

Second Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux
of the UN Environment Assembly and
the Committee of Permanent Representatives
9 – 10 June 2017
Hotel Villa Caletas (Pacífico Central)
Puntarenas, Costa Rica

**Note by the Secretariat on the draft key messages for the Statement of the President of the
United Nations Environment Assembly, to the 2017 High-level Political Forum on
Sustainable Development**

The Secretariat submits a note on the draft key messages for the Statement of H.E. Edgar Gutiérrez Espeleta, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The Secretariat, suggests that the joint bureaux meeting consider the items under Agenda item 7: Visibility of the UN Environment Assembly, at the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to be held on 9 – 10 June 2017.

Draft key messages for the Statement of H.E. Edgar Gutiérrez Espeleta, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to the 2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, under the theme "*Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world*"

- As President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, I am honoured to transmit the high-level political messages and policy recommendations, on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and ways to accelerate progress. I present the Forum with these messages considering the UN General Assembly's resolution 71/231 and the UN Environment Assembly's resolution 2/5.
- The United Nations Environment Assembly represents the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment and addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today, including the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. It has a well-defined role of serving as the world's authoritative voice on environmental matters across the UN System. With this overarching mandate and its universal membership, it is uniquely placed to interact with the Forum at the institutional, political and substantive levels, contributing to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner.
- The integration of the political outcomes of the Environment Assembly is essential for the realization of the comprehensive implementation, monitoring and review of global sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda.
- The United Nations Environment Assembly emphasized that UNEP, within its mandate, has an important role in the follow up and review of the progress in implementing the environmental dimension of sustainable development, including the provision of policy relevant information, through assessment processes. The work of the UN Environment Assembly should support the overall follow up and review by this Forum, including through the continuation of UNEP's work on indicators to monitor the delivery of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda.
- Approximately 70 per cent of the world's poor depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. Ecosystem services and other non-market goods make up between 50 and 90 per cent of the total source of livelihoods among poor rural and forest-dwelling households worldwide.
- The world continues to face serious environmental challenges, such as climate change, ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and ocean pollution and acidification, which are compounded by growing demographic pressures and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production in some areas.
- While evidence clearly outlines the interrelationships between poverty and environment, limited country-level capacity and governance mechanisms to mainstream interlinked objectives into

decision-making processes, inhibit sustainable development. Adequate normative and policy foundations are essential.

- Expanding poverty-environment mainstreaming in policies, plans and budgets to include the promotion of quality investments creates the potential to simultaneously improve livelihoods, health and the resilience of poor men and women and to sustainably manage the environment and address climate change.
- At the second session of the UN Environment Assembly in May 2016, 174 countries convened to discuss and take action on major environmental issues that constrain the prospect for achieving sustainable development. Ranging from the environment-health nexus to massive food waste and sand and dust storms, these issues on the agenda of the UN Environment Assembly already have a visible impact at local, regional and global levels.
- The resolutions and decisions adopted will have a profound impact on the delivery of 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. It also recognises the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface to address pressing environmental challenges and enhancing actions that could eliminate global poverty while deepening the relationship between health and environment.
- Member States recognise that authentic sustainable development outcomes cannot be achieved if development action remains within traditional social, economic and environmental silos. Instead, a more holistic or “integrated” approach is necessary. The sustainable use of the environment and natural resources is a prerequisite to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere.” Efforts to eradicate poverty and ensure durable growth are directly linked to improving management of the environment and natural resources, and vice versa.
- The resolutions adopted at the second session aim to raise political awareness and catalyse policy action on these and other specific environmental challenges, based on the sound science being brought by UN Environment to policy makers and to provide the early warning that allows the international community to act.
- Through regular reviews and assessments, including the periodic Global Environment Outlook, UN Environment continues to ensure that everyone, in particular marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women, benefits from mainstreaming environmental considerations into development planning.
- In order to ensure that the voices of stakeholders are adequately heard at the highest level, the UN Environment Assembly is mandated to initiate new multi-stakeholder partnerships, and strengthen existing ones, to contribute to delivering the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work of UN Environment demonstrates that sustained poverty eradication and prosperity are possible only if integrated and balanced approaches are taken to sustainable development in partnership with multiple stakeholders. Emphasis was placed on

promoting cooperation with financial institutions and the private sector, which is at the forefront of science, technology and innovation. While leveraging the capital and expertise of the private sector to protect and restore the environment, UN Environment cooperates directly with industries and enterprises to reduce adverse environmental impacts

- This forum should allow us to discuss how to apply an integrated approach in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, breaking down silos for delivery, building understanding, capacity and skills for changing the “business as usual” model as well as developing creative strategic partnerships across stakeholders.
- The UN Environment Assembly advocates a healthy environment as the basis for long-term prosperity and takes integrated approaches to sustainable development which demonstrate that improving the environment brings social and economic benefits, including contribution to the eradication of poverty and creating opportunities for sustainable development and growth. A healthy environment is a condition for prosperity.
- With this in mind and considering that in 2012, 56 million people died worldwide and of those, nine million died from pollution related deaths, Member States have decided to have Pollution as the central theme of the third session of the UN Environment Assembly. Pollution is the single global problem that can be managed and eliminated in our lifetime.
- The United Nations Environment Assembly will continue contributing to this important platform sharing experiences regarding the effective integration of the environmental dimension in implementing, monitoring and reporting on the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.