**, more specifically, to the role **industrial agriculture** has in reactive nitrogen waste caused by the excessive use of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers. Additionally, we strongly urge for a reference to the **role industrial animal agriculture** has in reactive nitrogen waste with a two-layer problem: first, feed production facilitated by the excessive use of nitrogen synthetic fertilisers with a large part of them remaining unabsorbed and lost to the environment, and second, the consumption of nitrogen-heavy feed by animals kept in intensive conditions with a substantial amount of unabsorbed nitrogen excreted in manure. We recommend that additionally to the *“descended traditional agricultural wisdom”* there needs to be a **special mention of agroecology** and the **value of agroecological transformation in reactive nitrogen elimination and management**. For example, we would like to stress the need to *“Promote the replacement of synthetic nitrogen fertilisers by building soil fertility through the use of legumes, rotations, green manure and animal manure and by increasing soil organic matter.”*

Recommendation 5: We agree that citizen and consumer awareness-raising on *“natural nitrogen cycle and how anthropogenic activities alter its balance”* is important. This could refer to specific actions, for example, *“Promote greater consumer awareness of the contribution of high meat diets to substantial nitrogen losses to the environment and that plant-based diets with modest amounts of animal products involve lower nitrogen losses.”*

Draft omnibus resolution from Switzerland on the sound management of chemicals and waste

Science clearly shows the **cross-cutting nature of chemicals and waste and their effects on human health and the environment**: pollution, loss of biodiversity, land and ocean degradation, resource depletion and climate change. This in turn causes irreversible harm such as poverty aggravation and inequalities, hunger and malnutrition. **Insufficient legislation on chemicals and waste and its poor enforcement** and the **absence of harmonised standards for chemicals of global concern**, which are not covered by existing multilateral agreements, inevitably lead to pollution and irreversible damage to people’s health and the environment.

SAICM is a unique instrument that covers chemicals not covered by any other agreement; it is a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral strategy linked to health, environment and sustainable development. Although the SAICM mandate has been extended due to the COVID19 pandemic, most attention is focused on the development of a **new global platform on sound chemicals and waste management beyond 2020** that should be central to the UN system’s policies and programs wherever they involve chemicals and or waste.

To date, **eight chemicals-related issues** have been formally recognized by the International Conferences on Chemicals Management (ICCM) as **SAICM Issues of concern (IoC)** in need of global action. However, the work to address the present IoCs has not progressed as expected under the present SAICM. The **lack of progress** suggests that the SAICM voluntary approach has not been as efficient as hoped. UNEP should gather and assess options for further international action to address issues of concern. Such actions should include sufficient, predictable and stable financing and elevated obligations on stakeholders if inadequate results have been achieved in IoC implementation.

Recommendation 1: While the draft omnibus resolution refers to the need for an integrated approach to financing sound management of chemicals and waste, it does not mention the **importance of the polluter pays principle and internalisation of costs**. Manufacturers of chemicals should significantly contribute towards providing sufficient, predictable, sustainable and accessible financial resources to enable the effective implementation of beyond 2020 activities through the **internalisation of the environmental costs** of their pollution (Principle 16 of the Rio Declaration of 1992 (A/CONF.151/26(Vol.I)), the **extended producer responsibility** and **polluter pays principles** in line with the UNEP's integrated approach to the sustainable financing of sound management of chemicals and waste.

The resolution should refer to the proposal made by CIEL and IPEN which makes the case for a **globally coordinated tax of 0,5%** on the production value of a small number of basic chemicals (or feedstock chemicals) to fund the sound management of chemicals and waste.

Recommendation 2: The resolution should call for the **sharp increase of GEF financing for the sound chemicals and waste** management framework (currently only 0.2% of the GEF budget).

Recommendation 3: The resolution should request the **modification of the Special Programme terms of reference to enable access by all relevant stakeholders working on sound chemicals and waste management**, to remove limitations on activities that fall outside the GEF mandate and to remove the time limitation.

