



H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn
Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway
President of the UN Environment Assembly
Oslo, Norway

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Inputs to Questions on the Ministerial Declaration of UNEA-5

Excellency

We refer to your letter of 24 April 2020 in which you call on member states and other stakeholders to provide inputs for the ministerial declaration for the fifth UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5). We also like to thank you for sharing your thoughts and considerations with respect to the current global crisis.

First of all, Switzerland wants to stress that it considers it important to continue the practice of having a ministerial declaration at *all* UN Environment Assemblies in order to allow ministers to take the necessary high level strategic decisions on the most pressing issues of the global environment.

We support that the final outcome of the ministerial declaration is short, concise, political, and based on scientific evidence. In general, we call on taking into account the key environmental assessments in particular the 6th Global Environment Outlook, and thematic assessments like the Global Chemicals, Biodiversity and Resources Outlooks as a foundation of the declaration.

In particular, we see the following elements and key messages to be considered for the ministerial declaration on the theme *Strengthening Actions For Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*.

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Strengthening Actions for Nature on ...

- **... governance:** *Call on* UNEP to deliver on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, following in particular the UNEA-2 Resolution on the subject matter. To make use of and build upon existing products and processes, indicators and data, and the internationally-agreed environmental goals (<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/compilation-internationally-agreed-environmental-goals-and-objectives>). *Further request* strengthened action to reinforce the implementation of environmental rule of law and good governance, including by ensuring that sectoral laws take into account environmental obligations and good governance. *Call for ambition* in environmental negotiations including the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the international sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020, whose success will be crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.
- **... chemicals and waste:** *Highlight* the positive potential of sound chemicals and waste management throughout their life-cycle for nature and the SDGs. *Call to work for* an ambitious and robust, comprehensive and coherent, effective and efficient regime post-2020. Underline the need for a synergetic, coherent, and complementary regime and underline the importance of a dedicated science-policy interface to assess global policy options.
- **... mineral resources and sustainable infrastructure:** *Promote* integrated approaches to sustainable infrastructure and on good governance of mineral resources to meet development needs while ensuring the preservation and sustainable use of resources. The declaration has to *recognize* the significant challenges and contribution of responsible mining and sustainable infrastructure to the SDGs, for combating climate change issues, and the need to reduce environmental impacts. The declaration should *underline the need* for an intergovernmental process to identify further global policy action. It is key *to stress* the importance of developing and applying strong and effective legal and regulatory frameworks, policies and practices. The reports by UNEP presented at UNEA-5 on these topics need to be taken into account for the next steps.
- **... biodiversity:** *Call to keep* the political momentum in the negotiations for an ambitious and effective post-2020 global biodiversity framework that reflects the scale of the threat to biodiversity and provides a roadmap for the transformative actions required to realize the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, “Living in harmony with nature”.
- **... climate change:** *Call on* Parties to the Paris Agreement to continue to enhance their nationally determined contributions and long-term low greenhouse gas emission development strategies consistent with the recommendations of the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 °C. *Further send out a clear signal* of commitment to align financial flows with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.
- **... consumption and production patterns:** SDG12 is the goal that is considered the most underfinanced and vital for both developing and developed countries alike. The 10YFP is recognized as an important implementing mechanism for SDG12. Unfortunately, the shift towards sustainable consumption and production patterns has not (yet) materialized. The declaration shall *encourage all* stakeholders in preparing for an enhanced implementation framework and action for sustainable consumption and production patterns: The declaration shall *recognize* the importance of a next phase of the 10YFP as it is ending in 2022.
- **... aquatic ecosystems:** *Call on* developing an overarching global response to tackle long-term elimination of discharge of litter and (micro-)plastics to the oceans.

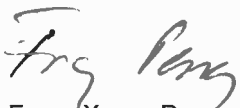
You further invite member states and stakeholders to share their views how to turn UNEA-5 into a success story. Switzerland stresses the following recommendations:

- We appreciate the efforts of the UNEA President to conduct an open, clear, and transparent process to elaborate a ministerial outcome. We would like to encourage the Presidency to share a roadmap for the preparation of the ministerial declaration with member states.
- With respect to the ministerial declaration and based on the experience of last two years, we would recommend to continue the successful practice that member states have the opportunity to provide substantive inputs while not having to enter into formal negotiations of the details of the text itself.
- Processes leading up to UNEA and the organization of the meeting are key factors for a successful Assembly. In this light, we encourage to call on member states to follow the guidance note on submitting resolutions as prepared by the Secretariat. In particular, the Annual Subcommittee (ASC) will be a milestone in the preparation process. It is the opportunity to discuss the Mid Term Strategy 2022-2025. To make fully use of the opportunity, meeting documents have to be made available by the secretariat at an early stage that member states can analyse them well ahead of the ASC. We also are of the opinion to improve on the negotiation structure during the OECP, for example to allow for only two clusters to meet in parallel to ease the organization for smaller delegations.
- We agree that the COVID-19 crisis has unprecedented impact on all aspects of public life. However, we hope that by the time of UNEA-5, the main decision on “building back better” towards a green and substantial recovery have already been taken. We therefore caution against making COVID-19 the focus of the ministerial outcome or even the UNEA. Fundamental challenges with respect to the environment, in particular those that are not strictly tied to the COVID crisis, will remain beyond the recovery and need to be addressed as well.
- Last but not least, UNEA-5 must call for ambition in the now postponed 2020 environmental negotiations whose success will be crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. These processes are namely the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the international sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

Switzerland is deeply committed to continue strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme as the central pillar of the international environmental governance. In that respect, adopting a ministerial declaration is key. We fully support Norway in the process towards that goal.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest considerations.

Federal Office for the Environment
Head of the International Affairs Division


Franz Xavier Perrez
Ambassador

Enclosures:

- Letter Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway (24 April 2020)

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