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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Second session**

Nairobi, 23–27 May 2016

Item 4 (i) of the provisional agenda*

International environmental policy and governance
issues: **emerging and other relevant issues**

**Compilation of statements and recommendations by major
groups and stakeholders for consideration by the United
Nations Environment Assembly at its second session**

Note by the Executive Director

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) regional consultation meetings with major groups and stakeholders are held in preparation for the annual sessions of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP. The outcome of the regional consultation meetings usually takes the form of a statement or key messages and recommendations to the governing body of UNEP.

The regional consultation meetings held in 2015 and early 2016 served as a platform for engaging major groups and stakeholders from the regions in addressing the main areas and topics for discussion by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its second session, to be held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 May 2016.

The outcomes of the regional consultation meetings are meant to feed into the sixteenth session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

A. Topics for discussion

1. The regional consultation meetings addressed the following key issues:
 - (a) The role of UNEP in delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (b) The “healthy environment, healthy people” issue;
 - (c) Resolutions discussed at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly;
 - (d) Stakeholder engagement policy and access to information policy: principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development of 1992;

* UNEP/EA.2/1.

- (e) The 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns;
- (f) Regional priorities.
2. The dates and venues of the regional consultation meetings are set out in table 1.

Table 1

Dates and venues of the regional consultation meetings

<i>Region</i>	<i>Meeting dates and venues</i>
Africa	28 February–1 March 2015, Cairo
Latin America and the Caribbean	4–7 May 2015, Panama City
Europe	12 and 13 November 2015, Brussels
West Asia	16 and 17 November 2015, Beirut
Asia and the Pacific	17 and 18 May 2015, Bangkok
North America	17 March 2016, Washington, D.C. 23 March 2016, Ottawa

3. A total of 458 participants attended the regional consultation meetings, and 51.7 per cent of participants were women. Table 2 provides an overview of the distribution of participants by major group and by region. Non-governmental organizations were the most represented of the major groups and stakeholders, with 59.4 per cent of the total number of participants, followed by the “Others” category, with 20.4 per cent.

Table 2

Representation of major groups and stakeholders at the regional consultation meetings

	<i>Type of major group</i>	<i>Africa</i>	<i>Europe</i>	<i>West Asia</i>	<i>Latin America/ Caribbean</i>	<i>Asia - Pacific</i>	<i>North America</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>%</i>
1	Business and industry	0	9	0	2	0	1	12	2.6
2	Children and youth	1	0	0	3	6	0	10	2.2
3	Indigenous peoples	2	0	0	3	2	0	7	1.5
4	Local authorities	0	7	0	3	1	0	11	2.4
5	NGOs	41	146	17	7	21	40	272	59.4
6	Science and technology (including research and academia)	3	8	0	2	3	2	18	3.9
7	Women	2	5	1	2	8	0	18	3.9
8	Farmers	0	2	0	2	6	0	10	2.2
9	Workers and trade unions	1	3	0	1	2	0	7	1.5
10	Others ¹	15	45	0	0	17	16	93	20.4
	Total/region	65	225	18	25	66	59	458	100

B. Statements and recommendations

4. The annex to the present note, whose content has not been edited or amended in any form by UNEP, contains statements and recommendations from major groups and stakeholders prepared during the regional consultation meetings.

5. Government and non-governmental entities took part in the multi-stakeholder dialogues held in the United States of America and Canada in preparation for the United Nations Environment Assembly. Their respective summaries reflect key messages that came across in the discussions and do not represent a consensus on the issues discussed or an endorsement by the participants as a whole. They are therefore different in nature from the other statements by regional major groups set out in the present document.

¹ “Others” includes stakeholders such as government representatives, faith-based groups, the media, foundations, organizations whose mandates cut across several sectors, and intergovernmental bodies.

Annex

Outcomes of the regional consultation meetings with major groups and stakeholders¹

A. Africa annual regional consultations meeting with major groups and stakeholders in preparation for the 16th UNEP Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16 and the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2), 28 February – 1 March 2015 (Cairo, Egypt)

AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND MAJOR GROUPS STATEMENT AND KEY MESSAGES AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 15TH SESSION OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO UNEA

Your Excellency Hon. Dr. Binilith S. Mahenge, Minister of State Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania and AMCEN President;

Your Excellency Dr. Khaled Mohamed Fahmy Abdel Ael, Minister, Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt;

Mr. Achim Steiner, UN Under Secretary General and Executive Director, UNEP; The Director & Regional Representative, UNEP- ROA, Mr. Mounkaila Goumandakoye;

Excellencies, Ministers of Environment from various countries across the African continent;

Representatives of Regional Economic Integration Bodies;

Ladies and Gentlemen, all protocols observed;

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to stand before you, on behalf of African civil society, to articulate our perspectives on the agenda of this 15th Session of AMCEN, which we have no doubt will provide direction for the African continent as we head towards the new Sustainable Development Goal in New York and the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris all taking place this year.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, inspired by the consultative spirit of AMCEN, the African Civil Society under the auspices of Pan African Climate Justice Alliance, bringing together diverse groups from the youth, Indigenous Peoples, farmers, faiths, NGOs and networks, met and came up with a collective key message which we are already sharing with delegates. We hope that our views will be considered when making final decisions for this session.

We sincerely appreciate the space you have accorded civil society in this important process, and particularly thank UNEP Regional Office for Africa, the African Union, COMESA and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting, participating and sharing with us during the pre-AMCEN Consultative Workshop and Major Groups Forum held on 1st of March 2015.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, we meet here again, an exercise which has become a routine, to review the progress on international climate change and Post-2015 SDGs dialogue processes and Africa's involvement, our gains and losses.

During our workshop, we wondered whether it is worth participating any longer in the UNFCCC processes which have come and gone without delivering any concrete outcomes as the growing impacts of climate change continue to stand in the way of our development aspirations. The last two decades have been characterized by unfulfilled promises and commitments by developed countries but still we feel that the multilateral process under UNFCCC is the only sure way to deliver fairness and justice for poor countries and communities.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen; in the Copenhagen, Cancun, Durban, Doha, Warsaw and Lima climate conferences, the rallying call for Africa has been that the outcome of the negotiations must be, at a minimum, to keep Africa safe, ensure food security and agree a fair sharing of the atmospheric space between North and South.

¹ Issued without formal editing.

We should not hold back from putting pressure on rich countries to change excessive production and consumption systems while protecting and compensating communities affected by their historical actions. Discussions around the new climate change agreement should be preceded by the rich countries honoring the promise they have already made as a signal of good faith. This may not be the case as the Lima Climate Talk has demonstrated the shifting of goal post by the developed countries on many fronts. Despite the establishment of the Green Climate Fund, we are worried that it may not be properly financed as the experience with other funds such as Adaptation Fund shows.

1. On the Road to Paris: The new climate agreement: The African civil society calls upon African governments/ministers to urge developed countries to communicate emission reduction targets as iNDCs that commensurate to keeping global average temperature well below 1.5°C and against principles of equity -historical responsibility, capacity, the right to sustainable development. African should also ensure the transfer of finance and technology via strengthened institutions like the GCF, the Adaptation Fund, and the Adaptation Committee is part of its demands in Paris UNFCCC-COP21.

