



RECOMMENDATION BY THE CENTRE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH ON THE THEME OF THE 2019 ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY.

Introduction

We thank the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives for creating space for Major Groups to submit and make recommendation on the theme of the 2019 Environment Assembly. The previous United Nations Environmental Assemblies have been an opportunity for global leaders to put burning environmental issues on the agenda and to deliberate on future action that saves the planet. Looking back on the theme of the past UNEA, they have been forward looking.

The First UNEA with the theme “Sustainable Development Goals and the Post-2015 Development Agenda, including Sustainable Consumption and Production” resulted in 17 resolutions and 2 decisions. The second UNEA with the theme “Delivering on the Environmental Dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” was broad enough to tackle several facets of environmental issue and resulted in the adoption of 25 resolutions with 2/8 touching on Sustainable Consumption and Production and 2/9 on prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste Also, UNEA- 3 adopted a broad theme “Towards a pollution-free planet”, resulting in the successful negotiation of several resolutions and decision on the Environment including land, air and water.

Interlinkages among the 3 Theme Proposed for UNEA-4 Calls for an Integrated Approach

The interlinkages among environmental problems demand for interlinked/nexus solutions. Putting environmental problems in a silo or finding solutions to aspects of environmental problem could create or add to existing problems. A consideration of the themes proposed for the 2019 Assembly: Sustainable Consumption and Production; Food and Nature/Biodiversity and Innovation for the Environment shows that though each theme is a burning environmental issue in real terms demanding immediate action, they have interlinkages. For instance millions of people around the world are estimated to be undernourished despite the fact that food production round the world is estimated to be enough the feed everyone going by population and food production statistics necessitating the call for innovative food system which integrates sustainable food production; processing, distribution and consumption in order to enhance environmental, economic, and social and nutritional health.

It is interesting to note that this is not an issue of which is the bigger environmental issue that is broad enough to deal with the other. Dealing solely with sustainable consumption and production will only look at one aspect of the food security problem while looking at the second theme will also ignore aspects of the problem of SCP. Also, the work of the Integrative Strategies Forum and the Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity has emphasized the fact ‘that the main causes of biodiversity loss (habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, invasive species, overexploitation, pollution and, increasingly, climate change) are ultimately products of unsustainable production and consumption patterns, which need to be understood and addressed in relation to that system’ⁱ.

Also, the key role of innovations in dealing with environmental problems, implementing the SDGs, the AU’s Agenda 2063 and other regional developmental goal in order to achieve an enduring structural transformation of economies has become prominentⁱⁱ. Promoting innovations has been identified as needed for systemic transformation that could help reverse negative trends and solve complex environmental problems. Innovations can significantly advance sustainable development and improve the well-being of our societies.

While it is imperative to identify and address the many facets of the problem posed by unsustainable food consumption and production hindering the vision of food security and sustainable food systems and all other interactive factors contributing and exacerbating unsustainable pattern of development and their diverse social, gender and human rights impact, It is necessary to identify the key role of innovation This call for policy, adequate standards, commitments, framework and action which explores the linkages among the theme proposed and other burning cross cutting environmental issues.

Addressing the proposed theme 1 and 2 separately at UNEA-4 will again compartmentalize the problem undermining the global reality of its interlinkagesⁱⁱⁱ. Furthermore, the third theme on innovation cuts across most aspects of the environment and particularly to the first 2 theme proposed for UNEA-4. Exploring *integrated innovative solution* driven by a theme that calls for exploring a multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary approach will deal with the complexity of environmental problems that confronts mankind globally.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE THEME OF UNEA-4

The Centre for Human Rights and Climate Change Research recommends that the Theme for UNEA 4 should be able to build on the interlinkages among sustainable consumption and food security; sustainable production and Biodiversity in developing innovative solutions that leave no one behind.

The Following Recommendations on the Theme for UNEA-4 are put before you for consideration:

-Promoting Environmental Innovations that Leaves No One Behind

-A Nexus Approach to Food Security, Sustainable Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation in the Context of Responsible Consumption and Production

-An Integrated and Innovative Approach to Environmental Solutions: A Focus on Sustainable Production and Consumption, Sustainable Food Systems and Biodiversity.

The theme proposed above meets the selection criteria for possible themes for the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly put forward by the secretariat including in the sense each theme provide a targeted yet sufficiently interdisciplinary environmental policy focus that engages the economic and social spheres and has a significant scope for progress at global, regional and local levels and ensures consistency between the themes of earlier Sessions of the Environment Assembly, to promote synergy and avoid duplication of work.

ⁱ Integrative Strategies Forum and the Central and East European Working Group for the Enhancement of Biodiversity (CEEWEB), Conserving Biodiversity Through Sustainable Production and Consumption, Background document for the pre-conference organized by ECO Forum, 9 October 2007, Belgrade

ⁱⁱ Kasirim Nwuke, innovations, technologies and management of Africa's natural resource, 10th Session of the ECA Committee on Sustainable Development

ⁱⁱⁱ Garima Sinha, Linkages Between Food Consumption Patterns, Food Security And Sustainable Food Systems, Dayalbagh Educational Institute. 2014