

Joint Regional Statement
from Major Groups and Stakeholders in the European Region
in preparation of the 7th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7)
based on the outcomes of the Regional Consultation Meeting for the European Region
(RCM) 3 + 6 October 2025 (online)

We, representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders who came together for our Regional Consultation Meeting (RCM), emphasize the **great urgency to take coordinated international action to tackle the systemic threats posed by the triple planetary crisis** of pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss, as well as land degradation. The triple crisis severely affects ecosystems and animal health, human well-being, economic development as well as peace and security. It is deeply interlinked with **systemic power imbalances and inequalities** that keep billions of people in poverty and hunger. These injustices are further aggravated by an increasing number of disasters, armed conflicts, violence and oppression, all of which come with severe long-term environmental consequences. **Peace and justice are the prerequisite for sustainable development.**

While most stakeholders recognise the urgency, **action is too slow or, even worse, going backwards in certain areas.** Global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, and the climate crisis is a reality around the world with severe floods, droughts, storms, melting glaciers and whole ecosystems at risk of breakdown. Biodiversity loss is accelerating, and pollution has infiltrated every ecosystem. Microplastics are now found in human blood, lungs, placenta and breast milk. Children are exposed to plastic particles and toxic chemicals before they are even born. Environmental threats from vulnerable infrastructure, including nuclear, are real, and we recall the upcoming **40th anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster on 26 April 2026.** The triple planetary crisis is also public health emergency that demands political action.

These emergencies particularly **affect future generations.** Today, they are already **disproportionately affecting marginalised and underrepresented communities**, such as racialised communities, Indigenous Peoples, refugees and displaced persons or women, girls and gender diverse people. People in already vulnerable situations are also less resilient in responding to climate and environmental risks.

Siloed environmental and climate policies and narrow technology-focused solutions alone will not address the triple crisis and rising inequalities. We need to address the **root causes of the triple planetary crisis.**

We call on Member States to incorporate the below recommendations in their preparations to UNEA, the Ministerial Declaration, UNEA-7 resolutions and in the UNEP Mid-Term Strategy:

- A fundamental **structural transformation from a linear to a circular economy** that respects planetary boundaries will enhance the wellbeing of the planet and all who live on it. The economies of the industrialised countries have a particular responsibility to ensure an economic model that builds markets for secondary raw materials and reduces overall resource use. We cannot continue to grow a linear economic model that exploits the resources of the planet and cheap labour in weaker economies.
- The transformation must **prioritise environmental and social justice**, integrating strong policies to **secure the livelihoods of communities and workers** affected by the transition.
- Long-term, future-oriented policies based on respect **for individual and collective human rights**, including the human right to a healthy, clean and sustainable environment, and the protection of **rights of current and future generations**, can guarantee equal outcomes for all.
- Impactful decision-making is based on **participatory democracy and the principle of intergenerational and intragenerational equity.** Transparent multilateral actions call for **meaningful engagement of civil society as a whole and of underrepresented groups**, including youth, women, gender minorities, racialised groups, Indigenous Peoples and people from areas most affected by climate and environmental impacts, in decision-making, budgeting, implementation and follow-ups.
- Applying the **One Health** approach, recognising the interconnection between people, animals, plants and their shared environment, increases human, animal and ecosystem health. Applying the **precautionary principle** helps to prevent harm and costs before they occur.
- We need a transition to **sustainable food systems and sustainable, healthy diets**, acknowledging the impact of unsustainable agricultural practices on people, animals and our planet. We urge UNEA to focus on sustainable food systems, in full support of small-holders, family farmers and peasants.
- It is widely accepted that the transition requires **significant public finance for climate, biodiversity and zero pollution.** Taxing corporate profits consistently as well as taxing pollution and resource use

could provide the funds needed. Ending all fossil fuel and other harmful subsidies that negatively impact the environment ensure the implementation of the polluter pays principle and to shift the financial burden from the public to polluters.