We call on DCPs to mobilize at least USD 1 trillion and monetize/materialize pledges to the financial entities of the financial mechanism of the Convention so as to meaningfully implement adaptation intervention and low carbon development strategies.

We further call for full operationalizing the Warsaw Mechanism on Loss and Damage and its full inclusion in the 2015 agreement. Also focusing on provisions to address the rights and needs of climate displaced people and for managing risk.

2. On the Post 2015-SDGs and processes that will conclude in New York, we call on AMCEN to engage and proactively create spaces, for the participation of environment and climate change experts and African Civil Society from the Environment sector. It is critical for AMCEN to emphasize that success will depend on the efforts of millions of citizen volunteers working towards the realisation of a broadly shared vision. There is a need to mobilise and focus citizen participation on a scale without precedent.

3. On the Management of Africa's Natural Capital: Africa is dependent on its natural capital. We therefore urge Government to ensure that the utilization of natural capital is by Africans for Africa, in a sustainable and equitable manner. Threats and key drivers of degradation such as extractive industry activities and land grab should be managed and addressed. Environmental governance should be strengthened and should involve communities and civil society in determining how the natural capital is used so as to create jobs and benefits for current and future generations. Public institutions should be strengthened in order to avoid pilferage and corruption.

4. On Illegal Trade in Wildlife: We commend the decision EX.CL/Dec.832 (XXV) of the 23rd African Union Summit in Malabo to develop the African Common Strategy on Combating Illegal Wildlife Trade in Wild Flora and Fauna. We urge AMCEN to fast track the development of this strategy, in an open and inclusive process that involves Member States, African Union Commission, UNEP, UNECA, AfDB, CSOs and Private Sector.

5. On Principle 10: Sustainable development can only be guaranteed if citizens have access to information, participate effectively in the decision making and have access to justice when such rights are denied or tempered. We call on AMCEN to start and accelerate to adoption of an African Regional Convention on Principle 10. AMCEN should sensitize their populations on Principle 10. This could be done by assessing the application of rights to information, public participation and access to justice at national level, and produce implementation mechanisms and safeguard good governance of Principle 10 to emphasize environmental justice through special environmental codes systems.

6. On broad participation in UNEA: As the strengthened and upgraded UNEP is poised to play an effective role as a follow-up to Rio+20 in integrating three dimensions of sustainable development, we recommend that the Committee of Permanent Representatives allows full participation of Major Groups. Major Groups already accredited under UN ECOSSOCC should be recognized by UNEA, while elected MG Regional Representatives should be accorded speaking rights at the Committee of Permanent Representatives and UNEA. Broader partnerships between UNEP and other organizations as a means to fulfill its mandate should always be promoted, with UNEP not limiting itself to policy formulation but also implementation.

7. Inclusive participation in regional processes: Gender: 80% of small scale food producers in Africa are women who depend on natural resources therefore, women should be involved in the agriculture and environment policy formulation, programs and projects design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels with measurable indicators. African government through its

relevant organs like AUC, AfDB, ACPC, RECs and other agencies like UNEP, UNECA, and NEPAD etc should support and strengthened the work of African Working Group on Gender and Climate Change.

In furtherance to the Assembly/AU/Dec.538(XXIII) on climate change, particularly on developing a CAHOSCC Women and Gender Programme on Climate Change (CWGPCC) to engage women and gender in climate change related actions, we request AMCEN to work with Member States and other partners to put in place relevant mechanisms to implement the decision ahead of the twenty-first Conference of the Parties (COP21) to be held in Paris, France at the end of the year.

8. Youth: In line with the Lima ministerial declaration on education and awareness raising, we urge African government to support youth innovation, entrepreneurship and green jobs through formal integration of environmental and climate education in school curriculum and while showing our appreciation for the just-released new book 'Accelerating Youth Action towards Africa's greener future' we urge AMCEN to institutionalize and provide financial support to relevant youth organizations and initiatives in Africa.

I thank you all.

Mithika Mwenda

PACJA Secretary General, on behalf of the African Civil Society and Major Groups

B. Latin America and the Caribbean annual regional consultative meeting of the major groups and stakeholders to the Second United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2) and the 16th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16), 7 May, 2015 (Panama city, Panama)

RECOMMENDATIONS

We, the representatives of the Major Groups and Stakeholders of Latin America and the Caribbean, gathered at the UNEP Regional Consultative Meeting held on 7th May 2015 in Panama City, Panama, agreed to make the following recommendations:

On the UNEP Stakeholder Engagement Policy:

We call upon Governments to ensure that the negotiations linked to the Rules of Procedure, the Stakeholder Engagement Policy and the Access-to-Information Policy will decidedly draw on the principle of non-regression, in particular concerning agreements and practices for full and effective participation in the UNEA and its subsidiary bodies, accreditation of observer organisations and access to negotiating drafts.

We request that Rule of Procedure 70 allows all organizations with an interest in the environment and sustainable development -including those at the international, national and local level - to be fully integrated into the different participation mechanisms of the Major Groups and Stakeholders.

With regard to the Major Groups Facilitation Committee (MGFC), we request that Governments strengthen the role of Regional Representatives, guaranteeing equal status to those representing the Major Groups at the global level, given that this is an indispensable requirement for each region's views to be taken into account in the policymaking process of UNEP.

On the post-2015 Development Agenda:

We call upon Governments to reassign available economic resources at the global, national and local level such that, given the comprehensive nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, contradictions could be minimized and synergies generated among the different sectorial policies in each dimension of international governance for sustainable development.

Concerned by the privatization of public goods and services through public-private partnerships, we call on all institutions, in particular government and United Nations System agencies, to be transparent and accountable regarding all private sector contributions to their programmes and activities.

We insist on the urgent need to apply a human and natural rights approach in all decision-making and implementation processes, recognizing, in particular, the diverse levels and forms of governance of Indigenous Peoples and local communities and their right to take part in decision-making at all levels, including the High Level Political Forum.

Regarding implementation measures, we emphasize that technology transfer should abide by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, so as to avoid creating dependency, conditionality or indebtedness for those receiving the technology. We also stress the urgency of revaluing, and respecting the implementation of, technologies based on the traditional knowledge of local communities and Indigenous Peoples, which are more appropriate for the place where those technologies originated.

In line with the objective of leaving no one behind and Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, indicators must be disaggregated to allow for the monitoring of progress of all groups, including local communities and Indigenous Peoples.

On the recommendations ahead of COP21:

We consider climate change one of the current major challenges to sustainable development. We therefore urge Governments to adopt, ratify and implement current and future agreements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to allocate the resources needed to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and increase the adaptive capacity of the small states, most vulnerable communities and sectors, with particular emphasis placed on the health sector.

We recognize that adaptation and mitigation measures vis-à-vis climate change phenomena are essential for the future of the planet in general and for our region in particular. In light of the foregoing, we urge Governments to engage and involve civil society in searching for policy options to enhance resilience to climate change phenomena.

