

## TURKEY'S INPUTS TO UNEA-5 MINISTERIAL DECLARATION – PART II

### What would you welcome as the most important elements/key messages from the ministerial declaration to address the theme in an impactful manner?

1. Global challenges require global responses. The global coronavirus pandemic showed us once again that we have to act together. And the nature reminded us itself again. Focus on nature and the recognition of its effects on human well-being has become a core element.

2. Covid-19 pandemic underlined the delicate balance in human-nature interaction and the importance of sound management of this interaction, as the pandemic demonstrated the concrete effect of environmental pollution on immunity levels of human beings. Therefore, it has become incumbent upon us to further underscore the necessity to address biodiversity loss and climate change with a view to preventing such pandemics. At this juncture, declaration should be used as a conduit for ensuring sustainability of environmental actions against such pandemics. International cooperation for preventing further degradation for ecosystem and biodiversity loss shall be encouraged. Positive effects of current lowered economic activity on nature shall encourage us to design environmentally friendly technologies in the recovery period. Therefore, new initiatives shall be developed to protect species, ecosystems, gene plasms and for their sustainable use.

2. As witnessed by the pollution of water resources, depletion of aquifers, and degradation of wetlands, the pressures on the planet's water resources are already significant. With growing human population, aspirations of increased economic growth, and climate change, these pressures are likely to increase for the foreseeable future, such as recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Water and specifically water cycle is explicitly linked to the most important ecosystem services; from providing safe and clean drinking water to regulating the flow of flood and drought events and creating opportunities for water-based recreation and cultural practices. In other words, management approaches based on the ecosystem services concept are now being proposed in a range of water contexts, including climate change water-based adaptation, river basin approach and Water Resources Management.

If our water-based ecosystems are to continue to provide the services that support human life and spiritual and material well-being to current and future generations, society must start taking seriously the values in their different dimensions of ecosystems, especially water resources. Increasing clarity around and the adoption of “**agreed principles**” or “**core elements**” is needed for the development of a “**sustainable shared responsibilities**” and to improve the delivery of “**achievements**”.

To date, ecosystem services-based approaches have acted to stimulate dialogue on how natural resources are valued and used; now it is important to make sure that this dialogue remains meaningful, critical and purpose-driven within the ecosystem-related approaches all of which address societal challenges and also contribute to sustainable development achievements, as well.

From this point of view, we have to focus on vital water issue as the most important ecosystem services. We have to adapt our national policies to minimum requirements for water reuse in order to develop sustainable new and non-conventional water resources that will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030

Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular SDG 6, to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, SDG 2 on water scarcity as it relates to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, also as well as a substantial increase in recycling of water and safe water reuse globally with a view to contribute to achieving United Nations Sustainable Development SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production.

3. Climate change, deforestation, land degradation, desertification and draughts have direct impact on the environment, as well as on food security, development, economic and social life. Bearing in mind SGD 15.3, it would be welcome to refer to land degradation neutrality goals in the declaration.

4. It will be important to touch upon the issues of protection of marine environment and marine litter. In this vein, measures to prevent pollution caused by abandoned fishing equipment shall be addressed.

### **How can the Environment Assembly make a significant contribution to Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals at a global scale?**

1. In the context of environmental, biodiversity and climate related policies, human focused approaches shall be adopted.

2. Sustainable development models that aim to prevent natural disasters must be supported. Future work should be conducted to increase preparedness against Covid-19 like health crisis as well as disasters with environmental impact.

3. Globalization of ecosystem based agricultural practices would be a significant contribution for strengthened actions for nature to achieve SDGs. In this regard, UNEA-5 could present an opportunity to initiate and support some concrete actions, namely;

- Funding for least developed and emerging economies should be increased.
- Cooperation among member states in agricultural plant breeding shall be improved to maintain ecological balance. In this vein, existing genetic breeding materials must be protected.
- Sustainability of farm plants, application of sound farming techniques and recycling of agricultural waste for production of bioenergy shall be encouraged.
- With a view to protect human health, environmental and natural balance, integrated agricultural pest control programmes shall be incentivized. Alternatives to chemical pest control measures, such as bio-cultural measures, biological control and techniques, use of durable breeds shall be supported.
- Ecosystem based agricultural policies building on innovative techniques shall be developed.
- Sustainability of support towards small-scale agricultural producers shall be ensured.

4. At this juncture, it is vital to integrate and disseminate work on Convention on Biodiversity, 2011-2020 Biodiversity Strategic Plan-Aichi Targets and 2050 vision. Development goals, indicators and tools should be aligned with biodiversity and ecosystem services and functions. For this purpose, UNEA-5 decisions should support UN Decade of Biodiversity with a view to achieve more sustainable and forward looking transformation. To contribute efforts towards restoration of biodiversity, regional and global management systems shall be urgently developed for establishing inventory and data systems. Biodiversity maps at the global scale shall be developed. The decisions to be taken in this regard shall be binding for all concerned parties to ensure a positive global impact.