

The Ministerial Policy Review Session of the Second Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

“Healthy Environment, Healthy People: Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

27 May 2016
(10:00 – 11:00 hrs)

Background

1. This background note has been prepared to support the Ministerial Policy Review Session during UNEA-2 and it builds on the thematic report “Healthy Environment, Healthy People” which has been prepared under the guidance of a Senior Review Group set up by the UNEP Executive Director, and composed of relevant entities of the United Nations while open to e-discussions organized on www.myunea.org. The report and its Executive Summary are available at <http://web.unep.org/unea/documents>.

Objectives of the Ministerial Policy Review session

2. The main objective of the Ministerial Policy Review session is to provide a platform for Member states to examine how addressing environment and health linkages can contribute to the successful delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets, and to propose concrete ways on how to advance integrated action, strategies, policies and regulations at the global, regional, national and local levels to improve environmental practices for healthier lives of population.
3. Ministers and heads of delegation will be invited to discuss and exchange their experiences of transformative pathways that contribute to addressing environment and health linkages at all levels in a more integrated manner illustrated in the thematic report, such as:
 - **Detoxification of our economies**, to remove harmful substances from and/or mitigate their impact on the environment in which people live and work (e.g. addressing air pollution, reducing pesticides use, through the promotion of integrated pest management and organic and sustainable farming systems)
 - **Decarbonisation**, to reduce the use of carbon fuels and thereby emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) through substitution of non-carbon energy, in line with the Paris agreement on Climate Change.
 - **Decoupling of resource use and environmental impacts and change in lifestyles**, to generate the needed economic activity and value to sustain the world's population with less resource use, less waste, less pollution, and less environmental degradation. Important health benefits can be gained from decoupling opportunities in the food sector, in water use, in energy consumption and through recycling and more sustainable household consumption e.g. food waste reduction.
 - **Enhanced ecosystem resilience**, to build the capacity of the environment, economies and societies to anticipate, respond to and recover from disturbances and shocks. Reforestation and better land use management, for example, will lead to improved absorption of rainwater into the soil, increased water storage and availability, more biomass, and greater food security, thus reducing malnutrition. These restorative activities will not only ensure food security, but also nurture cultural, social and recreational activities, and bring economic growth for local populations.

4. Participants will also be invited to discuss how targeted regulatory, policy, strategies and actions can concretely help to successfully realise or scale up the multiple benefits of addressing environment and health linkages, for example through:
- **Strengthened multi-level governance** at the nexus of environment and health;
 - **Integrated evidence based policies and instruments, including legal and fiscal**, that translate policy to action across sectors and industries;
 - **Cross-sectoral partnerships and platforms** to incubate, catalyse, accelerate, and scale health-environment research, innovation, technologies, innovative financing, and practices;
 - **Improved individual, household, and societal knowledge**, attitudes, behaviours and practices through systematic communication, awareness raising and education interventions;
 - **Assessment, measurement, research and monitoring** to ensure an adequate formative process, and a research framework that engenders the evidence base that all investment and action demand.

Guiding questions

5. **The Ministerial Policy Review session** be guided by the following preliminary questions for discussion:
- Given the interlinkages between human health and the health of the environment, what kinds of policies are needed at the national level to ensure the adoption of integrated responses to address environment and health?
 - What is being done in your countries, including at the local level, and in the regions that could provide examples of best practices that can provide the basis for transformative change in addressing environment and health linkages?
 - Which are some of the priority areas where UNEA can deliver accelerated results in Decarbonizing and Detoxifying our economies, Decoupling resource use and changing lifestyles and Enhancing ecosystem resilience?
 - What support is needed to enable delivery at scale?
 - How can new or strengthened partnerships contribute to providing an integrated response to addressing environment and health linkages to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals?

Format and outcome of the Ministerial Policy Review session

6. The introductory segment in a full plenary setting will present and discuss the Thematic Report “Healthy Environment, Healthy People”. After a brief introduction by the Executive Director of UNEP, two heads of UN agencies and one keynote speaker will be invited to briefly address the Assembly.
7. The plenary will then break into two parallel sessions addressing the same theme in a smaller setting. Delegations will be invited to attend either session following a division of two roundtables by alphabetical order. Both roundtables will benefit from interpretation services. The roundtables will be chaired by Ministers of the Environment invited by the President of the Assembly.

8. To facilitate deliberations in each roundtable, the chairpersons may call upon, as appropriate during the course of the debate, heads of UN organizations and international experts to provide inputs on the theme.
9. In order to ensure interactive dialogue, it is requested that interventions be kept to three minutes.
10. The Co-Chairs of the Roundtables will be invited to summarize the debates during the closing segment of the Assembly.

**The Ministerial Policy Review Session of the Second Session of the United Nations
Environment Assembly**

The United Nations Office at Nairobi, Nairobi

Friday, 27 May 2016

Draft Programme

Time	<i>Morning</i>
1000-10:50	Opening of the Ministerial Policy Review Session “Healthy Environment, Healthy People” Invited key-note speakers:
11:00-13:00	<i>Morning</i>
	Ministerial Roundtable 1 <i>Co-Chair of Roundtable 1 – Introduction to the Ministerial Roundtable</i> <i>Co-Chair of Roundtable 1 – Introduction to the Ministerial Roundtable</i> Invited key-note panelists:
	Ministerial Roundtable 2 <i>Co-Chair of Roundtable 2 – Introduction to the Ministerial Roundtable</i> <i>Co-Chair of Roundtable 2 – Introduction to the Ministerial Roundtable</i> Invited key-note panelists: