Contribution to the preparation of the ministerial declaration for the Seventh United Nations Environment Assembly on Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet

In follow-up to the kind invitation from H.E. Dr. Abdullah Bin Ali Al-Amri, President of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) and and Chair of the Environment Authority of Oman, the World Federation for Animals is pleased to provide initial thought, key topics and issues to be considered for inclusion in the zero draft ministerial declaration

These issues focus on the UNEA-7 theme "*Advancing Sustainable Solutions for a Resilient Planet*", the HLPF theme *"Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind", and the global environmental agenda.*

To guide our submission as advised by the minister, we, the World Federation for Animals(WFA) hereby provide our initial thoughts by answering the following questions;

1. **What would the Ministers for the Environment propose as the most important elements and or key messages that would enable the ministerial declaration to take forward the UNEA theme in the most impactful manner?**

Integrating the One Health Approach into the declaration:

- Human interactions with the environment and animals continue to be an important and relevant issue. Our use of the environment and wild animals likely led to the COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, human interactions between wild and domestic birds and other species are setting the stage for global risk due to the contribution of these interactions to the evolution of new avian influenza strains which could pose a greater risk to humans.
- The One Health approach—which integrates human, animal, and environmental health—as a fundamental driver of sustainable solutions for a resilient planet and to reducing these ongoing risks. This approach is critical to achieving the SDGs and addressing overlapping global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
- A strong commitment to strengthening animal health systems will help prevent the spillover of zoonotic diseases and curb antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a growing global threat with severe consequences for human health, animal welfare, and the environment.

- Aligning with the AMR High-Level Meeting (HLM) Declaration, the declaration should emphasize the importance of preventing, detecting, and responding to AMR through coordinated environmental action.

Recognizing the Role of Animals in Climate Resilience and Sustainable Development:

- Acknowledging the contribution of working animals in climate disaster resilience at the community level, as highlighted in UN General Assembly resolution 79/205 and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Emphasizing that poor animal welfare undermines sustainable development, while improved welfare standards contribute to resilient ecosystems, sustainable livelihoods, and economic development.
- Recognizing that livelihoods, food systems, human and animal health, climate change, agriculture, wildlife trade, and disaster resilience are interconnected through animals and animal welfare considerations.
- Including a commitment to reducing reliance on animal testing by promoting innovative, human-relevant methodologies for research, in alignment with advances in regulatory science. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of efficient, non-animal approaches in the rapid development of safe and effective medical solutions.
- Implementing the UNEA-5.1 nexus resolution.

2. **What key messages or conclusions from recent scientific reports would the Ministers for the Environment recommend for consideration in the ministerial declaration?**

IPBES Nexus 7 - Thematic Assessment Report on the Interlinkages among Biodiversity, Water, Food and Health of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services which underscores:

- How biodiversity loss and environmental degradation increase the risk of zoonotic disease emergence, reinforcing the need for sustainable wildlife management and enhanced animal welfare protections.
- The impacts of wildlife trade on ecosystems and species populations, with direct implications for both biodiversity conservation and public health.
- The importance of transitioning to sustainable food systems, particularly in relation to intensive animal agriculture, environmental degradation, and public health outcomes.

The interconnected nature of ecosystem health and the well-being of animal populations, further highlighting the need for integrated governance approaches.

UNGA Resolution A/RES/76/300 on the Human Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment, which sets a legal foundation for environmental protection as a human right, reinforcing the need for policies that prevent environmental degradation and safeguard human and animal health.

EURL-ECVAM Reports on Non-Animal Testing Methods, Safe and sustainable by design chemicals and materials Review of safety and sustainability dimensions, aspects, methods, indicators and tools and A pragmatic framework for the application of new approach methodologies in one health toxicological risk assessment which all emphasize the urgent need for modernizing chemical safety assessments by adopting New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) that reduce reliance on animal testing while improving the efficiency, accuracy, and speed of safety assessments. This ensures global alignment with evolving scientific and ethical standards.

3. **What proposed collective actions and policy solutions should the Ministers for the Environment adopt to advance the UNEA theme and promote effective and inclusive environmental governance?**

To ensure effective implementation of the UNEA-7 theme, Ministers should commit to:

Mainstreaming One Health into Global Environmental Policies

- UNEP-led initiatives should systematically integrate environmental, human, and animal health considerations to prevent future pandemics, address AMR, and enhance resilience to biodiversity loss and climate change.
- UNEA should play a leadership role in science-based, cross-sectoral collaboration to ensure that environmental governance frameworks align with One Health principles.

Aligning UNEA Outcomes with Global Policy and Financial Commitments

- Ministers should promote policy coherence across UNEA, UNFCCC (climate), CBD (biodiversity), and FAO (food and agriculture) to drive coordinated action on food system transformation.
- Environmental priorities should be integrated into global financing mechanisms, including:
    - The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4)
    - Climate adaptation and biodiversity conservation funding frameworks

- Ensuring that nature-based solutions, sustainable food systems, and ecosystem restoration receive adequate financial resources, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).
- Enhancing Accountability and Implementation of UNEA Resolutions
    - Ministers should advocate for a stronger linkage between UNEA resolutions and financial/resource mobilization strategies to translate commitments into tangible action.
    - This includes establishing monitoring and reporting mechanisms that align UNEA decisions with existing SDG reporting frameworks.

Other Key Considerations for Inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration

- Recognizing that UNEA resolutions must be backed by adequate financing, institutional support, and clear implementation pathways to drive meaningful progress.
- Ensuring that environmental action is inclusive and equitable, particularly for vulnerable populations that depend on natural ecosystems for their livelihoods.
- Promoting the reduction of environmentally harmful subsidies, shifting investments toward sustainable and climate-resilient solutions.
- Strengthening international cooperation in capacity building, data-sharing, and technology transfer to support LMICs in achieving climate and biodiversity commitments.

4. **Any other message(s) would the Ministers for the Environment wish to be considered or included in the ministerial declaration?**

Recognising that resolutions are important statements of support and agreement, but delivering on action will require alignment to existing or new funding streams with the appropriate channels of reporting to UNEA/UNEP and also to SDGs, where the interconnected aspects of the resolution can be seen and reported to help address development and the triple planetary threats.

A strong ministerial declaration at UNEA-7 will set the stage for transformative global action on environmental sustainability. By integrating One Health principles, scientific insights, and concrete policy measures, UNEA-7 can drive a holistic and impactful response to the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

The World Federation for Animals (WFA) urges Ministers to embed these priorities into the ministerial declaration to ensure that UNEA-7 contributes to a resilient, equitable, and science-driven approach to global environmental governance.