

MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS OPENING STATEMENT
UNEA-2
Nairobi, 23 May 2016

Madame President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Major Groups and Stakeholders are strongly committed to an ambitious and effective UNEA. The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum is an essential part of the UNEA process.

We invite Member States to review the compilation of statements and recommendations by Major Groups and Stakeholders for consideration by UNEA-2, that contains the results of the Regional Consultation Meetings (UNEP/EA.2/INF/7).

We welcome the efforts and proposal of UNEA President on the Stakeholder Engagement Policy. We have reached this point through much compromise and good faith negotiations, but future work is needed to fulfill Para 88 (h) of the Rio+20 Outcome Document. At this time, the President's proposal is our bottom line. Further weakening the policy, such as with a silent veto on accreditation (a "no-objection" principle), would be unacceptable and result in our rejection of the entire policy.

2015 was a remarkable year for global sustainability decisions and commitments. UNEA-2 is a great opportunity to take bold decisions to continue this political momentum. It should set the stage for delivering the full and effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda up holding the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities. We must make sure that no one is left behind, including persons with disabilities who also have a significant stake in the 2030 Agenda and its implementation.

UNEA is the leading environmental authority in the UN with UNEP as its executive institution. UNEA-2 should advance global policy coherence and complementarity within the UN system and beyond, including implementation at the national and regional levels.

Effective follow up mechanisms for monitoring, transparency and accountability are essential in delivering on the environmental agenda and MG&S play a critical role in all three areas.

We would echo ED Steiner's words that "There is no UNEA without Major Groups and Stakeholders." We look forward to playing a greater role to play in the future. We reiterate our commitment to contribute to the UNEA process and are up to the challenge. We intend to continue and further strengthen this positive relationship with Member States and the new Executive Director.

The Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum focused on these specific issues:

- the need to mobilize domestic resources, while addressing systemic failures including illicit financial flows, taxation BEPS (base erosion and profit shifting), bribery and corruption, and evaluate the physical and policy impact.
- while acknowledging UNEP's efforts to promote Principle 10 globally and appreciating the improvements to and increased awareness of the Access to Information Policy, we call for external review of UNEP's performance on Access to Information and on Stakeholder Engagement in the light of paragraph 88 of the Future We Want document.
- developing multi-stakeholder partnerships that are accountable, transparent, equitable and effective. UNEA-2 provides an important opportunity to catalyze, strengthen and propose new multi-stakeholder partnerships. UNEP will require appropriate institutional infrastructure to do this working in cooperation with the Major Groups and Stakeholders.
- recognizing the contribution of Major Groups and Stakeholders, civil society organizations and local communities to developing different pathways to sustainable development. These should be people-centered and based on the principles of human rights; respect planetary boundaries; embody the right to sustainable living; a Just Transition; encourage citizen participation; ensure accountability and transparency; and reflect the principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) .
- emphasizing that UNEA decisions and policy outcomes must be based on sound, evidence-based science (such as is reflected in GEO 6), incorporating normal science along with citizen science, indigenous local knowledge and grey literature. This is critical in both the implementation and monitoring of the 2015 commitments as well as decisions taken at UNEA-2.
- making health and environment UNEA's core priority since this relationship underpins all social and economic development. We call on UNEA to embed this in every resolution.

We have further concerns that UNEA-2 resolutions must reflect the advancements made on the different MEASs on gender equality and women's rights.

The risks posed to environmental defenders are staggering; on average two people are killed every week defending their land, forests and waterways. We call upon Member States to protect those who put their lives on the line for the environment. We request all delegates to UNEA-2 to stand for a minute of silence to honor the ultimate sacrifice of those who have been killed.