Recognizing current urban growth trends in Latin America and the Caribbean, we call on Governments to strengthen green economy, sustainable development and resilience strategies in the framework of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Programmes such as the 10YFP and the Sendai Declaration and Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. In addition, they should encourage private investment with economic incentives and promote legitimate, transparent and equitable participation, based on consensus and respect for the rights of populations and the environment.

We further request that the States prioritize the creation of protected natural areas in each country to preserve biodiversity, and that their urban planning policies be designed and executed within a framework of respect for biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems.

On Sustainable Consumption and Production:

Given that the region has developed a declaration in the framework of the 10YFP, in which the representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders reached a common point of agreement with the governmental delegates, we call on the governments of the region to facilitate and enhance the active participation of the nine Major Groups in the promotion of SCP practices and the implementation of programmes under the Ten-Year Framework at the regional, national and local levels.

C. Europe annual regional consultative meeting of the major groups and stakeholders to the Second United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2) and the 16th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16), 12-13 November, 2015 (Brussels, Belgium)

OUTCOME JOINT POSITION STATEMENT

Healthy environment - Healthy people

Environmental Health and the SDGs The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are all interlinked, based on the evidence that only a balanced development with sustainable consumption, production and lifestyle patterns, and protecting people's health and the health of natural eco-systems, can ensure long term well-being and survival of humanity.

When the environment is polluted and destroyed, the people dependent on the environment also suffer. A number of multilateral agreements and conventions already exist to phase out hazardous substances which cannot be safely used, such as mercury and asbestos, and for which safe alternatives exist.

These agreements protect people and the environment, but much more needs to be done to apply the precautionary principle and to avoid future environmental damage with irreversible health impacts on humans, animals and nature. For example, currently many daily-use products contain potential 'endocrine disrupting chemicals' which create life-long health damage, as well as many pesticides which are increasingly suspected of doing harm to human health, including birth defects and development of cancer.

UNEP plays an important role in developing guidelines for environmental health and coordinating the conventions addressing the substitution of hazardous substances, but as the SDGs have stated, much more needs to be done to ensure a healthy planet for healthy people.

The Major Groups and Stakeholders from Europe have identified the following key recommendations for action on Environment and Health:

Mercury

- UNEA to call on countries who have not yet ratified to immediately ratify the Minamata Convention on Mercury
- UNEA to call on all countries to implement mercury reduction activities following the requirements of the Minamata Convention. Countries should make funding possibilities available, to support the ratification efforts; this could include work on preparing a mercury inventory, a legal gap analysis, and awareness raising activities, capacity building and promotion of good practices.
- Support should also be available for the development of a National Action Plan on Artisanal Small Scale Gold Mining, for the relevant countries to seek for.

SDGs and environmental health

- UNEA to call on all countries to prepare assessments of the impact of existing programs, policies, subsidies, incentives etc., including identifying those conflicting with the SDGs, i.e. do an integrated assessment of environment, sustainability and health and how this approach can be taken in development planning processes.
- Encourage UNEP to approach SDG integrally, by building on its ‘integrated approach to environmental sustainability in development planning’ initiatives at the national level.
- UNEA can take the lead to develop further accountability and compliance and implementation mechanisms (linking to the finance part of UNEA agenda).

Healthy ecosystem

- UNEA to agree on a global program to integrate biodiversity and ecosystem protection into national health, economic, agriculture policies and investments, and to reduce the total environmental pressure on land use, including action plans to specifically:
 - Create a dietary shift towards low meat, locally and ecologically produced food, to reduce land and water use pressure as well as non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
 - Move to only organic local agriculture.
 - Work towards a transition of agricultural systems, including supporting farmers actively with subsidies for integrated pest management, producing organic products, animal welfare, and phase out all subsidies for industrial farming which will imply huge savings for the budget too.
 - Social support for low-income population to access safe ecologically clean food, water and air. UNEP can play a major role here in addressing SDG 10 on reducing the growing inequalities we are confronted with in Europe

Armed conflict impact remediation and prevention

- Stress the role of UNEA regarding negative environmental impacts of armed conflict –building off from on its work on poaching and illegal logging (charcoal trade) – also coal mafia, oil mafia etc.
- Address the role of UNEA in facilitating preventive measures to reduce conflict when these are linked to land degradation, climate change, pollution, etc.
- Migration and refugees: address the role of UNEA in ensuring access to safe water, sanitation, safe natural resource management, for migrants, refugees and internal displaced peoples. Share knowledge and expertise in the field of migrant’s vulnerability to climate change, and build capacity for resilience and early warning and response.

Waste

- UNEA to develop guidelines and an action plan to reduce waste, working towards eliminating waste landfilling and incineration globally – in order to reduce water and air pollution, in particular eliminating very hazardous as well as medical waste discharge to sewerage system as waste water treatment plants are unable to manage such pollutant in an environmentally sound manner.
- UNEA to develop recommendations for a binding international tax on chemical and pharmaceutical sales for clean-up and health protection (this is an existing proposal SAICM – like Tobin tax, a 0,001% tax on total turnover achieving 4 billion Euro or so annually).
- UNEA to agree as part of the financing of the SDGs to strict application of polluter pays principle, including obligatory insurance of all economic activities that have a negative impact on environment and health.
- Recognise responsibility of Member States and corporations also to pay for future clean up as well as cleanup of old liabilities in particular the toxic chemicals such as PCBs and old pesticides, mercury from small scale gold mining and other extractive industry pollution. Equitable and coherent policies to protect environmental health.
- Add specific sex- and age-disaggregated indicators to be added to the basic global SDG indicators so that specific vulnerability of women, children, (e.g. early life exposure to Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals in daily products and pesticides) and elderly people are addressed.
- Link UNEP’s Gender GEO and the GEO6 Chapter on “Healthy Planet, Healthy People” to the global monitoring of SDGs effort to ensure greatest coherence and engagement of all sectors.
- UNEP to be given the mandate and resources to ensure that at country level civil society is meaningfully participating in environmental and SDG policy development, investment planning and implementation.
- UNEP to increase its engagement with major groups of civil society, and in particular continue its involvement with environmental NGOs, women, youth and indigenous peoples groups not only because they are more vulnerable but also as agents of change and leaders in transformation. Research and pro-active awareness raising and advocacy
- UNEP to support Civil Society Organisations and Environmental NGOs with strong ‘advertising’ campaigns which warn – just as with anti-smoking messages – about the hazards of burning coal in chimneys, mercury in fish, of EDCs in plastic, food, toys and cosmetics etc. and that contained in the link it is made very clearly to people that they are responsible for their own health, (e.g. your risk of heart attack).
- Make the co-benefits of environment and health very clear: longer and healthier lives thanks to clean environment, more resilient communities against climate and other natural disasters, value of nature for mental and emotional health, etc.
- UNEP to further integrate the values of environmental education and education for sustainable development in the implementation of environmental dimensions of the SDGs and in its programme of work in order to creating social, economic and environmental capital.
- Raise awareness on and support the participation of civil society in the implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), including the use of Infor MEA e-learning tools.

Increase trans-boundary cooperation and good governance

- Support Programs to work in border regions (similar to Interreg) on common pollution (water, air, mountain etc).
- Convince the Member States to halt the deregulation and cancelling of environmental legislation and legal tools, based on the rationale that it is undertaken to fight corruption or good for the economy. On the contrary we need to promote more legal frameworks.
- Promote and build on inter-sectoral partnerships based on green economy, environment and health, CCAC, etc good practices.

Mobilising resources for investment in sustainable development

The Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 tackle global issues that require a harmonized and cross-sectoral (government, business, finance and civil society) mobilisation of resources. At the Regional Consultation Meeting for Europe, the results of the UNEP Inquiry were welcomed, and representatives from the Major Groups formulated key-recommendations for priority actions that member states at UNEA-2 can request of UNEP to undertake. Where relevant, the recommendations are annotated with the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

The Major Groups in Europe urge UNEA 2 to take the next step and develop a global and harmonized regulatory approach for mobilising resources for investments in Sustainable Development, and for demobilising resources invested in unsustainable developments. Regretfully, unsustainable behaviour is often left rewarded as it rides freely and unfairly on the benefits of those in the corporate and financial community that do choose to adopt sustainable strategies.

As such different major groups from the European Region recommend that member states at UNEA-2 ask UNEP to develop harmonised instruments in the following areas:

Public Finance: Subsidies and Taxation

In line with Sustainable Development Goals and their subsequent targets (2.b, 7, 12.c, 13.a, 14.6, 17.14) as well as paragraph 31 Of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (A/CONF.227/L.1), member states at UNEA-2 should aim to:

- Stop public finance flows to unsustainable practices.
- Stop the subsidisation of fossil fuel exploration and use, and redirect subsidies in favour of renewable energy forms.
- Replace the subsidisation of other unsustainable practices in favour of sustainable alternatives.
- Enable developing countries to increase their income from taxation, by eliminating the use of tax-havens and other tax-avoidance mechanisms by multi-national enterprises.
- Installation of a global intergovernmental tax body.
- Increase the green taxation policies in Global North and South

Multi-stakeholder and Public Private Partnerships

In line with SDG 17, targets 16 and 17, seek and determine the conditions for effective and optimized partnerships, multi-stakeholder as well as Public Private Partnerships, where it is recommended further:

- That the aim of these partnerships is to leverage private investment for sustainable practices in line with the Sustainable Development goals and targets. In designing them, it is imperative that roles between public and private finance be made absolutely clear.
- To, based on the Bali Guiding Principles on partnerships (WSSD and CSD 11), and in conjunction with the ongoing work on partnerships at the UN, (UNDESA and ECOSOC), further contribute to formulate principles on partnerships at the global level that will enable the above. This should include accountability mechanisms.
- To encourage that these set of principles for partnerships once agreed on by member states, be utilized also at the nation-state level.

Trade, if fair and green

The participants stated that all need to recognise the importance and potential of trade as a source of resources for sustainable investments, especially in the East and in the Global South, and therefore that member states at UNEA-2:

- Ensure that in the process of trading that there is a full respect for the environment, and that trade should not violate any of the principles or rights expressed in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights.
- Ensure that trade will support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Ensure that all trade practices are based on principles of good governance, such as transparency, accountability and the rule of law.

- Request that negotiations in the framework of the WTO will explicitly contribute to eliminating unsustainable trade and material and financial flows, and encourage only trade flows that support sustainable development; Regional trade and investment negotiations need to be transparent and also totally in line with all SDGs.

Governance based on vision, not in reaction to environmental disaster

Conclusions from the UNEP Inquiry on design of a sustainable Financial System – called “The Financial System we need” as published in October 2015, tell us that the financial and corporate community are willing to incorporate sustainability concerns in their investment decisions. This behaviour is induced by the fact that companies and financial investors worldwide are experiencing the impacts of the disruptive effects of ecosystem degradation and climate change on their operations. The major groups believe that a pro-active approach will be more cost-efficient to the economy and will cause less (irreversible) damage to nature.

Member states at UNEA-2 should therefore:

- Pro-actively anticipate the disruptive effects of climate change, ecosystem degradation and therefore choose to regulate unsustainable behaviour. This will prevent that changes in the financial sector and in the private sector will only occur as a result of environmental disaster and at high cost and not as a result of a positive and sustainable vision.
- Provide UNEP with a mandate to support a global dialogue on strengthening the regulatory framework in favour of sustainable development.
- As the effects of climate change and ecosystem degradation become clear, and are felt at the company and investor level, request UNEP to implement an educational campaign to inform business and finance of the impacts of environmental degradation on their balance sheet – building onwards on the work of TEEB, UNEP FI, the Natural Capital Coalition and the Natural Capital Declaration.
- Considering the increasing scarcity of resource flows to development cooperation across the world, UNEP should strive to mobilize additional resources for the implementation of environmental dimensions of the SDGs and its programme of work from private sector in line with the UN principles.

D. West Asia annual regional consultative meeting of the major groups and stakeholders to the Second United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2) and the 16th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16), 16-17 November, Beirut, Lebanon

We, the Major Groups and Stakeholders of the West Asia region, in preparation for the for the second United Nations Environment Assembly and the sixteenth Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16) present the follow statement:

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

On Friday 26 September 2015 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the United Nations declared 17 goals, which world leaders adopted for sustainable development to be achieved during the period from 2015 to 2030, and was considered as an ambitious plan that promises a better world within 15 years in different aspects, especially education, poverty eradication, health care and the environment.

We emphasize the importance of these goals in achieving sustainable development, and

Recognizing the importance of the newly agreed 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, we pay tribute to all the global efforts exerted to achieve them, however, we must ensure the human development perspective that focuses on the human being as the mainstay of life and the core of development. As such, we:

1. *Stress* the importance of balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, social and economic) in order to integrate the principles of justice, participation, transparency, accountability, democracy, respect for human rights, gender equality and empowerment of women and disadvantaged groups, in addition to the Rio principles, namely "common but differentiated responsibilities" (CBDR), and the sovereignty of nations and people to their natural resources.
2. *Welcome* the recognition that the global Sustainable Development Goals need to take into consideration the specificities, priorities, and capacities of nations, in addition to regional and national

policies, with a particular focus on freedom, peace, security, prevention of war and conflict, poverty eradication, in addition to food, energy, water, transportation, along with changing patterns of consumption and production, reduction in land degradation, drought and desertification, biodiversity conservation, disaster reduction and emergency preparation, being key priorities for achieving sustainable development.

3. *Recognize* that humans carry the burden and responsibility of preserving the planet, requiring them to realize the extent and scale of their roles and responsibilities towards the planet and the cosmic system, and to believe that natural resources and wealth do not exist to be depleted and destroyed, but to be protected, preserved and harnessed for the Earth, and for the achievement of human development.

4. *Emphasize* the need to ensure the basic components or enablers to achieve the SDGs, particularly effective governance and implementation mechanisms including both the traditional methods such as funding and the development of effective mechanisms to provide opportunities for knowledge transfer and indigenization of environment-friendly technology, along with capacity building, building partnerships and support for policy development. This includes the need to ensure that funding is available specifically for developing countries which have limited resources and other priorities which might make them less capable of taking action on the SDGs.

