

Submission of the Scientific and Technological Community Major Group on the Zero Draft of the Ministerial Declaration of the UNEA 7th Session

The S&T Major Group observes the phenomenal growth in the global Artificial Intelligence (AI) market, which presents both opportunities in tackling global environmental and sustainability challenges and potential negative impacts on the environment such as increased electronic waste and energy consumption. We welcome the adoption of the Digital Compact at the Summit of the Future, as well as the establishment of the Coalition for Environmentally Sustainable AI, that aims to amplify the global momentum to place AI on a more environmentally sustainable path. We note with concern the imbalance that exists between developed and developing countries in the uptake of AI and the imbalance that exists between North and South in delivering data that can be used in AI technology.

We therefore call upon Member States to:

- (i) develop and test AI applications for advancing sustainable environmental solutions on a solid scientific basis, taking into account traditional knowledge while ensuring transparency, accountability, authenticity of data and good governance.
- (ii) continue to address the digital divide to ensure that scientists and innovators from the Global South are part of the contribution to these solutions.

We also provide the following comments on the text of the Zero Draft of the Ministerial Declaration.

We support para n:

[para n] Advancing sustainable solutions for a resilient planet and to encourage develop & incorporate digital solutions and AI in national plans as innovative solutions that contribute to accelerate achieving SDG plan towards sustainability and encouraging the full access to data.

Regarding para o, we suggest modifying it as follows:

[para o] Stress the need for a comprehensive assessment of the potential negative environmental impacts of the **entire** lifecycle of the different types of artificial intelligence.

In particular, the themes of the assessment should include: (1) Digital Infrastructure and its impact on the environment - energy consumption, carbon emissions etc.; (2) Use of Data in Environmental Assessments – including the authenticity of data and the accessibility of data. This should be accompanied by strengthened regulatory frameworks and standards to ensure its development and use align with environmental sustainability principles and ecosystem protection, while promoting international cooperation and the exchange of best practices for responsible and ethical AI deployment.