

Pure Earth and Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP) response to the Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2021 UN Environment Assembly

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the “Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document” on the theme for UNEA5.

[Pure Earth](#) is accredited with UNEP and hosts the current Secretariat of the [Global Alliance on Health and Pollution](#). GAHP is a Swiss foundation with 60+ member organizations representing environment and health ministries, multi- and bilateral funders, research institutions and NGOs.

General comments

1. Having advocated for a Pollution-free Planet at UNEA 3 and supported Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Production and Consumption at UNEA 4, we are glad that the draft outline for the UNEA 5 Ministerial Outcome Document acknowledges the links between these issues and biodiversity and think that the text on these linkages can be strengthened as suggested below. Nature based solution are an important part of a multi-pronged approach to ensure a pollution-free planet.
2. We also think that while Declarations can give political impetus, they only have real value if Ministers subsequently include a short assessment of implementation of their previous Declarations in the next outcome Document. For example, it would be very useful if this year the section on COVID19, not only stressed the zoonotic causes but also highlighted the growing evidence of links between worse COVID19 health outcomes and exposures to air pollution. We attach a well-received paper that we recently produced summarizing research to date on those links.

Specific recommendations

1. Vision statement – As stated, the vision is perhaps unduly negative for a Ministerial Declaration and we propose some minor changes:

Vision: Urgent and transformative actions to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and protect and improve ecosystem services achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and rebuild a better, more resilient and sustainable post-pandemic world.

2. Green Recovery, paragraph 2. Suggest to add “pollution prevention” and “public health” in sentence 4, such that the sentence reads: Ministers can draw attention to the benefits for biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, benefits for the

economy, *public health*, welfare and potential for jobs through ecosystem restoration and protection from pollution.

3. Green Recovery, paragraph 2. Suggest to add an additional penultimate sentence:
Ministers can promote inter-Ministerial, cross sectoral and multistakeholder dialogue around various environmental topics in order to achieve the integrated approach to biodiversity conservation and tackling climate change and pollution which is required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. These conversations should be open, transparent, and inclusive.
4. We strongly support the Healthy Ecosystems, Healthy People paragraph which is a good example of the benefits of an integrated approach. However, we think it is important to recognize that healthy ecosystems require both protecting biodiversity and preventing pollution. Moreover, the poor are most affected by both degraded ecosystem services and pollution and this could be highlighted. The final sentence of the Declaration provides an opportunity to pass a timely political message to ICCM 5. We suggest slightly redrafting the paragraph and adding such a message as follows :

Ministers may raise attention as to the importance of healthy ecosystems as a foundation to ensure healthy people, and that the considerable loss of biodiversity is undermining our joint resilience. ~~It is the poorest among us who are most vulnerable.~~ Zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 expose the close relationship between nature and people. We increase our vulnerability to such diseases through environmental degradation. It is the poorest among us who are most vulnerable to both the diseases and polluted ecosystems. This pandemic reveals the associated significant cost and the need for strengthened action to avoid future emergence of zoonotic diseases. Recognizing the rapid loss of nature, the piece by piece loss of natural habitat and the associated increasing risk for our societies, ministers can commit to measures to strengthened cross-sectoral efforts to protect biodiversity, reverse the degradation of ecosystems including by preventing and mitigating pollution, and enhance ecosystem resilience. This also as important measures to urgently adapt and mitigate climate change. Ministers can promote involvement of a broad range of actors in the development and scaling up of effective actions, including indigenous peoples and local communities, local and sub-national authorities, women and youth groups. Building on this and given the developments around the order of environment-related international meetings in 2021, the ministers can commit to the development and effective implementation of an ambitious post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in China. Ministers can also emphasise the importance for enhancing synergies at all levels between the biodiversity related conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements in order to efficiently contribute to the implementation



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2020 global biodiversity framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ministers should also consider ways to support the work of the UNFCCC and the Paris agreement, thus contributing to the 26th Conference of the Parties in 2021. [Ministers may wish to encourage](#) the negotiations of the beyond 2020 instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste [include an objective and a 2030 target on protecting biodiversity and ecosystems by preventing pollution](#).