- **It is essential to address severe environmental damage** (often referred to as “ecocide”), **both in peacetime and as a result of armed conflict and military activities** including contamination and pollution of water bodies and agricultural land, destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity, mismanagement of solid and hazardous waste including tailings and risks from industrial and chemical facilities, the need for remediation and restoration, health protection and accountability for environmental damage including under criminal law.
- **Inclusive, transdisciplinary research** integrating natural and social sciences, Indigenous knowledge, and a stronger **science-policy interface** through structured dialogue between scientists, policymakers and civil society including Indigenous Peoples can ensure decisions that are science-based and responsive to emerging environmental risks. A great deal of **expertise and evidence exists in science and civil society** that can help governments to formulate impactful policy, and we advocate for policymaking based on sound scientific data and evidence.
- Transformative action requires **environmental education** including climate literacy, sustainable living practices and practical skills that equip individuals with the knowledge and competencies necessary to navigate and address the interconnected challenges of the triple crisis.
- Addressing global environmental crises and challenges requires full and meaningful involvement of all Major Groups and Stakeholders. However, we note with concern that public participation in international fora is increasingly restricted. We are concerned by what seem to be new **restrictions to access draft resolutions and UNEA documents** on the online portal. These significantly impede access for accredited stakeholders, thereby directly undermining the transparency and inclusivity of the process and weakening accountability at a time when UNEA and other multilateral processes are increasingly questioned. We therefore urge UNEP and Member States to ensure all that accredited stakeholders have full, independent and unrestricted access to information, honouring the legal obligation under the Aarhus Convention, amongst others, to ensure **public participation in international fora**.

Specific recommendation on draft resolutions

Switzerland: Chemicals and waste

Stakeholders call for the recognition of the consequences of chemical pollution and contamination on human and planetary health, recognising disproportionate burdens on women and children, and communities in vulnerable situations. We call for greater recognition of the link between climate change, biodiversity and pollution through chemicals and waste. Also, long-term effects of chemical contamination and pollution caused by war and military activity need to be addressed. As stakeholders, we recognise the need for funding mechanisms to advance international work to address chemical and waste-related impacts and call for a permanent funding instrument such as a trust fund to provide the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP) with resources.

Kenya: Environmental dimensions of antimicrobial pollution

As stakeholders we urge member states to deal with AMP with urgency. There is a clear need for a comprehensive approach, tackling root causes and not only symptoms. There are several sectors that contribute significantly to ARM. Intensive terrestrial and aquatic animal production systems are major sources of antimicrobial use and pollution. Tackling ARM requires a transition towards sustainable and diversified agrifood systems that reduces reliance on routine antimicrobial use and recognises the impacts of AMR on vulnerable groups such as women, children or workers in the informal sectors. As stakeholders, we call for clear responsibility of the private sector and polluters. Preventive measures need to be integrated into national action plans, based on the One Health approach. The newly established ISP-CWP should also be enabled to provide advice and to contribute to science-based solutions.

Kenya: Safe, responsible and sustainable Artificial Intelligence for people and planet.

Stakeholders strongly welcome Kenya's initiative to address sustainability and AI. We call on Member States to more clearly emphasize equitable access to AI technologies and environmental data, ensuring data democratization and participation of marginalized and underrepresented groups, including women,

youth, Indigenous People and local communities. Inclusive access to AI and environmental data is essential for fairness, local ownership and informed decision-making at all levels. The resolution should address not only environmental, but also socio-economic impacts of AI infrastructure (particularly the data centres) such as water consumption competing with public and agricultural water demands, land use and labour impacts. A holistic approach should integrate both environmental and socio-economic dimensions across the AI lifecycle. The resolution should place stronger emphasis on human rights, gender equality, and data protection as core components of sustainable and responsible AI governance. This includes promoting ethical AI frameworks that safeguard privacy, ensure fairness and non-discrimination and actively advance gender-responsive and rights-based approaches.

Colombia: International Instrument for the Environmentally Sustainable Management of Minerals and Metals

Stakeholders welcome Columbia's leadership towards an international instrument. We would welcome the resolution already calling for the open-ended working group to directly start negotiations for a binding instrument. Several voluntary frameworks are already available. As stakeholders, we stress that any international instrument should include the need for transboundary, independently financed, transparent and cumulative environmental impact assessments and cross-border monitoring. It should also ensure the rehabilitation and remediation of abandoned or conflict-damaged mines and tailings. The instrument should call for no-go-zones in vulnerable ecosystems and water basins, as well as corporate accountability mechanisms along the supply chain. It should integrate gender equality in the management of minerals and metals, ensure the protection of environmental defenders and promote equitable community benefits.

Oman: Management of mine tailing to enable circular recovery

Stakeholders welcome Oman's ambition to address mine tailings. Tailings pose significant threats to people and nature. The overall aim must be to reduce overall resource use and to prevent pollution. Framing tailings as an "underutilized resource" should not legitimise the expansion of mining. Any remining efforts should follow the Safety-First Guidelines for Responsible Mine Tailings Management and ensure the protection of rightsholders. As stakeholders, we are concerned by the lack of inclusion of civil society and independent scientific institutions in the development of remining projects, and we do not support the use of green bonds. For the resolution, we call for a clearer reference to human rights, public participation, Free Prior Informed Consent and remedy mechanism for affected communities. Both resolutions focusing on mining should acknowledge the interconnection of mining and armed conflicts. Armed conflicts and post-war reconstruction often intensify extractive pressures on fragile ecosystems and communities while abandoned or damaged mines and tailings dams become sources of severe pollution, land degradation and health risks, disproportionately affecting women and displaced communities.

South Korea: Circular Economy

We welcome South Korea putting forward a draft resolution on circular economy. We urge Member States to promote a fair, inclusive and gender-balanced transition to a circular economy, centred on local innovation, sustainable production and consumption, and social innovations, including youth-led social innovations and entrepreneurship. As stakeholders we stress the need for resource justice as well as the protection individual human rights and collective human rights, including of Indigenous Peoples. We recommend that the resolution addresses the high demand for resources, and a comprehensive approach to Circular Economy covering the full life cycle of materials covering extraction as well as the whole value chain and life cycle of products. This transition is essential to combat pollution in high-impact sectors such as textiles, electronics, and tourism. We call for support of accessible resources, hubs and training for leadership for social innovation by youth, women, Indigenous peoples and others, to scale existing efforts and spearhead new inventions and interventions. We support a leadership role for UNEP to guide a global process for the transition to a circular economy involving Member States, international bodies, civil society and rightsholders, recommending a strong integration of existing processes related to circular economy such as UNEP's Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency, the International Resource Panel or regional CE coalitions.

India: Strengthening global response on management of wildfires

Stakeholders recommend to:

- Center communities and Indigenous Peoples by ensuring wildfire governance integrates Indigenous knowledge, youth, women, and local leadership and by creating a UNEP platform on Community and Indigenous Knowledge for wildfire resilience, recognizing that expanding wildland–urban interface areas now cover over 6.6 million square kilometres globally and place millions of people directly in the path of intensifying wildfires, underlining that prevention and preparedness at the community level are the most effective ways to reduce damages and build long-term resilience.
- Bridge the technology and capacity divide by establishing a UNEP–led Wildfire Technology Equity Mechanism that helps developing countries, least developed countries, and small island developing states gain access to early warning systems, AI–based fire modelling and affordable tools adapted to local needs, recognizing scientific findings that wildfire danger seasons are now almost one-fifth longer than in the late 1970s and that over 10 million people worldwide already live in areas directly threatened by wildfires, and ensuring that international cooperation enables rapid mobilization of support when a country is affected, as well as sustained investment in rehabilitation and resilience.
- Secure dedicated financing by creating a Wildfire Preparedness and Resilience Fund under UNEP with support from the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility that prioritizes proactive prevention, community capacity building, and low-cost innovation to shift from reactive firefighting to recognizing that wildfire suppression already costs billions annually, while funding for prevention and resilience remains under-resourced despite being far more effective and urgently needed.

Indonesia: Protection and sustainable management of Karst ecosystem.

Stakeholders recommend to:

- Strengthen and train local communities and Indigenous People in the management of karst geoecosystems to: (1) reduce dependence on karst water while at the same time protecting existing water supplies; (2) reverse the loss of biodiversity and (3) protect landscapes and landforms that are of aesthetic, cultural, economic and scientific value. Multi-level agreements and multistakeholder platforms based on a whole system approach that emphasises territorial identity will strengthen the protection of karst areas, together with the cave systems that are present in many of them, and reduce fragmented management.
- Close the knowledge and capacity gap on karst geoecosystems through a UNEP-led global platform that advances research on soil erosion, nutrient loss and water quality and quantity degradation, supports sustainable technologies, and monitors and reduces losses of caves and karst.
- Mobilize sustained international support for karst geoecosystems by creating financing and partnerships for the rehabilitation of degraded karst areas, for the monitoring of environmental change in karst areas and to enhance 'karst aware' land-use planning. Support the development of regional centres of excellence and widen the scope of the proposed UNESCO International Day of Caves and Karst Ecosystems, while also encouraging development of revenue streams proper to the local context, for example extractive-royalty and compensation schemes.

