

Comments by the European Union and its Member States

On the note by the Secretariat "Contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: Responses to the questions raised by the President of the Economic and Social Council" (9 March 2018)

- EU and its MS would like to thank UNEP for the draft contribution. Overall the report contains **useful elements** and will be a valuable contribution to the HLPF.
- However, we think there is still some work to be done. In terms of presentation, EU and its MS find the **structure** to be somewhat confusing. For example the placement of the SDG boxes is not clear whether they refer to the text before or after. Also the content of the SDG boxes is not coherent. It would be better if all the boxes would include concrete examples of UNEP's contributions for achieving the said SDG.
- In terms of **content** of the document, overall the EU and its MS would like to see much more concrete examples of what is the added value of UNEP and UNEA to address these problems. Referencing UNEA declaration and resolutions is fine, but the general description part could be shortened and UNEA declaration and resolutions further summarized. Moreover, references should not be limited to the last UNEA resolutions but include relevant previous UNEAs resolutions as well. There is a need to go a step further to make this contribution more concrete. There are some examples included, but a more coherent way of presenting them is needed. Also a description on what tools, guidelines and partners there are available to help member states to implement the UNEA declaration and resolutions quoted would be very helpful.
- **Section (c) on valuable lessons learned** focuses almost exclusively on cities. Although urban environment and building sector are very relevant elements in the resilience debate, it is not the only dimension. We would suggest including wider resource efficiency and sustainable natural resources management in this context.
- **Section (d) on emerging issues** is based on the issues identified in the Frontiers 2017 report. Although they are all important issues, we question whether these issues are actually the most important in the context of this contribution. They rather appear quite random or arbitrary, and lack the necessary link to UNEP input or guidance for implementation. We wonder if there could be a reflection on issues that are better linked to the SDGs under review. It would be good if for pertinent issues like links migration land degradation, the relevant UNCCD decision could be referred to.
- With regards to **section (e) on areas for political guidance by the HLPF**, we welcome that these messages are broad in nature, but we would find it logic that there is a link to the recommendations provided later. We would question the inclusion of decline in ecotourism in point 4 as a major economic and social repercussion of environmental degradation and pollution over for example food security or access to safe and affordable drinking water.
- **Policy recommendations** included in **section (f)** result largely from UNEA 3 and are therefore somewhat pollution centric. Relevant recommendations from previous UNEA sessions could be considered. In any case we would suggest altering their order and not start with data and indicators. A more natural order would be to start with more general declaratory ones 4 and 5 then move to the policy ones 6-10 and 3 and finalise with the monitoring ones 1 and 2.

- EU and its MS seek clarity on the **timing** of this process, and underline the importance of respecting the ECOSOC deadline of 28 April. In some UNEP documentation such as the joint bureau 27 February memo in is mentioned that a final draft will be considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at their 142nd meeting scheduled for April/May 2018. According to the latest timetable for the CPR meetings, we understand that the CPR will review the draft contribution document during the subcommittee meetings on 15 March 10 April and 24 April (final consideration). The document will be also discussed in the Joint UNEA/CPR Bureaus retreat on 22-23 March.

Questions:

- We noted that the EMG's synthesis report on "UN system wide collaboration on the environment" last year identified a number of areas for cross-sector collaboration and nexus opportunities for implementation of integrated 2030 Agenda. We would be interested in learning how these have been taken into account in preparation of different organization's (incl. UNEP's own) inputs for the 2018 HLPF?
 - In view of ensuring maximum use of this UNEA input to the HLPF, we would also be interested to learn how, in UNEP's view, how well the UNEA's 2017 contributions have been reflected in the HLPF synthesis report as well as in the declaration of the 2017 HLPF? If not sufficiently, what were the reasons behind and what could be done differently this year? How UNEP has been involved so far in the preparation of the SDG reports for 2018 HLPF?
 - We understood that UNEP ED will be in New York next week, and hope that this would also be used as an opportunity to raise the issue of the oral presentation of the UNEA President during the HLPF. We would be interested in being kept informed about the ongoing outreach on this issue.
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