

UNEP Secretariat of Governing Bodies
UNEP Civil Society Unit
Ministerial Declaration of the UNEA-7 DRAFT Submission from Farmer MGFC
February 21, 2025

Attention: Government Affairs Office

Dear Director Radihika Ochalik ,

The Farmers MGFC requests an additional 2 week extension to complete its internal Farmer Priority Survey and Review of the current DRAFT Farmer MG Submission for the Ministerial Declaration of the UNEA-7.

DRAFT:

The theme for UNEA 7 is Advancing Sustainable Solutions for Resilient Planet and we believe the farming community across the world has a critical role to play in finding solutions in all geographic locations and is capable of embracing all types of farming from small to large.

Farmers have the most direct relationship with the environment of any industry and as often based on family, multi generational labor it has the most unique responsibility for finding solutions for the next generation being fully aware of their responsibility.

Managing the environment comes with the additional pressure of having to produce profitable income in increasingly volatile global markets that rarely consider environmental impact in price.

In finding solutions there are a number of direct key challenges with commonality to all farmers. Increasingly unpredictable weather extremes are seen across the world and farmers have a key role in adapting practice to mitigate extremes, build resilience, strive for sustainability and manage carbon effectively. Farmers are seeing invasive species moving and challenging new geographic areas with serious consequences. They are challenged by new diseases in both the plant, animal and microbial world. The role of water management, quality and availability is probably the single most defining challenge in production .

In answer to the questions posed:

1/ What would the Ministers of the Environment propose as the most important elements or key messages to take forward in the theme?

Recognition of the key role farmers can play in meeting the challenge of sustainable solutions, this support and understanding is critical in breaking down barriers of communication across the UNEA landscape. The ability to talk and engage with Civil Society

and Major Groups involved in the UNEA and UNEP landscape we see, as a participating proactive Farmers Major Group, as a key benefit of engagement and route to greater understanding.

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

We embrace all routes to meeting the challenge of sustainability and resilience within agriculture from organic, agroecology, regenerative through to large scale commercial. Science in all its forms we believe should be embraced. With a growing population, food and non-food demand from farming it is important that ministers recognize the unique geographic nature of different solutions. That they recognize the importance and champion the science and understanding required for evolving problems such as evolving invasive species, pests and diseases. That they openly discuss the role of land sparing through the adoption of good science as we look to balance the challenge of protecting the environment while meeting particularly the challenge of making affordable food and good nutrition to all.

3/ What proposed collective actions and policy solutions should be advanced or adopted?

Looking at this within a global context to how politics can so easily affect farmers on a local level often distorting or destroying the income of farmers and subsequently their ability to look after and invest in the environment. The concept of off-shoring environmental responsibility can be hugely frustrating for farmers and recognition of this practice by environmental ministers would be a pro-active and positive help to farmers.

The importance of ensuring good education is available is of critical importance, communicated locally at first hand the most effective way to lead change and adopt beneficial sustainable solutions.

4/ Any other messages to consider?

Demographics and urbanization are a major challenge to the farming sector. It finds it increasingly difficult to attract and retain people within the industry and so not only putting food production at risk but also environmental management. As people move to an increasingly urban lifestyle they become disconnected from both their primary food production but also its relationship with environmental challenge. There is a key role of communication support ministers can offer.