Recommendation 4: The resolution may request UNEP to gather and assess options for **further international action to address issues of concern** (IoC). Such actions should include elevated obligations on stakeholders if insufficient results have been achieved in IoC implementation. The assessment should be based on the results of a progress evaluation using triggers described in the paper "New Mechanism of Action: elevation of obligations to progress SAICM Issues of Concerns (IoCs) in the post 2020 multilateral regime for chemicals and waste".

Triggers include (i) Failure to reduce acute poisoning and/or chronic effects by chemicals that are IoCs; (ii) Failure to reduce the levels of chemicals that are IoCs in human and environmental samples; (iii) Failure to reduce the volume of the production, use and disposal of substances of very high concern relevant to an IoC; (iv) Insufficient monitoring of human and environmental impacts by an IoC; (v) Significant costs for society in the absence of action to address an IoC, including healthcare costs for individuals and the state; loss of IQ and productivity; loss of pollinators, natural biological control of pests, and other ecosystem services; loss of biodiversity; and costs of chemical contamination of natural resources, such as air, soil.

Elevated actions on an Issue of Concern with increased obligations on stakeholders are justified by meeting one of the triggers above. Such actions could include an amendment or a protocol to an existing treaty (where a treaty provides for this option).

For Chemicals in Products, mandatory full disclosure of the concentration of Substances of Global Concern in materials and products should be considered in line with a new European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) database on the presence of hazardous chemicals in articles (SCIP Database).

Recommendation 5: It is important that the resolution supports the work guided by the other resolutions on chemicals and waste. In particular, chemicals and materials cycles should be dealt with jointly to achieve the sound management of materials and products. To support that work, for example, the work on SAICM IoC "Chemicals in Products" should be considerably scaled up. For example, the omnibus resolution should make a **link to the resolution on Circular Economy** by highlighting the urgent need to strengthen the Chemicals in Products (CiP) work in support of a toxic-free circular economy.

Recommendation 6: The omnibus resolution should encourage states to propose a **resolution for UNEA 6 on a global cross-sectoral transparency standard for hazardous chemicals in products** to further support a toxics-free circular economy.

Draft resolution from Switzerland on a science policy Panel on chemicals, waste and pollution

In the fall of 2021, 1.900 scientists started [campaigning](#) for an independent intergovernmental science-policy body on chemicals and waste similar to the IPCC on climate through adopting a resolution at UNEA5.2. Building on this campaign and recent [research](#) published in Environmental Science & Technology on chemical pollution exceeding planetary boundaries, many organisations are calling on UNEA 5.2 to adopt such a resolution. MGoS see a need for decisive action to address threats to human health and the environment posed by hazardous chemicals and waste. A global science policy panel (SPP) should inform the work on chemicals, waste and associated effects on human health, biodiversity and the environment. An SPP should be **politically and financially independent**. It should only be based on the scientific knowledge of the involved experts to foster credibility and trust among stakeholders.

MGoS in principle support the initiative to create an **intergovernmental science-policy body on chemical pollution** to strengthen independent science on chemical and waste pollution, to address the global environmental crisis of chemicals pollution and waste, and in support of the **implementation of the BRS and Minamata Conventions** and identifying omnibus policy options.

MGoS agree that an SPP may play a role in conveying the state of available data and contributing to the definition of problems; horizon scanning; encouraging dialogue between scientists, governments and all other stakeholders; and enhancing stakeholder, political, and public awareness. We also believe that an SPP should play a role in generating **knowledge to inform the negotiations** of binding or non-binding instruments and the work of all stakeholders, including governments, industry, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the public at all levels from local to global. An SPP platform may guide monitoring studies and contribute to **periodic evaluations of the effectiveness** of the work on chemicals and waste.

The function of an SPP should provide actual data, assessments and recommendations and should be based on the **precautionary principle, information disclosure and the right to know**. Recommendations should be based upon robust and up-to-date scientific evidence which will require the consideration of data from next generation, non-animal hazard data generation techniques.

Furthermore, the SPP should serve SAICM beyond 2020 without duplicating but being informed by existing scientific bodies, e.g., the POPs review Committee of the Stockholm Convention or the Chemicals Review Committee of the Rotterdam Convention.

