

Call for Inputs to specified questions on the ministerial declaration of UNEA-5

Inputs from the Emirates Environmental Group, UAE

1. What would you, as government/organisation/stakeholder, welcome as the most important elements and/or key messages from the ministers in the declaration to address the theme in an impactful manner?

We are happy with the current elements that are included under the theme.

Our recommendations include the following:

It is important to continue to utilise the momentum built from UNEA-4 for a successful UNEA-5. This would also include addressing issues that did not reach fruition at UNEA-4.

Nature-based solutions are the right platform to bring together the climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development agendas under one overarching umbrella.

It is also important to note that UNEA-5 will be sandwiched between a number of important international events such as the quadrennial World Conservation Congress, the adoption of the post-2020 biodiversity framework through the Convention on Biological Diversity. It will be interesting to see how all these milestone environmental events affect decisions and resolutions.

We believe it is important for us to provide inputs on challenges most relevant to our own national circumstance so that solutions at UNEA-5 are concrete and demand-driven.

It is unfortunate that environmental issues from the Arab world are very rarely considered while setting international priorities or formulating policies. Every country in the region has established its Ministries of Environment and has taken a pledge to bring down its carbon footprint. It has also been proven that the region is at par with developing countries across the world when it comes to commitment towards environmental sustainability.

The main environmental challenges faced in our region are: water scarcity, food security, desertification, land degradation and energy security. EEG would be happy to participate in any inputs /dialogue required on statistics, policy, knowledge-sharing that UNEP would need to shed more light on these issues in the region. Thus, it is important to include this Arab perspective into UNEA-5.

According to UNCTAD, there are estimates that the world will need to close a \$2.5 trillion gap annually to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. In such a situation, the Arab world is a huge resource and must be part of the Strategy too.

Other elements that can be included are:

- **Shift towards circular economy**: This provides potential for innovation through the following: utilising regenerative resources, sustainable resources management, resource efficiency, sustainable marketing, waste management, product lifetime maximisation, design for sustainability etc. Thus, a holistic approach of the circular economy enables the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as the SDGs.
- **Green business development**: Green businesses are synonymous with being environmentally and socially responsible; caring for their workers; protecting the communities they operate in. This conscious methodology of working and culture promotes sustainability and innovation, while maintaining competitiveness.