5. *Demand* the strengthening of the institutional framework for sustainable development at national and regional levels, through establishing effective and transparent bodies or councils, that are connected and accountable to all actors from the grassroots level to the highest decision making authorities, empowered and mandated to implement and follow up on the Sustainable Development Goals and plans, specifically through:

- 5.1 The establishment of a Council for Sustainable Development at the regional level that is directly linked to the Economic, Environment and Social Councils of the League of Arab States, with mechanisms to ensure the engagement of civil society, major groups and stakeholders at all levels.
- 5.2 The establishment of a Council for Sustainable Development at national level that is directly linked to the executive authority with mechanisms to ensure the engagement of civil society, major groups and stakeholders at all levels.

The right to information access

6. *We urge* States to activate Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration to make it a fundamental principle of engagement and partnership among civil society, major groups and stakeholders, through:

- 6.1 The adoption of the Bali Guidelines prepared by UNEP at the regional and national levels and the development of legislation, policies and appropriate mechanisms to ensure the right of access to information concerning the environment and sustainable development.
- 6.2 The introduction of environmental law principles and the integration of sustainable development concepts within the education curriculum (schools and universities) and extra-curricular awareness programs.
- 6.3 The development and establishment of a sustainable development information and data network to support the decision-making and planning processes and initiatives at the government and civil society levels.
- 6.4 Ensuring the continuous implementation of environmental assessments along with the implementation of environmental impact assessments for all projects and programs, to ensure impacts and risks are identified, addressed and managed.
- 6.5 Build upon and enhance citizen science engagement in the assessment, monitoring and development of policy, embracing the opportunities of building the capacity of grass roots organizations in support of sustainable development.

Sustainable production and consumption (SCP)

7. *We emphasize* the need to take advantage of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes (10YFP) on SCP to contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals recognizing that SCP cuts across a number of SDGs as well as SDG11 itself.

8. We *urge* the governments of the region to implement the adopted Arab strategy and execute the policies that have been adopted through the 10YFP.

9. We *urge* civil society to play a more active role in all stages of programming including planning, discussions, providing input and ideas, advocacy and raising awareness to rationalize consumption and production patterns. This includes a call for commitment to support and facilitation from all actors in order to allow civil society to take on this active role, both in terms of information sharing and in funding.

Participation of civil society organizations and stakeholders

10. We *affirm* the need to agree and finalize UNEP's Stakeholder Engagement Policy, to update the institutional framework for MGS engagement in UNEP policy and programmes and in achieving the SDGs, and to develop the appropriate guidelines and policies to ensure their effective participation and engagement both at the regional and international levels. We affirm the need to:

- 10.1 Expand the major groups and stakeholder notion to include representation from other civil society organizations as well as other sectors such as the education sector, the media sector, people with disabilities etc.
- 10.2 Loosen the accreditation criteria of UNEP and ease the accreditation mechanisms to allow more effective and legitimate representation.
- 10.3 Ensure the independence of these Major Groups and stakeholders through self-organizing caucuses.
- 10.4 Adopt the principles related to participation, transparency, accountability, democracy, and good governance within the UNEP Stakeholder Engagement Policy.
- 10.5 Clarify the role and function of both the newly proposed institutional framework (currently called the Major Groups Facilitating Committee, MGFC) and the regional representation.
- 10.6 Ensure equal representation between the MGFC and regional representation in discussions.

In regards to the West Asia Region

We request the following:

11. Expanding and ensuring the representation of all civil society organizations and stakeholders (Major Groups) by raising awareness and mobilizing all groups through direct and official communication from UNEP's Regional Office for West Asia

12. Replicating the proposed institutional framework at the UNEP headquarters in the region, through the establishment of MGS regional committees at the regional level, composed of the various major groups and stakeholders, self-organized and managed on a rotational basis, and ensure effective follow-up and coordination among them regionally and globally through the regional representatives.

13. Strengthening the role of civil society and stakeholders in influencing national, regional and international policies related to the environment through the development of coordination and follow-up mechanisms with all major groups in West Asia, capacity building and establishing an information resource network for knowledge and experience sharing in the region.

14. Strengthening the role of the Regional Office for West Asia by enabling it to function more effectively by providing all the necessary financial resources to do so.

15. We *urge* to have an advance training for MGS Coordination for each region as well as to have platform for MGS that will enable to each regional representative to put forward the regional activities and issues and to ease the communication between all Regional Representatives to benefit from each other for the goodness of each region

Regional priorities of West Asia

16. The political situation, state of war, occupation, conflict and insecurity conditions along with the overexploitation of natural resources that some countries in West Asia are experiencing reflects negatively on the three dimensions of sustainable development, as well as on local communities and environmental resources, and are exacerbated by the demographic challenge and unemployment.

17. The region is one of the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and the relationship between the effects of climate change and security are of concern and need to be addressed through a series of responses and interactions to reduce them such as through risk management and the application of innovative, flexible and scalable solutions. It is expected that demand for water in the region will increase five-fold in 2050 and exceed supply by 50%. In many countries, particularly those suffering from current mismanagement, there is urgency for change to avoid a situation of tensions potentially leading to instability and violence.

We request the following:

18. Implementation of the proposed mitigation measures to respond to the environmental impacts of the conflicts in the region such as Syria (such as are cited in the Lebanon Environmental Assessment of the Syrian Conflict & Priority Interventions September 2014, published by UNDP, Lebanese Ministry of Environment and EU), including amongst solutions to prevent the encroachment of vulnerable communities and Informal Tented Settlements on agricultural areas and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.

19. Deployment of low-carbon energy on a large scale in the cities of the world achieves significant economic benefits and opportunities. Sustainable Cities are becoming increasingly important with increasing urbanization and the growing levels of demand on clean and economically viable sources of energy.

20. Ensure that the entire world's population has access to sources of energy, and identify new global targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency.

21. Apply and adopt renewable energy sources as best practice to ensure a sustainable and secure energy future.

22. Strengthen efforts to achieve fulfillment of human rights, justice, peace and security in the region and respond to the challenges of countries who suffer from political tensions, occupation, conflicts and insecurity

23. Encourage a balanced growth in development activities to ensure environmental sustainability and conservation, benefiting from knowledge sharing and transfer of successful experiences in the region.

24. Devise a comprehensive vision of sustainable development among the Arab countries (including countries in the West Asia region) translated through a unified strategy, which shall be aligned with national plans and initiatives for sustainable development.

25. Sustainable use and management of natural resource at both national and regional levels.

26. Application and implementation of international laws and agreements with respect to infringements on natural resources between countries.

27. Strengthen regional cooperation in the areas of development, whilst encouraging technology transfer in the region through planning and determining the needs to ensure appropriate transfer and nationalization of technology with an emphasis on capacity building and training to ensure the promotion of sustainable development.

28. Encourage investment in research and development (R&D).

29. Promote the principles of good governance and anti-corruption in its various forms locally, nationally, regionally and internationally, in addition to ensuring the participation of civil society and stakeholders whilst ensuring transparency and accountability to strengthen their role hence enabling them to perform their role and function as fully capable partners in the development of national plans and policies.