Tajikistan: Resolution on the preservation of glaciers and the broader cryosphere

Governments should make glaciers and the cryosphere a governance priority by mandating UNEP to build a dedicated framework linked to water security, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation, and biodiversity, complementing but not duplicating existing UNFCCC processes. This includes preventing floods and looking beyond glaciers to rivers, wetlands, groundwater and whole catchments. Nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration, reforestation and water-quality protection should be paired with strengthened early-warning systems for floods, permafrost collapse, ice-jam events and black-carbon pollution impacts. The resolution should aim at closing knowledge and capacity gaps through cooperation, equity and cautious open science by mandating UNEP to lead a global cryosphere knowledge platform that links to WMO's Global Cryosphere Watch and IPCC assessments. This platform should promote secure and responsible data sharing, and support long-term monitoring of glaciers, snow, permafrost and downstream water stores. It should address weak monitoring networks, particularly in the Global South, and foster collaborative knowledge production with Indigenous Peoples, mountain communities, local actors and scientists. It should align with UNGA's Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences by establishing basin-level observation systems, creating a Digital Cryosphere Atlas and expanding inclusive education and training. States should secure sustained and equitable financing for cryosphere action by committing to predictable and innovative finance that shifts from fragmented projects to basin-scale and transboundary programs.

Research shows that new instruments such as adaptation bonds, ecosystem-service metrics, and links to the UNFCCC Loss and Damage funding mechanism can improve long-term funding for monitoring and resilience. Financing should prioritize ecosystem- and nature-based solutions, be gender-responsive, and synchronize with milestones such as the 2028 Global Stocktake and IPCC AR7, while sustaining momentum through the Dushanbe Glaciers Process and annual World Day for Glaciers observance.

Vanuatu: Active Protection of Deep-Sea Ecosystems

As stakeholders, we stress the need to respect the ocean as key to our survival, food systems and cultural identity, especially for island and coastal states. We demand full and equitable child and youth participation in ocean governance, marine ecosystems conservation, and sustainable management. We support the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement and call for stronger enforcement of Regional Seas Action Plans, empowering children and youth, and women as co-leaders in a sustainable blue economy, in full respect of the human right to healthy environment. As stakeholders we support a moratorium on deep-sea mining. We call for the relaunch of the negotiations for an international treaty to curb plastic pollution. We support the call for more research on marine protection, especially on deep sea ecosystems.

Dominican Republic: Strengthening Global response on the massive influx of sargassum seaweed

Stakeholders call on members states to take urgent measures to address the causes of the sargassum blooms, particularly those that have origins on land. It is important to tackle root causes and to avoid false solutions. The resolution could be strengthened by putting a stronger focus on prevention and the precautionary principle on the one hand, but also accountability for transboundary effects and reparatory measures, including compensation for coastal communities most affected. Stakeholders also stress the need for more research to address the wider consequences and effects of sargassum influx.

Fiji: Coral Reefs

Stakeholders recognise the urgent need to protect coral reefs. The resolution should be fully consistent with BBNJ and CBD decisions. We would welcome support for more research on-site reef protection measures. We stress the vital role of Indigenous Peoples, coastal communities, youth and women in protecting coral reefs and that they are agents of change, and the need for meaningful participation of these groups throughout the Reef for Protection programme.

Peru and Kenya: Enhancing the international response to address environmental crimes

Stakeholders welcome the proponents' ambitions to address environmental crimes. We stress the needs to recognise the victims of environmental crimes and to ensure the protection of witnesses, whistleblowers and environmental defenders. Addressing environmental crimes also means recognising perpetrators and the need for accountability mechanisms. UNEP could support the response by offering technical guidance on the documentation of environmental crimes. We recommend the use of citizens science and remote sensing to document environmental crimes better. We suggest that UNEP and UNODC could work with other international bodies such as Interpol or the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crimes to step up information sharing around environmental crimes. We furthermore recommend that UNEP could create synergies with other national and regional processes such as the European Directive on the protection of the environment through criminal law and the Council of Europe draft convention on the protection of the environment through criminal law.

Given the compatibility of this resolution with the Vanuatu resolution on recognition of ecocide, we would support a combined resolution including specific language on ecocide law.

