



MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARY

Level 14, Eric Williams Financial Building, Independence Square, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, WI
Tel: 612 3000 ext. 2016/1329 Fax: 623 8123

PD(EPPD): 14/1/55

September 3, 2018

Siim Kiisler
President of the UN Environment Assembly
UN Environment
United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
PO Box 30552, 00100
Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Sir,

**Re: Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2019 UN
Environment Assembly**

Reference is to your correspondence dated August 8, 2018 on the subject at caption.

The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago acknowledges the efforts of the United Nations Environment Assembly to contribute to the effective implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the development of the Ministerial Declaration "Innovative Solutions for Environmental challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production".

To this end, please find attached comments on the draft Ministerial Declaration for consideration.

Sincerely,


/f/Permanent Secretary

Comments on Draft Outline for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2019 United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

Comments on Main Priority 1

- i. The heavy emphasis on the use of technology seems to negate the fact that there is a digital divide, and the most vulnerable in society are usually the ones with the lowest levels of access and are thus most disadvantaged. More emphasis should be placed on bridging this gap to ensure a wider scope of achievement of the priorities.
- ii. There is little mention made of digital illiteracy and this should also be addressed particularly as it relates to the use of citizen science as this too will directly impact the level of success of the priorities.
- iii. To encourage transparency and accountability there must be a universal level of understanding of environmental data by the citizens in the countries. There will always be a need for ongoing public awareness and training camps to allow for practical knowledge transfer (in and off the field), to all sectors of society. Citizens must be encouraged to view environmental matters as a fundamental part of their national duty and therefore treat with it as such.
- iv. It should be made a national priority to publicise the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO) reports and make linkages to their own respective national environmental reports.
- v. Priority should be placed on providing wireless coverage and internet access on a nationwide basis as a means to creating the enabling environment for citizen science.
- vi. The development of the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) for biodiversity and waste should be a national priority, allowing citizens to access information on the generation of waste by type, volume/mass and sector as well as available recycling/reuse options.

Comments on Main Priority 2

- i. Ensure that some form of internationally recognised standards and certification are developed for sustainable products and this be a mandatory element for products to prevent greenwashing.
- ii. Behavioural changes and cultural shifts will not happen overnight but will require the public and private sectors to not only commit to these changes, but to constantly advertise, enforce and practice sustainable consumption and purchasing patterns in all areas of every-day living.
- iii. A clear and concise explanation of “decoupling of resource use” should be included.
- iv. Encourage investment in the necessary infrastructure for the establishment of recovery and recycling facilities.
- v. Encourage financing institutions to further develop funding instruments and mechanisms for LDCs and other developing states for the establishment of sustainable and efficient resource management systems.

- vi. Encourage the development of national policies which would treat soils as a semi-renewable resource, particularly for SIDS.
- vii. Encourage the development of a system of penalties and incentives to guide the manufacturing sector toward sustainable production.
- viii. There is no mention of climate change and addressing climate change, which sustainable consumption and production will indelibly play a large part in. Therefore, this needs to be included and the Paris Agreement goals perhaps also mentioned. There is mention of decarbonisation but this could be married with the climate change/ Paris Agreement expansion.

Comments on Main Priority 3

- i. Include media practitioners as fundamental stakeholders in the process to ensure they can not only help disseminate information, but they also understand the messages being transmitted and its importance. They would also be able to translate the information into a format that is palatable to the wider public.
- ii. Ensure that the framework to encourage creativity and the development of technology in the society is fully functional (idea to creation). This will include the development of new and or the improvement of existing Intellectual Property (IP) rights for 'green' technology development and sustainable business promotion.
- iii. Encourage the development of public awareness initiatives for consumer guidance towards more sustainably manufactured products.
- iv. Promote the model of co-management (i.e. Government and NGO/CBO groups) of biological resources in rural communities with the aim of developing sustainable livelihoods.
- v. Encourage the private sector in participation in conservation initiatives through incentives.

Other Comments

- i. The vision and priorities of the draft ministerial outcome are aligned with several other international agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals and they should be referenced within (for example Goal 9).