

**USA National Statement - Opening**  
**UNGA 73/333 Meetings, July 21-24**

Thank you.

The United States of America congratulates the co-facilitators on your appointment and thanks you for taking on the task of presiding over these meetings and guiding to us through a thoughtful, but expeditious process. We also thank the Secretariat for making the background documents available well in advance of this meeting.

However, we must be clear that the process envisioned by the documents provided is not a prudent use of time or resources. Member States have spent millions of Euros and over 50 hours on the Global Pact for the Environment process that yielded at best modest areas of consensus. Today, we find ourselves on the verge of another round of resource-intensive meetings. We urge everyone to consider the cost of sinking even more resources into this process. The background documents provided by the secretariat and the co-facilitators suggest reopening many of the thorny political issues that nearly derailed the working group process last year. Extensive discussion of these issues is unlikely to yield broader consensus. If anything, it will undermine what fragile consensus there is.

The United States continues to emphasize that time is of the essence and we propose that we use our meeting time to begin the immediate preparation of the the high level political declaration to be adopted at UNEA-5 as mandated to us by UNGA.

Colleagues, the United States wishes to express its serious concerns about both the substantive and procedural preparations for these UNGA 73/333 meetings.

On substance, we respectfully oppose both the co-facilitators proposal to “actionize” working group recommendations and the questions posed in the Co-Facilitators’ Document in relation to each recommendation. There is no mandate to actionize the recommendations, and the United States will not support an agenda that exceeds UNGA 73/333’s agreed language. Member States have the task of preparing a high-level political declaration using the agreed recommendations. This should be a Member State driven process. While we understand the co-facilitators are acting in good faith to move this process forward, we are also deeply concerned that the wide range of co-facilitators’ questions will quickly lead us into a highly politicized dialogue that will result in acrimonious debate with dim prospects for a successful outcome. [We are reminded of the lengthy and broad ranging process followed at UNEA-2 for a Ministerial Declaration that resulted in no Declaration being adopted and would not wish that to occur here.]

We would like to make our national position very clear concerning some of the substantive issues raised.

1. This process is not going to be a pledging conference. The United States will not support an outcome that suggests new financial commitments should be made.
2. We do not support additional discussions about principles of environmental law. The existing recommendations recognize the ongoing work of the International Law Commission, and we question why the co-facilitators

would suggest entering into a parallel discussion when there is an UNGA-mandated process underway. We should not undermine existing UNGA decisions. In addition, the outcome of extensive face-to-face deliberations to achieve the 73/333 recommendations did not include consideration of an instrument. There was no consensus on what gaps there were in the international system, and therefore no agreement on a proposed solution.

3. The GPE discussions reinforced support for, and recognition of, Multilateral Environmental Agreements' independent legal mandates and structure. We do not support discussions that would lead to UNEP or UNEA playing a coordinating or oversight role for MEAs or their policies. Therefore, we consider many of the questions in the co-facilitators paper not relevant for this group, which does not have authority over the governing bodies of legally independent MEAs or financial mechanisms.

Our final point colleagues considers the big picture of UNEP, UNEP@50, UNEA-5, and Stockholm+50. In our post pandemic world, we need to consolidate meetings, consolidate outcomes, and to make the most of the limited resources available to us. In short, our workload needs to be decreased, not expanded, as proposed in the co-facilitators' process. Let us instead start work today on a streamlined high level political declaration that upholds the elements of 73/333 in a concise and meaningful statement.

I also wish to support the earlier interventions from Switzerland and New Zealand calling for a lean and streamlined process.

Thank you very much.