

UNEP Secretariat

Honorable Representatives and Officials

re: Draft contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Dear Sir or Madam,

Thank you for providing us with the opportunity to respond to the Draft Contribution for HLPF 2020. While the statement and contribution are quite strong already I believe there are quite a number of things that could be done to further strengthen it and to provide the level of ambition that is needed to truly transition to a sustainable world, to protect and restore the natural environment, and to achieve the sustainable development goals or SDGs.

I have participated actively in the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and now the HLPF, Rio+5, WSSD, Rio+20, ESD, SCP, FfD, UNFCCC, and other sustainable development processes at the local, national and global level for the past twenty-some years representing various civil society organizations but principally the Global Ecovillage Network and the Commons Cluster of the NGO Major Group. Here are my suggestions based on what I have learned and contributed during that time.

Thank you,

Rob Wheeler

Main UN Representative

Global Ecovillage Network

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Primary Recommendations

Add to Paragraph a) Other gaps and enabling conditions that must be rectified include the failure of many if not most UN Member States to fulfill their commitments to develop local and national action plans on Education for Sustainable Development and on Sustainable Consumption and Production. It is essential that such plans be developed and implemented in all countries and that they be integrated with both plans and efforts to achieve all of the SDGs in a fully inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing manner.

At the end of the paragraph on Nature Based Solutions add: In addition nature based solutions can boost and restore soil health and agricultural productivity, re-establish large and small scale natural water cycles, and provide one of the best and really essential means for addressing climate change and global warming.

At the end of the paragraph on SCP add: Indeed every country again needs to make a serious commitment to developing and then implementing local and national action plans on Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Add to the end of the paragraph on Sustainable Finance and Business Practices: However, much more needs to be done to finance initiatives both to protect and restore the natural environment and to transition to regenerative agriculture. The least amount of financial resources has been devoted to environmental initiatives and to agricultural development than to any other sector of the economy and society.

At the end of paragraph b) on Addressing the lack of environmental data add: It should be recognized that civil society can play an important, even

essential, role in gathering environmental data and information and should thus be supported in doing so.

On paragraph c) in regards to environmental law add at the beginning: the UN General Assembly adopted UN Resolution A/72/L.51 on 10 May 2018 in order to focus on the need to significantly strengthen national and international environmental legislation and law. An on-going process has been developed and recommendations made by an Open Ended Working Group in this regards with proposals and resolutions to be taken up at UNEA5 in order to further support the strengthening of such legislation and law. It is essential that governments, UN agencies, civil society and all other stakeholder groups support this initiative and act to ensure the most ambitious outcome from this process possible.

Under the section on the illegal trade in wildlife at the end of the paragraph on Strengthening environment rule of law please add a sentence on illegal logging which could say something like: Illegal logging and forest fires are two of the primary causes of global warming and climate change. A substantial effort is needed to fully address and weaken the impacts coming from these activities and unfortunate occurrences. Similarly, 90% of the waste water goes back into the watershed untreated in the developing world while more than 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation. Legislation and global support is thus needed to address these problems; and financing needs to be provided to invest in biological waste treatment and ensure that all water flowing back into watersheds is safe, clean and drinkable.

Towards the end of the document following the sentence on the UN Decade on Sustainable Development add something like: A Draft Strategy is being developed for the UN Decade which is most comprehensive and ambitious in nature. In order to ensure that ecosystem restoration and protection can play the essential role that it can provide in addressing multiple global challenges and achieving the SDGs, it is essential that the UN Member States and our global institutions do everything possible to fully implement this strategy and to integrate all efforts to do so with all

other sustainable development initiatives and strategies so that they are truly mutually reinforcing.