

MALAWI CONTRIBUTION TO MINISTERIAL DECLARATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY (UNEA) AT ITS FIFTH SESSION.

Theme: Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the sustainable Development Goals”

1. We, the world’s ministers for the environment, having gathered at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in (venue/City), together with the representatives of international organizations and other stakeholders, recall the outcomes of the previous sessions of the Environment Assembly and are dedicated to addressing environmental challenges through strengthening actions for nature to achieve the sustainable Development Goals and to moving towards sustainable and resilient societies through sustainable consumption and production patterns.
2. We reaffirm that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production , and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development, and we recognize that nature based approaches and solutions are necessary to move our world closer to the vision set out in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled, “The future we want”, and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. We are, however, deeply concerned about the findings of relevant global environmental assessments which indicate that, despite the availability of solutions to our common environmental challenges, our planet is increasingly polluted, affected by the adverse effects of climate change, quickly losing its biodiversity, and experiencing widespread environmental degradation.
4. Therefore, we will undertake measures to:

Climate change

- engage in mobilization and provision of means of implementation (finance, technology, capacity building) for enhancing adaptation efforts and building resilience of the vulnerable households, communities and ecosystems;
- promote investments in watershed and ecosystems restoration and management;
- promote investments in renewable, energy efficient and cleaner technologies;
- provide safeguards and incentives to those communities practicing avoided deforestation, considering that forests act as a carbon sink but also provide livelihoods to humans and animal life;
- promote regional integration and collaboration of efforts by member states in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of programmes activities;
- make efforts to expand the scope of support to cover as many of the 2030 SDGs as possible, and support member states in the design and programming of activities;

Chemical Management

- effectively implement the comprehensive and integrated sustainable development Goals as they relate to chemicals and wastes;
- encourage the global community to move beyond minimizing the adverse effects of toxic chemicals and stockpiles on human health and ecosystems;
- adopt the circular economy and a life-cycle approach by promoting sustainable consumption and production and a proactive framework for addressing related environmental and health issues, coupled with measures to advance a green economy and sustainable chemistry at all levels;

- promote the mainstreaming of chemicals and hazardous waste management into national public health, environment and social and economic policies and legislation;

Biodiversity

- conserve and enhance sustainable utilization of biodiversity in all ecosystems including agricultural and other managed ecosystems in order to support productivity and enhance community resilience to climate change;
- encourage the development and use, with adequate safety measures for the environment and human health, the modern biotechnology which has great potential for human well-being;
- encourage establishment of measures to prevent adverse impacts of biotechnology on biodiversity;
- mainstream biodiversity across all sectors of society with a focus on engaging those sectors that will be involved in implementing actions to address biodiversity loss;
- encourage sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources with the custodians of these resources and act as an incentive for conservation and sustainable use, but also contribute to livelihoods and economies of developing countries;
- Provide adequate financial support for conservation and research in genetic resources with known medicinal value

Mercury

- Fund rigorous research to find out the deep impacts of mercury and its synergy with community livelihood in Africa;
- Conduct qualitative and quantitative scientific research studies with the purpose of having more and accessible information on mercury;
- Provide resources to artisanal small-scale miners to embark on alternative green projects to support their livelihoods;
- Support the identification and remediation of mercury contaminated sites in the continent;
- Support the strengthening of institutional capacity on mercury management in Africa including the capacity to manage mercury waste;
- Support the procurement test kits for quick identification of mercury products that are not labeled

Waste Management

- consider funding waste management interventions that will help to benefit scavengers to be deterred from scavenging thereby reducing their exposure to hazardous waste whilst benefitting from the projects;
- increase and improve the capacity in infrastructure, public awareness, human and financial resources, among other factors as a way of improving management of the wastes whose amount and toxicity are increasing as a result of population growth, rapid urbanization, increasing industrialization, rising incomes and more sophisticated form of consumerism of waste, especially in the cities;
- prevent pollution of both surface water and ground water and contamination of the ecosystem by avoiding the uncontrolled burning of waste, indiscriminate disposal of waste, uncontrolled dumpsites, and mixing of hazardous with municipal wastes;
- uncontrolled dumpsites, in particular the mixing of hazardous and other wastes that poses a threat to public health and the environment;

- increase support on initiatives that aim at preventing or reducing pollution in addition to addressing effects of biodiversity loss and climate change considering that poor waste management can affect biodiversity and also contribute to climate change through GHG emissions;
- give an equal seriousness and replication of the measures on biodiversity, climate change and the rapid growing waste management challenges that developing countries are grappling with the purpose of attaining Goal 17 of the SDGs;

Protection of the Ozone Layer

- Strengthen cooperation and coordination between governments and private institutions and all relevant stakeholders to exchange knowledge and promote innovations of energy-efficient solutions and technologies that reduce the use of substances controlled by the Montreal Protocol in the development of the cold chains.
- Engage in taking action to prevent illegal production and consumption of controlled substances by implementing the Montreal Protocol obligations in a manner that is effective and encourage reporting of fully approved cases of illegal trade of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) and ODS-dependent equipment.
- Strengthen the capacity of enforcement officers with regard to their role in monitoring and control of trade in refrigerants and its dependent technologies.
- Establish sound management of seized or stocks of refrigerants and ensure adequate storage and disposal facilities.
- Strengthen the capacity of national standards officers on development of safety standards on flammable alternative refrigerants and promote certification of refrigeration technicians in view of safety and flammability issues of many low GWP refrigerants promoted by the Montreal Protocol
- Effectively implement policies that promote increased uptake of low GWP, high energy efficient Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning technologies.
- Enhance partnership with private sector and civil society to accelerate and scale up implementation of Montreal Protocol activities on the protection of the ozone layer.