E. Asia-Pacific annual regional consultative meeting of the major groups and stakeholders to the second United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2) and the 16th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16), 19-20 May 2015, Bangkok, Thailand

STATEMENT AT THE 1ST FORUM OF MINISTERS AND ENVIRONMENT AUTHORITIES OF ASIA-PACIFIC

Ensuring Sustainability as the Key Driver for Achieving Development Justice

Earlier this week, more than 100 representatives from civil society in Asia-Pacific met in Bangkok to discuss the themes that will be addressed at this Forum and to strengthen civil society engagement in

the post 2015 development agenda in Asia-Pacific. This Statement reflects the deliberations of civil society relevant to this Forum.

We welcome UNEP's week, more than 100st Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia-Pacific. This is long overdue. In the past decade, UNEP has addressed themes that will be addressed at this Forum and to strengthen civil society engagement in the post 2015 developments and formulate positions on the agenda of the annual UNEP Governing Council meetings in Nairobi, but without any interface with member-states at the regional level. We look forward to inclusive, constructive and vibrant engagement with governments, institutions and other development actors in this Forum that we hope will evolve into a principal platform for regional deliberations on environmental issues and ensure delivery of environmental commitments.

Building on good practices in regional and global engagements in UNEP processes and the long-established recognition by the UN and Asia-Pacific governments of the invaluable contributions of civil society in sustainable development, we put forward these concrete recommendations for effective and meaningful civil society engagement in this Forum:

- Promote direct participation of civil society representatives based on established practices at UNEP;
- Provide adequate opportunities and spaces for civil society to substantively contribute to the agenda of the Forum;
- Ensure timely access to documents relevant to the Forum and related processes; and
- Respect and support efforts of civil society to self-organize to effectively communicate our substantive contributions to the deliberations of the Forum.

We expect openness to these recommendations towards an inclusive, transparent, action-oriented and forward-looking Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia-Pacific.

In response to the themes of the Forum, the 107 civil society representatives that met this week offer the following contributions:

Environment Outlook for Asia-Pacific: Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

Asia-Pacific has experienced stellar economic growth in the past decades side-by-side with staggering disparity in wealth distribution among and within countries. This economic growth comes at massive costs to the region in the past decades side-by-side.

A key culprit for this problem is the segregated approach to development. Lip service is paid to the linkage between environmental and human wellbeing, but not operationalized nor translated clearly in development programs and interventions. The daily realities of people in communities, however, are not made up of segregated economic, social and environmental components but a totality of these inextricably linked dimensions. Environment challenges confronting communities but not operationalized nor translated clearly in development programs and interventions. The daily realities persist.

Climate change is taking a heavy toll on the region, to very dramatic proportions in the Pacific where sea-level rise is gradually obliterating coastal communities from the world map and bringing new development challenges such as climate migration and refugees. Disasters in unimaginable magnitude hit many parts of the region more frequently than ever, many due to extreme weather events. In the face of these devastation and uncertainties, the region particularly its industrialized and emerging economies is steadily increasing its share in annual global greenhouse gas emission while governments continue to subsidize the extraction of coal, oil and gas. Half of the US\$5.3 trillion annual subsidy for the fossil fuel industry comes from three major economies in Asia – equivalent to US\$5 million per minute. This dirty subsidy puts the health of people in this region at serious risks, mainly from local pollution that costs a staggering US\$2.73 trillion annually and from the impacts of global warming on food and water security at US\$1.27 trillion per year. Fossil fuel subsidies are immoral and indefensible, and must end now.

Environmental crimes continue unabated with serious consequences on wellbeing and the future generations. Extractive industries particularly mining activities diminish the ability of local and indigenous peoples to eke out a living, compromise food security, gravely damage ecosystems and endanger people's health and safety. Environmental crimes - crimes on wildlife, forest and marine resources - must be addressed as serious challenge that impede sustainable development, undermine the rule of law and threaten global and regional stability. Corporations involved in plundering the environment must be made accountable.

Concessions for multinational corporations to control vast tracts of land or coastal and marine areas marginalize and displace farming families out of their lands, driven them to urban areas and cause perennial conflicts in many parts of the region. In 2013, Indonesia alone had 427 agrarian conflicts over nearly 3 million hectares of land. Some Asia-Pacific countries have adopted environment protection measures to systematically displace indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands and restrict them from practicing traditional agricultural systems, thus threatening their livelihoods and undermining their right to conserve their intangible cultural heritage. These and countless stories of people to control vast tracts of land or coastal and marine areas marginalize and displace farming families out of their lands, driven them to urban areas and cause perennial conflicts in many parts to environment challenges will only succeed if it recognizes community control over productive resources based on stewardship principles, respects their participation in decision-making processes, and empowers communities.

The oceans, the earth's resources of protein, are not spared from this continuing plunder. The region, the earth's resources of protein, are not spared from this continuing plunder. and marine areas marginalize and displace farming families out of their lands, driven them to urban areas and cause about 625 fish species are in alarming state of decline due to overfishing. This has serious repercussions on food and nutrition security since as much as 90% of total dietary protein in the region are derived from fish. The people of the drowning small islands of the Pacific struggle with the impacts of toxic wastes, chemicals and micro-plastics that end up in their shores, washed up by ocean currents from the coasts of the region's middle-income economies that are among the world's top dumpers of plastic wastes into seas and oceans.

Global macro-economic and trade policies aggravate the sustainability challenges in Asia-Pacific. Current and forthcoming trade and investment agreements, such as the opaque TPPA and other mega regional and North-South FTAs, are threatening the three pillars of sustainable development. Bilateral investment agreements are undermining environmental policy regulations and natural resource conservation by allowing transnational corporations to sue national governments in secret arbitration cases under Investor-State-Dispute-Settlement (ISDS) clauses for any policy changes that may reduce profits. Pressures from harsh competition promoted by current trade regime lead to increased exploitation of natural resources. Trade and financial policies that perpetuate poverty, food insecurity and all forms of inequality must be abolished.

The poor, women, young people, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, elderly and LGBTIQ disproportionately bear the burden of environmental degradation. Asia-Pacific women and girls as well as their communities face multiple human rights and sustainable development challenges aggravated by severe economic, social, and environmental injustice. Fundamental policy shifts are necessary to incorporate gender equality and human rights in environmental initiatives, and reflected in all regional and international agreements. Such shifts require redistribution of unequal and unfair burdens on women and girls in ensuring environmental sustainability, societal wellbeing and fundamental policy shifts are necessary to incorporate gender equality and human rights in environmental initiatives.

Addressing this grim situation from the segmented lens of ministries and providing patch-work solutions based on siloed approach to development will not bring long-term solutions. Opportunities in changing the current narrative depend on overall strategy to eradicate poverty, tackle inequality and address powerlessness. We call for reform of intersecting and structural drivers of inequalities and discrimination including review and reform of unjust laws and policies.

