



## **Kenya Ministerial Declaration**

### **Key Messages for UNEA 5**

**Climate Change, loss of Biodiversity, Combating Pollution and Sustainable Management of Chemicals and Waste**

#### **Introduction**

In preparation of UNEA 5 themed, “**Strengthening action for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals**”, it is importance to take note that there are Immense benefits that nature contributes to all dimensions of sustainable development, among them combating climate change and its impacts, halting the loss of biological diversity, reducing pollution and contributing to ending poverty in all its forms with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **Key Messages**

##### **1. Limits to adapt will only be reached at 1.5°C and 2°C degrees for most species and sectors**

According to IPCC 1.5°C report released in October 2018, impacts on natural and human systems from global warming have already been observed. Most land and ocean ecosystems and some of the services they provide have already changed due to global warming. A wide range of adaptation options is available to reduce the risks to natural and managed ecosystems. Since adaptation is expected to be more challenging for ecosystems, food and health systems at 2°C of global warming than for 1.5°C, only stringent timely mitigation will reduce the climate crisis. Nature based solutions must be prioritised if the planet is going to survive. Strong integration of climate change adaptation with development planning process at all levels as appropriate is key.

##### **2. We must ensure integrity of all ecosystem including oceans to protect biodiversity**

Populations are at disproportionately higher risk of adverse consequences of global warming of 1.5°C and beyond include disadvantaged and vulnerable populations indigenous peoples, and local communities' dependent on agricultural or coastal livelihoods.

Clear goals and targets must be set and monitored, ensuring adequate funds are allocated for ecosystems restoration, forge and strengthen partnerships among scientists, policy makers and citizens; revise existing legal frameworks to ensure that ecological risks and threats to human health (such as zoonotic viruses) are mapped and risk minimised including restoring and protecting degraded ecosystems to safeguard their integrity.

### **3. Loss of biodiversity impact ecosystems as much as climate change, pollution and other environmental stressors**

Population growth, agricultural intensification, urbanization and industrial production are creating competition and unsustainable utilization of natural capital, contributing to rapid depletion and environmental degradation further putting pressure on natural resources, including land, water and other environmental components. To transition towards resilient and sustainable development, parties must embrace sustainable management of finite natural resources; Land and water-based ecosystems and the rich biodiversity that support provision of food, clean water and air, and raw materials that fuel economic growth. Further, strengthen actions for nature base recovery that promote restoration, conservation and sustainable utilization of biodiversity using nature-based solutions.

### **4. Environment Assembly Contribution to reduction and halt of the Loss of Biodiversity**

Habitat destruction and biodiversity loss are mainly caused by climate change, deforestation, overexploitation, invasive species and pollution among other causes. Efforts must be made to review and develop policies and strategies that seek to promote nature proofing of all social economic development interventions in order to foster biodiversity safeguards in pursuance of sustainable development and investment. Further, recognize other Intergovernmental processes such as post-2020 biodiversity framework.

Enhancement of the means of implementation of UNEA 5 and previous resolutions in the context of interdependent mix of financial resources, technology development and transfer, capacity-building, inclusive and equitable globalization and trade including regional integration. Greater effort must be

made to monitor and follow-up Implementation of resolutions that seeks to address innovations around biodiversity loss, land degradation and rangelands including pastoralism. Recognize status of other Intergovernmental processes such as climate change, post-2020 biodiversity framework

## **5. Post Pandemic Recovery through Ecological Restoration**

There is an emerging trend of increased outbreaks of zoonotic diseases like SARS, Ebola, avian influenza, swine influenza and currently the Corona virus pandemic. The interconnectedness of these outbreaks and the degradation of the ecosystem is demonstrated by the fact that 60% of infectious diseases are zoonotic, meaning that they are spread from animals to humans (Doody A. 2020).

Therefore, efforts to rebuild resilience post COVID 19 pandemic will need to embrace 'Green Recovery', a phenomenon that promotes biodiversity restoration, conservation and sustainable utilization including building back safer and use of local knowledge. This ensures increased biomass that is key in accelerating carbon sequestration and hence emission reduction. Green recovery embraces restoration of environmental integrity, and can stimulate green opportunities in the long-run. This could be through investments in renewable energy, improvements in industrial production, waste management or infrastructure.

However, support provided to developing countries in addressing environmental challenges should not be compromised in favour of any potential support aimed at recovery of COVID-19.

## **6. Waste Quantities and Complexity Is Increasing**

With increasing population and urbanization, the amounts of waste per unit area in urban areas have increased proportionately, calling for expanded investment in infrastructure and technologies. The COVID-19 challenge has brought a challenge of presence of bio-hazardous waste in domestic waste, whose lack of specialized handling poses a risk of increased infections. Baseline studies for existing waste streams and practices, considering the COVID-19 waste, should be done and results used to put in place appropriate investments in waste management.

## **7. Creating Green Jobs from Waste Management and Reorienting Policies to Embrace Circular Economy**

Many developing countries operate a linear system of waste management involving waste generation, collection and disposal. Countries should migrate to circular economy approach where maximum value is extracted from waste to promote creation of green jobs and enhanced livelihoods. Public participation in waste segregation at source should be enhanced to reduce waste contamination and operational costs for waste service providers. The proposed migration requires appropriate policy and legal guidance which should be reviewed and reoriented to embrace circular economy models.

## **8. Empowering Communities and Waste Service Providers**

Pollution control and waste management requires active participation of all players including waste generators and service providers. Public awareness and education as well as capacity building could empower all players to become active partners in these initiatives. Effective management of biomedical and health-care waste requires appropriate identification, collection, separation, storage, transportation, treatment and disposal, as well as important associated aspects including disinfection, personnel protection and training.

Interventions geared towards sharing knowledge and specific local action especially arising from COVID-19 challenge should be prioritized. UNEA could assist in documenting and showcasing existing best practices through case study publications, side events and documentaries. Relevant agencies must support the Ministries of Health globally in implementing the UN Basel Convention's Technical "Guidelines on the Environmentally Sound Management of Biomedical and Healthcare Wastes", and additional information on sound medical waste management including appropriate locally developed guidelines and protocols.

## **9. Efforts to Address Chemicals and Waste Management**

Existence of weak frameworks for integration of chemicals management considerations into the sectoral policies, national development planning and

decision making processes; details effective coordination and management of chemicals in relation to social economic and natural activities. Efforts must be made to mainstream chemicals management issues into development plans and strategies, national budget and national social debates.

Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and relevant UNEA resolutions while ensuring local levels integrated risk assessment are conducted to guarantee informed decision-making on social, health and environmental protection, linkages and synergies.

## **Environment Assembly Can Make Significant Contribution to Strengthening Action for Nature to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals**

1. UNEA can consolidate environmental actions within the context of sustainable development and give motivation to more effective implementation. This approach will motivate member states and stakeholders into sharing and implementing successful approaches and solutions, while avoiding duplication and overlaps with the mandates of other fora.
2. UNEA has the potential to demonstrate how a healthy environment underpins a thriving economy and society, and how actions to enhance them are important part of the solutions to different challenges.
3. UNEA-5 can provide, under such theme, a platform to capture the potential of transformative actions for nature to bring together contributions from different fora, in particular from relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
4. Implementation of resolutions that will be adopted at UNEA-5 will contribute to practical strengthening actions for nature to achieve SDGs.

### **Reference**

Doody, A. (2020) Safeguarding biodiversity is essential to prevent the next COVID-19. <https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/safeguarding-biodiversity-is-essential-to-prevent-the-next-covid-19/>