Recommendation 1: The resolution should be more precise on securing that the panel scientists have **no political, commercial or economic interests**. The ToR should clearly rule out conflict of interest and allow for the rejection of scientists on that basis. An advisory group, entirely independent of governments, should be mandated with the final word in case of conflicts to secure the highest level of credibility of the panel.

Recommendation 2: The resolution should **address gender-disaggregated data and gender-specific hazards in chemicals and waste** management. While the draft proposal notes that the panel should ensure gender balance and be interdisciplinary, it does not refer to the importance of considering gendered hazards to ensure better recommendations for protective and preventive measures. Under point II on the key functions of the panel, we suggest adding: “undertake assessments on the nature and scale of particular issues, including gender-disaggregated data, how they may evolve in future, and to generate outputs that inform all actors [...]”.

Recommendation 3: The resolution should stress that the scope of **data sources for review by the panel must be broad**. The panel should establish a format for the systematic consideration

of data and knowledge from local and Indigenous People and their communities as well as from civil society organisations. Such data and knowledge may warrant and inform the collection of additional data according to scientifically and statistically valid methods, preventive and protective decisions, in line with the precautionary principle.

Recommendation 4: The resolution should use the opportunity given by the panel to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment, minimising exposure to hazardous chemicals, whilst making every effort to ensure that data and decisions are based upon modern, reliable next generation testing methods. MGoS recommend that the **report from the UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights** on the right to benefit equally from scientific progress and its applications with recommendations on conflict of interests and effective science-policy interface platforms can be referred to in this resolution.

Building forward better

Resolution Cluster 4 Recovery and Circular Economy

The 2020 UN Secretary-General's report on progress towards the SDGs acknowledges the impacts and implications of COVID-19 as the worst human and economic crisis of our lifetimes. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the **damaging, short-sighted and unsustainable state of our current economic and social system**, which is based on the **overexploitation of both natural resources** and the, often gendered, **overexploitation of cheap or even unpaid labour** undertaken in extremely poor and risky conditions. The pandemic has reminded us that our destructive relationship with Nature and animals has reverberating effects for our health and wellbeing. It was indeed a "predictable and predicted outcome of how people source and grow food, trade and consume animals."

It gives us an opportunity not just to build back, but to build forward better with green and sustainable economies and societies that fully protect all human rights. Let this be the wake-up call for a paradigm shift to overcome the problems deeply entrenched in our economic and social systems. The **2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework under the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other commitments made under Multilateral Environmental Agreements need to be the compass for the recovery.** They should guide the way to tackle the root causes of poverty, hunger and inequality globally, to establish social and health protection systems that are accessible to all, and to build a climate and biodiversity-friendly and inclusive economic model that serves the wellbeing of humans, animals and the planet.

Governments should ensure that the recovery funds do not bail out polluters but instead place strict conditionalities on financial instruments for a transition towards long-term sustainability. We must now divest and **stop the financing of short-sighted, unjust or false solutions and polluting industries** and direct funds towards regenerative, circular and just economies. Recovery measures should privilege small and medium-size enterprises, those with clear social and environmental missions and innovative, equitable business models serving local communities and economically marginalised groups. They should be aligned with SDG12 on Sustainable Consumption and Production: next to support for consumers in behaviour change, we need to ensure the burden of responsibility is put primarily on businesses.

The recovery is also an opportunity to shift from a linear to a circular model of consumption and production. A sustainable circular economy can be a key strategy to achieve a sizeable number of targets under the SDGs. However, this sustainable circular economy should be developed through criteria-based standards evaluating how well the measures promote the functionality of healthy ecosystems. It is important that it is implemented in its definition as an

economy which is **“restorative and regenerative by design and aims to keep products, components and materials at their highest utility and value at all times.”** This means that durability by design and maintenance and refurbishment are prioritised over recycling.