Environment and Health Linkages

The flipside of urbanization expansion, land conversion and industrialization in Asia-Pacific is a grim landscape of environmental degradation that brings resurgence of infectious diseases such as dengue and malaria, sanitation-related diseases and zoonotic diseases like avian flu that take heavy toll on human lives, productivity and public expenditures. Pressures to increase agricultural productivity to feed the region increase agricultural productivity to sustain and industrialization in Asia-Pacific is a grim landscape of environmental degradation that brings resurgence of infectious diseases such as dengue and malaria, sanitation-related and from encroachment of forest areas for more intensified farming.

To minimize adverse impacts of hazardous chemicals on the environment and human health, governments must take measures to achieve by 2020 the sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle as envisioned in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The phase out of marketing and use of highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) and the promotion of and support to sustainable ecological agriculture would greatly contribute to secure a healthy environment and promote good health in both rural and urban communities. Vector-borne and sanitation- and hygiene-related diseases need to be addressed through more holistic

approaches and not through the use of toxic chemicals that only provide short-sighted remedies, aggravate ecological imbalance and expose people to more health hazards.

Segmented and sectorial approaches in addressing environment and health issues result to focusing on symptoms rather than combatting the root causes. Adopting a complex systems approach and recognizing that social, economic and ecological systems function together and often operate together as mented and sectorial approaches in addressing environment and health issues result to focusing on symptoms rather than combatting the root causes. Adopting a complex systems approach and recognizing that socand environment. Addressing air pollution as a chronic issue and as a development priority in Asia-Pacific, for example, requires much more than technological fixes but should tackle patriarchal norms and gendered roles where women bear unhealthy and hazardous cooking conditions at home, and responsibility for overall economic systems and decisions on food and fuel of the household. Solution to household air pollution requires wider societal shifts that recognize the human rights of women and their families to safe and adequate housing conditions and facilities, safe and healthy food, clean water, safe and renewable fuel options, and overall right to health.

Post 2015, SDGs and Environment Sustainability in Asia-Pacific

The Post-2015 development agenda, particularly the SDGs, presents an opportunity to address sustainable development challenges in this region. The explicit recognition of inextricable linkages between poverty and environment sustainability in the SDG is a good start towards operationalizing the integration of social, economic and environmental dimensions in each goal. Compartmentalizing the goals into the same-old distinct boxes defeats its essence and undermines the transformative aspirations of the post-2015 development agenda.

The Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) offers an opportunity to define the regionable development charities and pathways. Deliberations of the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia-Pacific should be closely linked to and planned with the APFSD to ensure coherence, synergy and consistency.

We urge governments and institutions in Asia-Pacific to:

- Adopt sustainability principles as the central development paradigm, align national budgeting and finance with sustainable development priorities, and put in place policies, laws, regulations and economic instruments that internalize so-called externalities;
- Make science and technology appropriate and responsive to the actual needs of people and to advance the goals of sustainability;
- Develop relevant capacities including in research, technology assessment, monitoring and data among institutions and communities;
- Adopt new systems of measuring progress that reflect social and environmental health;
- Use the SDGs to mainstream sustainability and to mobilize communities and other development actors, and recognize that governments that cannot implement the SDGs without the support of the different sectors of society and partnerships with civil society; and
- Disaggregate national data to reflect realities based on age, gender, sectors, ethnicity/indigenous status, disabilities, etc. to present more accurate progress towards attaining the SDGs.

The post-2015 agenda will only be transformative if underlying structural inequalities in society are addressed. Sustainable development will continue to be a fringe narrative unless poverty is eradicated. Wef society and partnerships with civil society; ae been calling for human rights based, transformative and inter-linked approaches to sustainable development. Our combined work is necessary to ensure development justice in the Asia-Pacific region, and globally.

F. U.S. Annual regional consultative meeting of the major groups and stakeholders to the Second United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2) and the 16th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16), 17 March 2016, Washington, D.C.

KEY MESSAGES ON DELIVERING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

This document is intended to reflect areas of general consensus that emerged from the consultation, but should not be read as an official position or endorsement by the individuals and organizations in attendance.

The United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for North America (UNEP RONA) convened a half-day round-table consultation in Washington, D.C. on March 17th, 2016, with U.S.-based Major Groups and Stakeholder representatives, civil society, and government officials. The objective of the meeting was to provide U.S.-based stakeholders with an opportunity to provide input into the upcoming United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 2) to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 23 – 27 May, 2016. The consultation focused on two issues that will be central to the UNEA agenda: *Delivering the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda* and *Healthy Environment – Healthy People*.

The meeting was facilitated by Scott Fulton, President of the Environmental Law Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). Patricia Beneke, Regional Director for UNEP's Regional Office for North America, delivered the opening presentation, which provided an introduction to UNEP's global work and its regional priorities. Ms. Beneke also described how the 2030 Agenda integrates the economic, social, and environmental pillars that underpin sustainable development and noted that the SDGs are universally applicable.

The keynote speaker at the consultation was Jane Nishida, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ms. Nishida's remarks focused on U.S. experience with the intersection between public health and the environment. She noted in particular the U.S.'s success with substantially reducing air pollution emissions while expanding economic productivity. Ms. Nishida also mentioned the success of the UNEP-led Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) in phasing out lead from gasoline, and discussed the importance of building on this success to promote the elimination of lead from other sources, including paint.

Participants engaged in a lively roundtable discussion focused on the topics described above.

Some of the key messages that emerged from the dialogue were the following:

- The universality of SDGs means that they are relevant to North America and should be addressed locally as well as globally. Technology and innovation have an important role to play in the implementation of the SDGs.
- The implementation of the environmental rule of law is fundamental to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- It is vital to find ways to measure, track and monitor progress on the SDGs at the country level.
- Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) is a key issue in the US context (e.g. food waste).
- Domestic crisis scenarios, such as the lead water poisoning crisis in Flint, Michigan, provide a teachable moment for the broader international community.
- The U.S. has been a leader when it comes to ensuring access to critical environmental information such as air and water pollution data and toxics release information. It can provide support to other countries seeking to learn from and replicate this experience.
- The U.S. approach to domestic environmental regulation focusses heavily on addressing connections between human health and environmental quality.
- The SDGs should be viewed as ecosystems of interrelated parts, rather than silo issues (e.g. animal well-being being is also connected to human well-being).
- Understanding the needs of local communities is crucial in meeting the SDGs.
- The SDGs should focus on how vulnerable communities are most at risk from environmental failures.
- Education and communication about the SDGs is essential for their success.
- Youth engagement is vitally important as youth is the future.
- Increased and adequate involvement of the major groups and stakeholders at UNEA and all other global international processes is essential

- Stakeholder involvement in implementing the SDGs is crucial. For example the private sector plays a key role in addressing the food waste challenge through its value chain. Getting government entities and private sector markets to integrate value chain producers is essential to ensure viability.

Participants identified the following challenges in implementing the sustainable development goals in the US context:

- The lack of a clear contact point for the SDGs within the government, which makes it challenging for stakeholders to contribute and be included.
- Financing shortages at the local level were seen as an impediment to improving environmental quality and implementing the SDGs.

