

## **Agenda Item 2.2: Communication for the Fourth UN Environment Assembly A Draft Concept Note for Discussion**

The United Nations Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. It addresses the critical environmental challenges facing the world today. Here, representatives from more than 190 countries convene to outline cooperation and action for the protection and preservation of our global environment.

In recent years, this Assembly has become known as an accelerator for some of the world's most impactful environmental movements. Campaigns like #BeatPollution got their start here and the global push to turn the tide on single-use plastics owes its momentum to the multilateral cooperation forged at the Assembly.

### **Strategy**

At the fourth Assembly, delegates will convene around a cross-cutting and ambitious agenda intended to focus global attention, motivate political action and inspire innovative solutions to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

For all the progress inspired by the Global Goals one barrier impedes them all: The choices we make in our everyday lives continue to fuel consumption and production habits that are increasingly extending beyond the limits of our planet. The Assembly will call on the world to innovate. To *think beyond* prevailing patterns and *live within* sustainable limits in order to tackle environmental challenges and assure a prosperous future.

Building on the successful models of past Assemblies, UN Environment Programme communication will help meet these challenges through a public-facing, open-source, thematic *campaign*, complemented by compelling *content* for all stakeholders, and a *container* to capture and amplify stakeholder commitments, best practices, and stories. In the countdown to the Assembly we'll focus on an informative and emotive approach to communicating the environmental cost of key consumption and production models, deliver persuasive calls to action and reinforce them through inspiring, solutions-based storytelling. In doing so, our goal is to do more than just raise awareness, we hope to catalyze momentum for action by:

- *Establishing a sense of agency.* Through targeted data and personal calls to action we'll conscientize our global audience to both their ability and responsibility to make sustainable choices. Rather than reductive prescription, conscientization hopes to awaken and inform a spirit of critical self-examination, demanding stakeholders in diverse socioeconomic contexts to generate and apply their own solutions to their own paths towards sustainability
- *Delivering a message of urgency.* We'll highlight the best (and worst) of the world's production and consumption solutions and challenges to illustrate the urgent stakes and the innovation imperative that define the moment—and to underscore that there is both a pressing need and an unprecedented opportunity to act
- *Building a mentality of coherency.* Complex goals need coherent, systemic action by every constituent participant: individuals, communities, institutions; citizen sector, public sector, private sector. We'll highlight the unity of purpose and joined-up action required to drive innovation, scale solutions, and advance the behavioral and social norms underpinning consumption and therefore production

A basic objective of the Assembly's communication programme will be to excite and encourage all stakeholders to sustainable action commitments. Driving our messaging around environmental challenges and solutions will be the principle of integration. From an economic perspective, we'll be asking audiences to consider the true cost of our actions. From a social perspective, we may lean on a human sense of justice, both in terms of present day inequalities as well as in terms of the intergenerational logic of sustainable development. It is through a combination of fact- and value-based messaging that we have a strongest hope to get audiences to rethink their choices, to adopt innovative solutions, and to give serious consideration to lives and systems sustained within planetary means.

## **Tactics**

### *Communication for Advocacy*

The Communication Division will support policy advocacy efforts to build momentum for action and secure the agreements and pledges needed for the shift to innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production. The Division will work with the Regional Offices and other secretariat functions to help countries in raising awareness of related problems, innovations and solutions, including through propagating new science and highlighting success stories.

### *Powerful storytelling*

Creative storytelling will be critical to the success of the communication campaign. The Communication Division's strategy will include a steady flow of compelling stories that put a human face on the consumption and production challenge, and identify promising solutions and innovations, helping to fuel discussion, raise awareness and drive action on the ground. Through our channels we hope to highlight success stories of ecopreneurs, innovative policy measures and young people who are leading by example, whether through the way they live or a problem-solving business idea.

### *Social media engagement*

UN Environment Programme will use social media as a powerful tool to engage the public on the issues in focus at the Assembly. Ahead of and during the Assembly, the social media campaign will serve to educate, empower and inspire users to ask questions and take actions aimed at solving the critical environmental challenges we face. We will create compelling, issue-based visuals that bring strong engagement across channels and audiences. Infographics, animations and video content will address the depth of different issues, will provide positive paths forward and will answer the question: What's in it for me? At the Assembly, the social team will profile concrete examples of the power of innovative solutions at the Sustainable Innovation Expo, along with interactive opportunities for attendees to show how they are part of the sustainable living movement.

### *Building a powerful digital platform*

The UN Environment Assembly website will be a content platform and a curated container for all stakeholders, serving as a critical rallying point for aggregating the stories, actions and impacts of our campaign. The engagement strategy and ask will be formulated to increase outreach to citizens, government, private sector and other stakeholders on the Assembly's theme, allowing visitors to explore the dimensions of sustainable consumption and production, share their stories, download and share infographics, and learn about the Assembly, its history and aspirations.

### *Earned media outreach*

Our campaign will include a proactive approach to news and media. Working collaboratively across the house, the Communication Division will develop a calendar of earned media touch points designed to build awareness, create anticipation and ultimately secure coverage around key content opportunities. Our external narrative will focus on the urgency of the theme and position the Assembly as a critical moment for building global consensus. Dovetailing with our digital campaign activities, our earned media approach will seek to capitalize on "soft media" opportunities by connecting the Assembly agenda and theme to other high-profile environmental news. During the assembly itself, media attention will be built around key policy outcomes and further amplified by close collaboration with member states and regional assets.

The Assembly's communication strategy will ultimately deliver to a level matching the resources made available for the purpose.

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