We must look at both ends, the production and the consumption together. The primary approach is to **design for the durability of products** by using quality materials with **reusability and repairability principles for multiple reuses**. To reduce consumption, long-living products can then be linked to **collaborative consumption models** where products and services are accessible without owning them. Making consumption and production circular must be embedded in sustainable consumption patterns: as humankind, we need to **think wisely about what to put into the circle** in the first place and **curb overconsumption of non-essential products**.

Furthermore, **life cycles of chemicals and materials are inseparable**. Without simultaneously addressing hazardous chemicals that are integral to materials we cannot create resource efficient material cycles that are safe to human health and the environment. Basic pre-conditions for the sustainability of a circular economy are, therefore, for countries to adopt the Globally Harmonised System (GHS) to support harmonised hazard communication between stakeholders in supply chains and to put in place transparency for chemicals in materials. This principle is embodied in the work of SAICM on Issue of Concern Chemicals in Products, which directly supports sound life cycle of chemicals and the fulfilment of SDG target 12.4.

Yet another aspect necessary to address is **illicit trade in hazardous materials**. In a globalised circular economy, trade in waste that has the potential to become secondary raw materials has been and will be increasing. It needs **stricter regulation**, for instance, through better implementation and strengthening of the provisions under the Basel and Rotterdam Conventions. Measures may include the establishment of harmonised threshold concentrations for hazardous chemicals in materials destined to be reused or recycled where the hazardous chemicals cannot be immediately phased out of the material cycles and harmonised operational standards for recycling facilities.

Although we recognize the need for reliable financing to help companies transform their production systems into circularity, these need to complement **investments in the restoration of ecosystems and strong institutions to sustainably governing ecosystems** that are the sources of resources and services necessary to sustain the circular economy.

Recommendation 1: To lay the grounds for a collective understanding of the concept of circular economy across countries and stakeholders, the resolution should call for the **creation of an ad hoc working group**, accompanied by a multidisciplinary expert scientific team, **to propose a globally harmonised definition of circular economy** and what aspects it includes, to be presented at UNEA 6. Harmonisation is key for the efficiency and coordination of actions, for establishing a monitoring system for the evaluation of contributions of the circular economy to sustainability, as well as would help scientists in finding the best solutions to resource and environmental issues where circularity models can help.

Recommendation 2: The resolution should clearly stress that there are **no alternatives to circularity for the creation of resource efficient material cycles**.

Recommendation 3: The resolution should recognize that sound life cycle management of materials is **inseparable from sound management of the chemicals** inherent to the materials. This necessitates improved transparency for hazardous chemicals in materials and products. Thus, the resolution should call for the urgent implementation of the latest version of GHS by all states to facilitate harmonised hazard communication for chemicals. However, this alone is not sufficient. In preparation for the next UNEA, states should consider proposing a resolution for an **instrument that includes a cross-sectoral transparency standard for hazardous chemicals**

in materials and products, to put in place the basic condition for global sustainable circular economies safe to human health and the environment

Recommendation 4: The resolution should not only address the production side of the economy but also consumption. While the recycling of waste products is important, a properly built circular economy should focus on avoiding the recycling stage at all costs. It should focus on prolonging the life spans of products through the **use of durable materials and design for repair**. It also includes **combining a circular economy with models for collaborative consumption** to reduce the need for virgin raw material by giving more people access to products they cannot afford themselves.

Draft resolution from Mongolia on Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure

The resolution builds on the 2015 Addis Ababa Action Agenda, on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and calls for financial and technical support to Global South countries to invest in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including transport, energy, water and sanitation as a prerequisite to achieve the SDGs and as a potential for inclusive and sustainable job creation and poverty eradication. It also acknowledged the financial shortages arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and emphasises the need for adapting investment strategies to implement the SDGs and sees the need for international cooperation to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable recovery. However, it notes that so far, **investments in 2020 have been ‘minimally green’**.

The MGoS sees this proposed resolution as timely in view of the green and inclusive recovery from Covid-19 focus in the UNEA5.2. discussions. We agree that **infrastructure planning and investments need to be fully aligned with the SDGs and the Paris Agreement**.

