

UNEA Monitor

UNEA Monitor is a daily newsletter powered by Major Groups during the UN Environment Assembly. The newsletter tracks the most important negotiations and events and delivers the daily news through the lens of civil society.

Civil Society Convened at UNEA-4:

18th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders' Forum Day Two Reflections

Speakers on Friday, March 8, the second and last day of the 18th Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, highlighted issues of importance including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets maturing in 2020; a potential mismatch between the platforms for local communities and indigenous peoples intended by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties held in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland; climate justice and the dependence of indigenous peoples on their natural environment; and a perceived shift in priority from achieving the Sustainable Development Goals for human rights to stronger investment in stakeholder interests. In addition, the speakers emphasized that liability and compensation issues should be championed by Major Groups, and that awareness about the gender dimension of ecological impacts must be increased. Questions were raised about the effects of corruption, and Africa's progress in creating green jobs.

One highlight of the day was an open dialogue with the Acting Executive Director of UN Environment Ms. Joyce Msuya, who welcomed the Major Groups and Stakeholders with the observation that the UN will not achieve its mandate unless it works with Major Groups. Issues raised with Ms. Msuya by delegates included the lack of reference to indigenous groups in the current draft ministerial declaration of UNEA-4; the low level of involvement of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs); violent acts against environmentalists; chemical damage to communities; and subsidies obstructing sustainability.

The afternoon's breakout sessions included five themes and resulted in the following:

- 1) Environmental challenges that directly relate to poverty and natural resource management: huge disparities remain between wealth, resource use, power and influence.
- 2) Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency: greater consideration of social and environmental impacts is desirable when producing and consuming chemicals and regulating use.
- 3) Innovative sustainable business development: governments should consider setting up frameworks for both technological and social innovations.
- 4) Progress in the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement and SDGs: a supportive environment for implementation is created through sharing, access, transparency, synergy between countries, strengthened regulations, and justice.
- 5) Innovative financing solutions: innovations are needed with regard to investments, taxes, subsidies and other feasible finance mechanisms.



Acting Executive Director of UN Environment Ms. Joyce Msuya congratulates for the first issue of UNEA Monitor.

Science and Technology in the Forefront of UNEA-4

A Comment of the Co-Chairs of the Major Group Science and Technology

The theme of the 4th UN Environment Assembly, Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production, highlights the importance of science and technology in the work of UN Environment. Science propels innovation, while the negative impacts of unsustainable production and consumption can only be effectively mitigated or reversed by decisive science-based leadership and policy making.

In current discussion at UNEA, there is a strong focus on technological innovation and business opportunities. This might come at the risk of neglecting the role of independent science in testing and proving environmentally clean innovative technology. The primary goal of the Major Group Science and Technology is to apply science and technology to the benefit of human health and the environment. For instance, the group supports a binding international treaty, informed by the best available scientific research, on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

New approaches to transforming consumption and production patterns are needed that embrace cultural, economic, and political shifts towards human and ecological wellbeing. These approaches would involve new infrastructure designs and deep reforms in governance arrangements, financial institutions, lifestyles, social and economic relations, and business models.

Further, knowledge produced by both natural and social sciences is necessary to identify, assess and monitor new technologies for their environmental and social impacts, along the

whole life cycle/value chain in a holistic and integrated way while applying the precautionary principle.

The Major Group emphasizes the value of scientific exchange and rapid technology transfer from the global North to South, the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge, and South-South mobility of scientists and engineers, all based on request-driven demands from the South.

In today's interconnected world, citizen science has emerged to increase scale and resolution and to facilitate community-based scientific solutions, by emphasizing collaborative intelligence and co-creation across cultures and worldviews while integrating local, traditional and indigenous knowledge.

While the engagement of the Major Group with the Science-Policy-Business forum has remained limited, the group continues its proactive engagement with the UNEP Science Division in the Global Environmental Outlook. The Group also looks forward to working with the Chief Scientist of UN Environment, and supporting the joint consultative process under the draft resolution on strengthening the international science-policy interface on chemicals and waste.

UNEA 4 must ensure the full engagement of the global scientific community, including scientists from the developing world and citizen scientists - so that no scientist is left behind.

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