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United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme

Fifth session

Nairobi (online), 22–23 February 2021

Outcome document of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly

Message from the fifth session of the Assembly – Looking ahead to the resumed United Nations Environment Assembly to be held in 2022

Note (1): The message contained in this document is the negotiated outcome of UNEA-5 (part one). It does not set a precedent for the resumed UNEA-5 or for any subsequent sessions of the Environment Assembly.

Note (2): This message is issued without formal editing.

Preamble

The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, convening online on 22–23 February 2021 in Nairobi under the exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic,

Recognizes the urgent need to continue efforts to protect our planet even in this time of crisis;

Wishes to strengthen support for the United Nations and for multilateral cooperation, remaining convinced that collective action is essential to successfully address global challenges;

Expresses deep concern over the devastating global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which have multiplied existing challenges and created new and serious health, social, economic, and environmental pressures, especially in developing countries, thereby undermining our common efforts to eradicate poverty and to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Recognizes more than ever that human health and well-being depend on nature and on the solutions it provides; and acknowledges that if our current unsustainable patterns in our interactions with nature persist, we face the risk of future pandemics;

Expresses grave concern at the continued loss of biodiversity, the degradation and fragmentation of ecosystems and wildlife habitats, and the threats to lives and livelihoods from climate change, pollution, waste, and poorly managed chemicals, which endanger our environment and our overarching goal of sustainable development;

Reaffirms the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment, and welcomes UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022–2025 and the Programme of Work and Budget for 2022–2023;

Commends UNEP for its rapid contribution to the environmental dimension of the socio-economic response to COVID-19 and commits to intensifying efforts to support a sustainable and inclusive recovery that protects planet Earth, catalyzes sustainable consumption and production, revitalizes our economies, creates decent and sustainable jobs, makes real progress in eradicating poverty, and at the same time strengthens our resilience to future crises of a similar nature;

Will step up efforts to implement the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and reaffirms the need for urgent action to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

Stresses the critical importance of further progress across all multilateral environmental fora, in particular the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the negotiations on a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the negotiations on the Strategic Approach and sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;

Will reconvene in person in Nairobi for the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly in early 2022 to continue our joint efforts for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and to make further progress in implementing the decisions and resolutions of previous sessions of the Environment Assembly, including on the future of the Global Environment Outlook and on marine litter and microplastics;

Will devote efforts to commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme in early 2022 in Nairobi, and to contributing to impactful celebrations in line with United Nations General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 1972;

Calls, as a matter of urgency, for inclusive, science-based collective action through our work and decisions at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.