MGoS recommend:

- The potential role of development banks is mentioned but should feature more clearly in the action points proposed.
- The role of fiscal mechanism as already specified in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda should feature clearly in the proposal action points.
- All infrastructure planning and investment needs be based on sound equality assessments, including gender analysis, to ensure it benefits people equally.

Draft resolution from Eritrea on behalf of the African Group on green recovery

A green recovery is equitable, considering the wellbeing of all people, reducing poverty and inequalities and creating opportunities for all. A healthy future depends on safeguarding human, animal and environmental health. A green recovery should foster resilience in Nature and in our societies to mitigate and adapt to the threats and challenges faced. Catalysing a just transition which addresses our destructive use of natural resources and prioritises sustainable use and supports the achievement of our development, Nature and climate goals. It requires multi-stakeholder and multi-level decision-making, the integration of Nature into our policies, practices and accountability mechanisms, and the redirection of perverse subsidies and incentives harmful to Nature into investments for Nature, climate and people. Just Transition policies require social dialogue processes with social partners and all relevant stakeholders as defined in the ILO Guidelines on Just Transition.

The following elements appear to be missing from the resolution:

- a rights-based approach;
- a focus on vulnerable communities and addressing of inequalities;
- the need to be clearer on the transition to renewables, that it must be just and nature sensitive, and that this pathway does not include transitioning via fossil fuels, e.g., gas.

- a greater centring of Nature;
- measures to ensure that recovery programmes take account of the need to prevent future pandemics, including addressing wildlife issues;
- the need for a multi-stakeholder/ multi-sectoral approach and whole of government approach;
- greater focus on implementation (incl. planning, monitoring and review).

Draft resolution from Eritrea on behalf of the African Group on circular economy

The resolution needs to be complemented and improved with respect to the following issues:

The benefits of resource efficient material cycles can be undermined by health and environmental concerns for hazardous chemicals if reuse and recycling is blindfold. Consequently, **transparency for the chemical content in materials** should be established throughout the supply chains of products. Efforts in the voluntary work with the SAICM Issue of Concern Chemicals in Products should increase, but ideally a **binding, global cross-sectorial transparency standard for hazardous chemicals** should be established at the earliest date possible. It is also essential that the concept of such a standard is included in the new binding instrument for plastics.

A basic prerequisite for harmonised communication of chemical hazards in the supply chains for material and products is the **adoption of the latest version of the Globally Harmonised System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)** by all states. It should be complemented by a transparency standard defining which hazardous chemicals should be disclosed and in what format the data sharing in the supply chains should take place.

Recommendation 1: The resolution should highlight the need to **coordinate policies and regulatory frameworks not just at the national level, also globally**. We therefore recommend in OP3 to add the word “international” so that the sentence reads “*Invites member states to strengthen local, national, regional, and international [...]*”.

Recommendation 2: The resolution on “Enhancing Circular Economy” needs to be **aligned with the omnibus resolution on “chemicals, waste and pollution”** so that they are mutually supportive. The omnibus resolution should, amongst others, call for stepping up the work with SAICM Issue of Concern Chemicals in Products and for the establishment of a globally harmonised cross-sectorial transparency standard for hazardous chemicals.

Recommendation 3: Change the first sentence “*The world has the opportunity to use circular economy solutions as part of the efforts to achieve the sustainable development goals*” in the introduction to the resolution proposal to “*Circular economy, in combination with models for **shared ownership and consumption** and other measures to reduce consumption are key strategies to achieve the SDGs*”.

Recommendation 4: Add of the word **repairability** to the first PP1 sentence: “[...] *a more circular economy in which products and materials are designed in such a way that they can easily be maintained and repaired, reused, remanufactured recycled or recovered and thus maintained in the economy for as long as possible [...]*”. This would capture the original definition of circular economy by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Recommendation 5: To PP2 add a sub-clause that clarifies how circular economy can contribute to **addressing the root causes behind biodiversity loss**: “*Acknowledging that embedding circular principles and goals across industries and governments’ priorities will be crucial to reaching global net zero pledges and that changing the way we make and use products can contribute to addressing 45% of global greenhouse gas emissions and reducing new mining activities, limiting further depletion of the natural resource base, avoiding further transgression of planetary*

boundaries, ensuring that we can live within the carrying capacity of the earth, making a critical contribution to mitigating the impending climate crisis, as well as help to reverse biodiversity loss by addressing root causes, restoring ecosystems and rebuilding natural capital.”