Vanuatu: Recognizing the Crime of Ecocide

We support the initiative to work towards the recognition of ecocide as a means to address severe and widespread environmental destruction and climate harm and as an essential step towards strengthening global environmental governance and accountability. We support the ongoing process and work at the level of the Rome Statute and the International Criminal Court as well as at national and regional levels around the world. We support that UNEP hosts an expert and multi-stakeholder dialogue on legal approaches to severe environmental harm and provides technical and capacity-building support for developing and climate-vulnerable countries in strengthening the environmental rule of law. By recognising ecocide, we can address large scale environmental damage both during peace and war time to safeguard human wellbeing and ecosystem health. We call for the recognition of the victims of ecocide, for the protection of

witnesses, whistleblowers and environmental defenders, and the recognition of perpetrators and the need for accountability mechanism.

Japan: Promoting Synergies, Cooperation or Collaboration for Implementation of MEAs

We emphasise the need for greater synergy between existing MEAs and Science-Policy interfaces, acknowledging the interconnectedness of climate, biodiversity, and human wellbeing under the One Health Approach. Governments must protect the interests of future generations by employing a holistic, rights-based, and gender-transformative systems-thinking approach for all environmental decision-making. As stakeholders, we encourage bottom-up initiatives and citizens science for the better implementation of MEAs. We are witnessing a global transformation in the way we can engage civil society through citizen science to support the delivery of MEAs. This should be recognised in the way implementation plans are developed for MEAs. Global citizen science programmes are emerging using AI and big data systems in which millions of people can be mobilised to support and accelerate the delivery of MEAs. It is time to adopt a Charter for Citizen Science and Multilateral Environmental Agreements that can be supported and developed by all Member States. We urge Member States to identify and eradicate bad practices, by ensuring coherent and consistent policies across MEAs as well as financing mechanisms, to redirect subsidies and other financial incentives that promote unsustainable practices which are harmful to the environment across all sectors, particularly in the energy, agriculture and water industries. We also support better measurements for the effectiveness of MEAs and adequate indicators.

Sri Lanka: Meaningful participation of children and youth in environmental and climate action

Alarmed by insufficient progress to noting with concern the gap between current action and required ambition insufficient progress to limit global warming to 1.5°C, we urge unprecedented political will, rapid, just, and ambitious climate action from all Member States, and legally binding instruments to address the interconnected Triple Planetary Crisis. We urge for rapid, just and ambitious climate action by all 193 UN Member States and a stronger UNEP Medium-term Strategy (MTS) 2026-2029 to guide a more ambitious, and targeted UNEP programme to assist countries in climate action, particularly on CO₂ and methane emissions, with ways for children and youth to meaningfully assist. We underscore the importance of inclusive, accessible, and meaningful platforms for child and youth engagement. Governments must provide sustained, long-term and impact-driven funding and institutional support that enables meaningful and structured child- and youth-led environmental initiatives and their participation in relevant processes. This includes mandating official, gender-balanced youth representation in national and international delegations to spaces like UNEA-7, ensuring a fair, and harmonized selection process (for example, through elections, selections using standardized rubrics, nominations) for such youth delegates across all UNEP member states, implementing policies that uphold children's rights and environmental justice, and protecting women environmental human rights defenders (WEHRDs). Young people's voices must be actively included, not tokenized. Lastly, we highlight the critical and distinct contributions of Indigenous children and youth to environmental stewardship. Their Traditional Knowledge and rights must be recognized, respected, safeguarded, and meaningfully integrated into all climate and biodiversity policies and actions at all levels. Their participation as environmental defenders in national and international processes is essential to effective environmental governance.

Kenya: Promoting sustainable solutions through sport for a resilient planet.

As stakeholders, we encourage sustainable oriented sponsors in financing international and national sports events such as football matches. We are concerned with reducing the presence of plastic and chemicals in outdoor sports activities and events. We strongly encouraging legislation that acts against greenwashing, for example, fossil fuel companies presenting their brand on marathon banners and sports gear and clothing. We call on member state to ensure the due diligence that leads to accountability in sustainability statements of companies' annual and quarterly reports, including in marketing campaigns.

Bolivia: Living Well in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth

As stakeholders, we recognise the importance of non-Western knowledge systems, such as Indigenous knowledge, heritage and worldviews, and the need to support these views for holistic environment action. We suggest including different value and knowledge systems in national education curricula, ensuring students are taught the value of nature and education outside of commercial interests.