

26 June 2014

**1st UNEA of UNEP
Nairobi, 23-27 June 2014**

EU+MS Opening Statement for the High Level Segment

Thursday, 26 June 2014 (10:00)

Madam Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished colleagues,

This Statement is delivered on behalf of the EU and its Member States. Bosnia & Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia align themselves with this statement.

It is my honor and privilege to participate in this first United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme.

First of all, let me take the opportunity to express our appreciation to the Government of Kenya for hosting this first UNEA meeting and to UNEP for organizing this celebrational meeting that brings UNEP to a new era. I would also like to express our congratulations to UNEP's Executive Director, Mr. Achim Steiner, for the recent extension of his mandate for two additional years.

We welcome the focus on the science policy interface in the ED's report. We would like to underline the significance of this vision and the efforts undertaken to improve ways in which knowledge and evidence-based decision-making can be improved. We look forward to UNEP continuing to provide us with policy relevant information at future UNEAs.

We have long been supportive of a strengthened system of International Environmental Governance within the UN Framework, with UNEP having a pivotal role. Therefore, we welcome the Rio+20 outcome and its implementation through Governing Council Decision 27/2 and UN General Assembly Resolution 67/251 last year.

As the Executive Director has rightly noted, the convening of this first UNEA session in Nairobi represents a coming-of-age for the global environment community, since for the first time, all UN members, observers and major stakeholders, will be represented in the new

assembly, thereby bestowing upon UNEA a new level of representation, legitimacy and authority.

At the same time, we must ensure that UNEP lives up to the higher expectations surrounding it and that decisions taken here are translated in concrete actions that will positively affect the state of the environment and promote global sustainability.

During these two days we will have the opportunity to deliberate upon two very important issues for the international agenda.

First, “Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 development agenda, including sustainable consumption and production” which is directly related to the ongoing processes in New York for the Post-2015 Framework, the Sustainable Development Goals and the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

Second, an extremely important and timely issue, the “Illegal trade in wildlife” which has taken an alarming rate in recent years and for which urgent action is needed.

Madam Chair,

The high level of Ministerial participation can constructively further our debate on issues of common interest and provide consensual guidance on matters of global significance.

The EU and its Member States are committed to work together with other partners in ensuring the best possible outcome from this first session of the UNEA, consistent with the decision we took in Rio in 2012 for the upgrading of UNEP.

Thank you.