Recommendation 6: Add one sentence after the first sentence in PP1 to highlight the need to combine circularity for material flows with **additional consumption reduction measures**, e.g., *“Particularly if combined with additional consumption reducing measures, such product design for long life span, by use of durable materials and design that allows repairing, as well as collaborative consumption models”*.

Recommendation 7: Add two additional sentences after the first sentence in PP9 to clarify that **life cycles of chemicals and materials are inseparable**, for instance, *“However, the life cycle of chemicals and materials should be managed together. A basic prerequisite for a sustainable circular economy to be safe to human health and the environment is transparency for the chemical contents of materials, to allow for informed decisions for all life stages of the materials and products and to support accountability processes. Recycling materials with unknown chemical composition can compromise the health of humans and ecosystems and undermine the other benefits circular economy provides.”*¹

Recommendation 8: In OP1 replace “invites” with “urges” and add reference to the **need for a drastic reduction of pressures on the planetary boundaries**: *“Urges member States, to take measures to develop national and regional circular economy strategies and action plans and integrate circular economy in the national development plans, to contribute to reduction of pressures on the planetary boundaries² and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.”*

Recommendation 9: Add an OP2A paragraph, with the following text: *“Underlines the need to **manage the life cycles of chemicals and materials co-jointly for the creation of circular economy safe to human health and environment**, by establishing transparency for the chemical contents of the materials, to facilitate informed decisions for all life stages of materials and products. **GHS should urgently be adopted by all member states** to support harmonised hazard communication in supply chains of materials and products and should be complemented with a harmonised cross-sectorial standard defining hazardous chemicals to be disclosed and in which data format it should be shared.”* The present OP2 would become OP2C.

Recommendation 10: Add an OP2B paragraph, with the following text: We urge countries to phase use of toxics to the highest degree possible at the earliest date possible. Prolonging the use and exposure to chemicals of concern (to health and environment) that persist in the life-cycles of materials, should not be part of a circular economy.

Recommendation 11: In OP6 add text capturing the need to also **invest in restorative actions to the ecosystems that provide the resources and services sustaining the circular economy**, including in strong institutions to sustainably govern the ecosystems. The following addition can be made after the original sentence: *“Also recognizes the simultaneous need for investments in ecosystem restoration and strong institutions to sustainably manage the ecosystems as the resources and services necessary to sustain the circular economy depend on healthy ecosystems.”*

¹ WHO, 2018. Circular economy and health: opportunities and risks (https://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/374917/Circular-Economy_EN_WHO_web_august-2018.pdf).

² For a definition of planetary boundaries see Stockholm Resilience Centre (<https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries.html>).

Recommendation 12: Add an OP8A paragraph, with the following text: *We urge countries to adjust the text in the resolutions dealing with or mentioning a **sustainable circular economy** to reflect that **sound management of chemicals and materials** are inseparable.*

Recommendation 13: In the current OP8 add the following text: *Requests the United Nations Environment Programme to develop a programme to support the development of local, national, regional and international institutional and coordinating mechanisms in order to carry out the circular economy transition, including strong policies, legal and regulatory frameworks, and in collaboration with other United Nations entities, development partners and the international community facilitate the collaboration among member states in the research, capacity building, knowledge management and sharing of best practises for the promotion of innovative solutions for a global transition to a circular economy.*

Draft resolution from Switzerland on mineral resource governance

Since 1970, the **global extraction rate has tripled**, from 27.1 billion tonnes to 92.1 billion tonnes by 2017. According to the World Bank, the transition to keep global warming well below 2C° may require an additional 3.5 billion tonnes of materials and minerals for the worldwide deployment of renewables only. Coal, iron and bauxite remain the most mined resources and continue to create **severe environmental and social impacts**. Other mining activities such as copper, gold or zinc mines are causing **devastating health impacts**, for instance through lead and mercury poisoning. The mining of critical **raw materials**, which is projected to sharply increase in the coming decades, already endangers human rights and the environment today.

Much of **mineral resource extraction takes place in impoverished countries** mainly in the Global South. Indigenous Peoples, farmers, women and children, mining workers and local communities in the mining areas suffer under the **disproportionate burden of environmental and social consequences** of resource exploitation, while the finished goods are largely consumed in wealthier countries.

MGoS are particularly concerned about the continuous expansion of extractive industries into the last untouched parts of Nature, including advancing proposals and regulations within the UN's International Seabed Authority and some nation states to progress **deep-sea mining**, as well as space mining. Based upon the arguments below, a **moratorium on deep-seabed mining** is strongly recommended

There is evidence for **significant, and currently non-mitigatable impacts of deep-seabed mining on biodiversity**. Deep-seabed mining will result in large scale habitat removal and associated biodiversity, including unknown diversity of macrofauna and microbial systems that underpin primary production, carbon dioxide and trace metal sequestration and cycling. It will disrupt ecological function and behavioural ecology of deep-ocean species, smothering fundamental ecological processes over vast (and difficult to predict) areas. There is also a compelling case for the significant role of deep-sea biological systems in driving planetary systems of carbon sequestration. Deep-seabed mining has the potential to cause disruption and potential collapse of these processes and could exacerbate our current crises of climate change and biodiversity loss. Such impacts are likely to be irreversible.

The application of a mitigation hierarchy approach reveals that the impacts of deep-seabed mining cannot currently be effectively mitigated or managed. Combined with the considerable gaps in the knowledge of ocean complexity and how this relates to earth-system processes, gaps in basic baselines of the biodiversity and ecosystem function of the ocean, and clear indications within the existing science base that impacts are likely to be considerable, there is an inadequate basis on which to grant mining exploitation contracts. Current **governance structures are nowhere near ready, nor are they appropriately informed by science and policy practitioners**. There are

major flaws in the decision-making processes and procedures practised by the International Seabed Authority where financial, legal, inspectorate, policy and enterprise objectives may be subject to the influences of pro-mining lobbies.

Given the reliance of humanity upon a wide range of ocean ecosystem services, there remains an unattended question of social impact assessment, which must be applied to both international and national proposed projects, considering Free Prior and Informed Consent, the rights and participation of Indigenous Peoples and an inclusive and transparent public consultation process.

Regarding mining in all environments, reaching climate goals and creating sustainable futures requires an **international approach to resource justice and democracy** which considers the finite nature of natural resources. It needs to develop mechanisms to ensure that ecological and social burdens are limited as much as possible and shared equitably and that finite resources are distributed and used in an equitable way.

Green mining is a myth: even the most well planned and executed mining projects all come with severe environmental and social impact. This can be reduced and mitigated, but never fully. All extracted resources are finite. This means that **mining as such is never sustainable**. The most sustainable material is the one that stays in the ground. Sustainable mineral resource governance needs to be embedded in a **new economic model** which prioritises human and planetary wellbeing with a clear objective of **reducing resource consumption, curbing overconsumption and practising sufficiency**.

Recycling of minerals must be given absolute priority over the extraction of raw materials. Currently, only around 5% of lithium from batteries are recycled, yet new mining licences are handed out around the globe with severe environmental and social impacts. No new mining licences should be given for a material where recovery and recycling possibilities have not been fully exhausted. The objective must be to create closed loops in a circular economy with a high burden on extraction, for instance, through a strict limitation of mining licences and high taxes.

MGoS welcome that with this draft resolution member states intend to ensure **sustainable resource management at global level** and suggest strengthening the resolution around the following issues:

Recommendation 1: The resolution should **strengthen the role of civil society and local communities**. We suggest adding to Art. 2 c) wording on “[...] *stakeholders, in particular non-profit civil society including Indigenous people, women, youth, local communities, farmers and peasants, as well as trade unions.*” Non-profit interests must be given priority over for-profit interests in establishing sustainable mineral resource management.