While all the goals are relevant to environmental sustainability, participants highlighted that some of the goals were more relevant to the U.S. context than others. The discussion focused on goals related to water, forests, cities, sustainable consumption and production, climate change, oceans, biological diversity, and social justice. In this connection, the following points were emphasized:

Goal 6: Water – Addressing access to potable water, sanitation and urban water sustainability requires improving water infrastructure and finding innovative finance mechanisms. The Water-Energy-Food Nexus provides a crosscutting approach for addressing this.

Goal 11: Cities – Since cities have a strong connection with water, climate, energy and health, using an integrated ecosystems approach in creating resilient communities is important.

Goal 12: Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) – Is a key area for the US, and ongoing efforts to reduce food waste are a promising example of domestic SDG implementation efforts. Addressing sustainable production systems across value chains is essential.

Goal 13: Climate Change – Is relevant to all sectors. Increasing renewable energy and adopting sustainable production methods can help minimize emission for key sectors e.g. agriculture.

Goal 14: Oceans – Managing wastewater and nutrient run-off is key to achieving this goal.

Goal 15: Terrestrial Ecosystems – Environment conservation is essential to protecting species from extinction. Target 15. 7 on illegal wildlife trafficking was seen as particularly relevant to the U.S. context.

Goal 16: Social Justice – Implementation of the environmental rule of law is essential for accountability and transparency, and will strengthen the environmental pillar of the development paradigm and safeguard the right to live in a healthy environment.

Participants also discussed the role of UNEP in encouraging implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The following ideas were highlighted related to UNEP's potential niche and role:

- As an enabler and through its role as a convener, UNEP can bring thought leadership and gather diverse stakeholders to tackle complex issues such as supply value chains and alternative indicators of progress (e.g. inclusive wealth index). UNEP can be a capacity builder and an engine of knowledge transfer.
- UNEP has technical strengths to offer. For example, one participant noted that it would be useful for UNEP to develop an analytical framework for urban ecosystem design.
- UNEP can also be a vehicle for disseminating assets that the broader stakeholder community would like to share globally (e.g., business communications tools, Ocean Health Index).
- UNEP should focus on key issues that impact the most vulnerable populations, such as toxics and chemicals, and build partnerships with countries and stakeholders that are interested in making progress on these issues.
- UNEA is a key platform for furthering understanding of the links between human rights and the environment.
- Through UNEA and also its involvement with the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, UNEP can work to ensure that the environmental dimension of the sustainable development agenda is strengthened.

G. Canada Annual regional consultative meeting of the major groups and stakeholders to the Second United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP (UNEA-2) and the 16th session of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF-16), 23 March 2016, Ottawa, Ontario

KEY MESSAGES FROM CANADIAN MAJOR GROUPS AND STAKEHOLDERS REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON DELIVERING ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL DIMENSION OF THE 2030 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

This document is intended to reflect areas of general consensus that emerged from the consultation, but should not be read as an official position or endorsement by the individuals and organizations in attendance.

The United Nations Environment Programme's Regional Office for North America (UNEP RONA) convened a half-day round-table consultation in Ottawa, Ontario on March 23rd, 2016, with Canadian-based Major Groups and Stakeholder representatives, civil society, and government officials. The objective of the meeting was to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to provide input into the upcoming United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 2) to be held in Nairobi, Kenya from 23 - 27 May, 2016. The consultation focused on two issues that will be central to the UNEA agenda: Delivering the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Healthy Environment – Healthy People.

The first session of the meeting on the topic of delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda was facilitated by Scott Vaughan, President and CEO of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), an independent, non-profit and non-governmental research organization founded in Canada in 1990. The second session on “Healthy Environment-Healthy People” was facilitated by Kate White, President and CEO of the United Nations Association of Canada.

Patricia Beneke, Regional Director for UNEP's Regional Office for North America, delivered the opening presentation, which provided an introduction to UNEP's global work and its regional priorities. Ms. Beneke also described how the 2030 Agenda integrates the economic, social, and environmental pillars that underpin sustainable development and noted that the SDGs are universally applicable.

John Cooper, Acting Director General, Safe Environments Program, Health Canada, provided remarks focused on the direct and indirect linkages between health and environment, and the work of the federal government in air, water, chemical management, climate and food issues. He emphasized the importance of collaboration, goals and commitments in addressing health and the environment and to identify solutions.

Participants engaged in a lively roundtable discussion focused on the topics described above.

Key messages that emerged from the dialogue on opportunities and challenges in implementing the environmental dimensions of the sustainable development goals in Canada include:

- Canada has new opportunities to think broadly about sustainable development and is committed to implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- Canada is in the process of finalizing the Federal Sustainable Development Strategy 2016 - 2019, which provides a prospect to integrate aspects of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs with the national strategy.
- A more robust presence and leadership of the federal government is needed to facilitate the implementation of the SDGs across sectors as well as at the provincial level.
- There needs to be a set baseline for metrics and indicators to allow monitoring and tracking progress in the implementation and reporting of the SDGs. However, this should not distract from achieving the commitments.
- Innovation in both partnerships and financing will play a key role in implementing the environmental dimensions of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- Sharing best practices in implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs and the relevance to the North American region can be beneficial to both the US and Canada, and other similar countries.

- Stronger language should be used in UNEA’s resolutions to address critical issues such as illegal trade in wildlife, which is a complex issue that goes beyond elephants and rhinos to challenging regulated competitive markets such as paper sourced illegally. Increased cooperation with countries in East Asia and engaging in demand reduction for such products in those regions is vital. Raising public awareness in North America is also critical, as it is a destination for illegal wildlife and illegal wildlife products.
- A key challenge in Canada is how to ensure that local communities and indigenous people benefit from the sustainable use of wildlife domestically.
- While the universality and the integrated nature of the goals were recalled, emphasis was placed on a number of goals – namely:
 - Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
 - Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
 - Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
 - Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
 - Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
 - Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
 - Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

On the subject of how we achieve improved environmental quality and enhanced human well-being, participants remarked:

- Science and research is a key priority for the new Canadian Government.
- It is important to continually research the impacts of environmental quality on health, and share the outcomes with the general public including medical professionals as well as underprivileged communities that are prone to the negative health impacts.
- North America has the capability of providing technical assistance and experience on environmental problems impacting health through bilateral opportunities for knowledge transfer.
- Cost-benefit analyses should take into account the costs of addressing environmental issues and the resulting health impacts when considering policies to address issues such as air pollution.
- Local communities, practitioners, and organizations should be empowered to use existing knowledge to find locally appropriate practical solutions to environmental health issues.
- Connecting climate change and its impacts on health can make the issue more immediate and personal, helping to drive actions to combat climate change.
- Traceability in supply and value chain of fisheries is important. Existing mechanisms should be leveraged to meet traceability requirements for small-scale fisheries and fishing operations.
- Other key questions that were raised include: Are we coming up with solutions fast enough that take into account customer behavior? How do we bring the costs to health and ecological footprint (externalities) into the costs of products and goods? Can eco-labeling play a role? Do environmental aspects of trade policies have health impacts?

Participants also discussed the role of UNEP in encouraging the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and called for:

- Continued engagement with civil society and greater transparency.
 - Widely distribute the Global Environmental Outlook North American Regional Assessment.
 - Help identify linkages between stakeholders in Canada and other UN agencies working on issues of relevance to UNEP.
-