

## Comments by Norway on the draft Ministerial declaration

Norway welcomes the new draft and appreciate the efforts of the President, and the high level of interaction from a broad range of member states. The draft is a good start, but it is clear that we need the time available to us to agree on an outcome that balances member states' interests and is at the same time fresh and innovative.

Norway remains of the view that the outcome needs to be short and succinct. For it to be fresh, innovative and understandable for people outside of the UN system and governments, we should orient it towards the society at large and that society is - as we all know - a social media society. Perhaps this can be done through shorter paragraphs and sentences, which can be the source of appropriate sound bites (and tweets). This means we as Member States would need to forego trying to capture too much in each paragraph, and rather identifying overarching ideas which can serve as bricks for member states to tailor to their domestic audiences in accordance with their concerns and priorities. This is a huge ask for us as Member States, but we have agreed to try something new for UNEA-3. We hope, with joint efforts, to arrive at a less cumbersome declaration. Norway is at any rate wary of spending too much space on describing particular problems and challenges, as well as the full array of policy measures which could and should be enacted to tackle pollution. This would enable a much more positive, action-oriented outcome, the goal which we have set ourselves in this process.

In this respect we are concerned about including text on issues which are under consideration. We should avoid prejudicing the outcomes on actions we are considering whether in resolutions or more generally or the idea of a "Global Coalition for a Pollution-Free Planet". There is a need to establish a common understanding as to what such a Global Coalition would entail. In the interim on this issue, and others there should be placeholders or square brackets around relevant text.

Finally, we should not lose sight of the fact that Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals represent the vision which the Member States of the United Nations have committed themselves to fulfilling. All our efforts 'towards a pollution-free world' should be clearly linked to this overarching common vision. We must be careful of language which might seem to create parallel or separate visions from this.

We have some textual proposals as follows, but we welcome many other proposals to the declaration short and crisp:

Para 1:

We, the world's ministers of environment, gathered for the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to discuss a path towards a pollution-free planet. We welcome the progress efforts being made that has been achieved by the international community, through national governments and the private sector, international organizations, civil society and individuals, to reduce pollution. We need to drastically accelerate our efforts if we want to secure a pollution-free planet for our ecosystems and our peoples. We commit

**Comment [A1]:** We have committed ourselves to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, which contain various sub-goals relating to pollution. Achieving these should be our focus, not aspirations beyond this, however admirable.

to working with all stakeholders to rapidly explore and implement every possible solution to beat pollution in all areas, namely, air, land and soil, freshwater and oceans.

Para 4:

This Assembly recognizes that everyone on this planet is entitled to live in a clean environment, with safe access to clean water, air and soil. ~~These are the most precious of natural resources.~~ **A healthy environment is a prerequisite for sustainable development.** Any threat to them is a threat to our health, our society, our economy, our ecosystems, our security and our very survival. ~~Pollution is not new, but with the global population expected to reach 10 billion people by 2050 – accompanied with a global increase in demand for resources, these self-imposed threats have never been greater.~~

**Comment [A2]:** Naturally we agree with the sentiment, but it seems odd to consider "clean water, air and soil" natural resources.

**Comment [A3]:** Inspired by Agenda 2030 and in particular: "People: We are determined to end poverty and hunger, in all their forms and dimensions, and to ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment."

Para 12:

~~We recognize that moving towards a pollution-free planet is a long term enterprise.~~ We commit ourselves to undertake and scale-up actions agreed in this Assembly and request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to engage interested stakeholders in establishing a common platform for action on pollution for our consideration at the next session of the Assembly. **We also call for a global coalition for a pollution-free planet fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals to inspire action and promote collaboration amongst existing frameworks.**

**Comment [A4]:** Again, the international community has already committed ourselves to Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. This outcome should first and foremost speak to that vision and not refer to a new one, however desirable.

**Comment [A5]:** We support the gist of this, but see the comment above about not prejudicing other discussions.