Recommendation 2: The resolution should clearly state that the objective of international mineral resource governance is to **guarantee global resource justice and democracy**. It should state the objective of equitable use of resources globally. It should refer to the precautionary principle. To ensure resource justice, the resolution should make a **clear reference to environmental rights** (access to information, public participation and access to justice) as enshrined, amongst others, in the Aarhus and Escazu Agreements. The resolution should refer to the principle of **Prior Informed Consent** and should reference the rights of **Indigenous Peoples’ rights** in line with international law.

Recommendation 3: Resource democracy also comes with the need to establish **public and democratic control over natural resources and to limit corporate control**. MGoS call for **transparency on revenues from resource exploitation** ensuring that such revenues are used for the common good.

Recommendation 4: The resolution needs to clearly state that the primary objective of sustainable mineral resource governance is to **reduce overall resource use**. In its current state, the resolution does not refer to any reduction objective. High consuming economies must commit to significant material footprint reduction targets.

Recommendation 5: The resolution must refer to the **absolute priority for recovery and recycling of raw material over extraction**. Mining and resource extraction is never sustainable given the finite nature of all mined resources and the social and environmental impact of all extractive activities, even where the highest environmental and legal standards are applied.

Recommendation 6: The resolution does refer to **due diligence obligations** for transnational companies. The sentence can be strengthened by emphasising the need for international due diligence requirements for all sectors, in particular high-risk sectors such as extractive industries. International due diligence requirements, for instance, through an international Treaty on Business and Human Rights, **need to ensure access to justice to hold companies accountable and liable** where damage has occurred.

Recommendation 7: The resolution should clearly define its scope as covering mineral resource extraction in **all environments including terrestrial and marine environments and space mining**. The resolution should **call for a moratorium on deep seabed mining**.

Emerging issues towards UNEA 6

The planet is under threat of new and emerging environmental risks that need to be addressed swiftly and effectively. Humanity in a time where an unprecedented erosion of biological and cultural diversity stands in stark contrast with the rapid development of disrupting technologies, from data-driven technologies to biotechnologies and Earth systems manipulations. Examples include geoengineering and gene drive organisms. We, therefore, call on the international community to ensure the UNEA platform as the global process to identify, recognise and prepare for emerging threats and to address environmental challenges that are not currently regulated through global governance. These issues include but are not limited to and should also be part of the Global Framework we are demanding:

- The **sustainable, equitable and human-rights compliant governance of our natural resources and raw materials** including a strengthening of the Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the right to say no. It needs to address the threats posed to some of the **last almost untouched parts of our planet** through deep-sea mining, oil and gas exploitation and transport, and other harmful techniques to exploit or pollute our oceans.
- The need for **soil protection** to reduce land depletion and pollution by highly hazardous substances from industrial and agricultural sources that will make food production no longer feasible. Avoiding soil degradation is crucial to ensure food security. We call on governments to recognise that the soil is alive with microbes, roots and mycorrhizal fungi whose complex soil structures can be undermined by synthetic fertilisers that damage the nitrogen-fixing, carbon sequestration and water retention services.
- The role of **unsustainable wildlife trade and industrial animal farming** triggers land and ecosystem degradation including nitrogen disposition, zoonotic diseases, pandemics, inhumane treatment of animals and climate change. There is a need to redirect perverse financial incentives and investments to sustainable food systems and diets and to internalise costs.
- To develop the capacity for technology horizon scanning, technology assessment and monitoring and to make sure to put **technical cooperation** in the context of **precaution, participation, free and prior informed consent, liability and redress** with a strong rights-based approach.

- Building on the Joint Global Statement towards UNEA 5.1, MGoS call for the inclusion of **social sciences, respect for multilingualism and diverse systems of knowledge** including Indigenous, traditional and local knowledge and innovations that evolve from the practical experiences of communities, including those where the role of women is central and across generations. We call to build much more on **citizen science** and to explore its data collection potential. Funding is needed for **open-source initiatives** to help promote and develop this unexplored cooperative potential.

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