

**Revised note on the preparations for the fifth session of the United Nations  
Environment Assembly “Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the  
sustainable development goals” (UNEP / SC / 2020 / 9/2)**

Comments made by the Argentine Delegation during the Subcommittee meeting dated  
2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2020

(For easy reference the comments are organized following the document paragraphs and subparagraphs).

*Section I.2. Main outcomes of the joint Bureaux meeting as it relates to the theme of  
UNEA*

Argentina praises the results of the Joint Bureaux Meeting as stated in the document. In particular, the importance of a brief, concise and ambitious Ministerial Declaration (bullet point 3); the importance of strengthening the implementation of existing UNEA resolutions (bullet point 5 and paragraph 22) and the benefits of limiting the number of draft resolutions to streamline the work of UNEA V (bullet point 6).

*Section II. The UNEA-5 theme in the context of the response and recovery from the  
COVID-19 pandemic*

Argentina supports the mention of COVID-19 under the conceptual umbrella provided by the fourth paragraph of the document *The future we want*, which reiterates the interdependence of the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development (paragraph 4).

We also support the reference made to the necessary alignment of international financing with the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-COVID-19 economic reconstruction for, from our viewpoint, one of the main obstacles to increasing climate and environmental ambitions, particularly in the case of developing countries, is attributable to insufficient means of implementation (paragraphs 6 and 7).

With regards to the use of the term “Nature” and “Natures Base Solutions” as defined by IPBES, although we underline the importance of IPBES in relation to its purpose of strengthening the science-policy interface, we need to recall that IPBES is an independent body, it is not part of the United Nations system and although it has a broad membership, its 132 members are less of those of UN. In addition, their work is limited to assessment development, policy support, capacity building, and communication and awareness rising. It is not a body where members agree on concepts related to implementation commitments, as it is the case with Multilateral Environmental Agreements. Consequently, their definitions and recommendations can fuel debate within the United Nations, but cannot be considered as already agreed language by Member States.

*Section III. UNEP’s Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2025 as a main outcome to support member States in shifting needle on the environmental dimension of sustainable development*

With regards to paragraph 10, 11 y 12 we would like to stress that since the Stockholm Conference (1972) and in particular after the Rio Conference (1992), the regime of multilateral environmental negotiations has advanced towards an increasing thematic and technical specialization through the different MEAs. Thus, the necessity of strengthening the scientific role of UNEP mentioned in paragraph 12 should take into account the accumulation of experience and expertise already collected and organized by the different specialized environmental organizations.

At the same time, it should be considered that not only does UNEP seek to work based on the *synergies* that exist between the various environmental agendas: this approach has been in place for decades and permeates the negotiations and debates in the three Rio conventions (climate change, biodiversity and desertification) and in the other specialized environmental or multilateral organizations (FAO; the chemical conventions; the Montreal Protocol; etc.). In this sense, the challenge behind the references to *synergies* and *holistic approaches* lays precisely in how to prioritize the different possible actions; how to manage scarce resources in the face of economic and social development needs; how to manage unforeseen and unintended consequences, etc.

Therefore, Argentina values the concept of *synergies* as a useful element in terms of communication and environmental narrative (an aspect addressed in section VI of the document: *Advancing an innovative communication...* and reflected as an example in Annex I), but acknowledges that its practical contribution when addressing the complex decisions mentioned above is rather insufficient. In other words, this conceptual reference cannot define or precipitate the negotiations in any recognizable sense, but rather constitutes the basic assumption shared by most of the delegations that carry these negotiations out.

***Section IV. Action areas where UNEA-5 can contribute to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals***

Argentina agrees with the overall thematic orientation of these four Areas.

- Area 1, *Nature for Poverty Eradication, Jobs and Economic Prosperity*: we support the combination of sustainable development and its three dimensions with the post-COVID-19 recovery and the need to accordingly align available resources.

- Area 2, *Nature for Human and Ecosystem Health*: we highlight the need to preserve the necessary margins in multilateral resolutions and declarations in order to contemplate the different realities and nuances prevailing in the productive systems of each country.

- Area 4, *Nature for Sustainable Food System*: We need to reemphasize that the scope of the concepts *food system* and *sustainable food system*, reiterated on various occasions in the document, has not been yet agreed at the multilateral level. We would also like to stress the importance of not to treat all agricultural systems as homogeneous, since some can be sustainable and therefore not be drivers of biodiversity loss (box 4). In relation to the expression *ecosystem friendly practices*, we suggest the use of *sustainable practices*. Lastly, we would like to recall that aspects related to transnational supply chains or economic incentives are extremely important and must be dealt with in all their complexity. It must be noted that they are at the intersection of economic and social aspects, which have edges that are beyond the competence of the

Environment Assembly and must be addressed in line with the negotiating mandates of the World Trade Organization.

#### Section VII. *Way forward*

Regarding paragraph 28, bullet point 4, we would like to highlight in this paper that the identification of ecosystem-based approaches, including nature-based solutions that are cost-effective and involve multiple benefits (synergies), must necessarily be carried out with the participation of the interested State, since the opportunities and challenges of implementing those possible measures differ by region and by case. Furthermore, the success of the approaches depends on the availability of technical and operational capacities and financial resources and must be framed on the orientation of the national government's environmental agenda.