

**EU+MS comments to the preliminary draft of the Ministerial Outcome Document  
released on 21 September 2017**

**To be sent to UNEP by 6 October 2017**

- The EU and its MS welcome the preliminary draft Ministerial Outcome Document released on 21 September 2017
- We also support the intentions of the UNEA President to build the document on consensus.
- With this in mind, in general we are supportive of this draft and we thank the UNEA President for his efforts to reach out to members in developing a draft ministerial declaration as well as his efforts to reflect the different comments received while keeping in mind the broader objective of ensuring an inspiring and meaningful ministerial declaration acceptable to all.
- We are also thankful for clarifying the sources of the figures referred to in the text.
- The EU and its MS welcome the style and sense of urgency of the declaration

We believe nevertheless that there is scope to further improve and strengthen the document, by

- including a reference to the implementation of the Paris Agreement next to the reference of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable Development as important frameworks for addressing pollution,
- emphasising the importance of the precautionary and polluter pays principles and the primacy of preventive measures,
- addressing all main pollution types (including less visible pollution types such as nutrients, pesticides, etc.),
- addressing emerging issues, such as endocrine disruptors and anti-microbial resistance,
- highlighting the transboundary nature of pollution and the related need for (international or regional) cooperation,
- calling on all relevant stakeholders, emphasizing the special role of the private sector (in promoting sustainable production and consumption and green growth/development, which will be key to tackling pollution and overall sustainable development) and calling on the private sector and all other relevant stakeholders to actively engage.
- ensuring that the reference made to economic growth and jobs is about sustainable (inclusive and green) economic development.

Regarding the text on the global coalition in the declaration (OP12), given the ongoing discussions on a 'Coalition towards a pollution free planet' proposed by the Secretariat which will need further discussion, outside the discussion on the Ministerial outcome declaration, we suggest to keep this paragraph open until it is more clear how Members would like to see the follow up after UNEA.

We enclose drafting suggestions to include most of the above points. However, we leave it in the hands of the President of UNEA3 how and if these proposals are to be incorporated, bearing in mind the main objective of agreeing a consensual Ministerial Declaration that inspires all relevant actors to take action "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet". The EU remains firmly committed to support the President in this endeavour.

## Ministerial declaration of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”

*Preliminary draft of the ministerial outcome document*

*Released on 21 September 2017*

- *Detailed comments by the EU and its MS for the 6/10 deadline*

1. We, the world’s ministers of environment and other high-level government representatives, gathered for the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to discuss a path towards a pollution-free planet. We welcome the progress that has been achieved by the international community to prevent and reduce pollution. We need to drastically accelerate our efforts if we want to secure a pollution-free planet for our ecosystems and our peoples. We commit to working with all stakeholders to rapidly explore and implement every possible solution to beat pollution in all areas, namely, air, land and soil, freshwater and oceans.
2. As the representatives of all countries, we believe that, regardless of age, gender or culture, faith or wealth, no one should die from unsafe water or poor hygiene. Yet, nearly 2,000 children below the age of five will do just that every day. No one should choke because they walk down a street or cook a hot meal in their home. Yet every day, 9 out of 10 of us will continue to breathe air that is unsafe and 20,000 people will die because of it. No community should be contaminated by hazardous chemicals and waste. Yet of the thousands of chemicals on the market, only a fraction is properly tested, labelled or tracked and it is estimated that there could be as many as 25 million agricultural workers in the developing and transition world suffering some form of occupational pesticide poisoning each year. No coastal community should struggle to secure adequate dietary protein from already fragile coastal fisheries. No ecosystem should be so damaged by production and consumption choices that it ceases to function properly. Yet every year, we dump up to 13 million tonnes of plastic in our oceans and 50 million tonnes of electronic waste on our land.
3. We acknowledge the linkages between pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and we recognize that pollution can have global and transboundary impacts. We recognize that tackling pollution is necessary to achieve both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and also note with concern that all forms of conflict, particularly armed, can inflict damage on the environment, often leaving a legacy of pollution that delays recovery and threatens the health of people and ecosystems. No one should be left behind as we strive to deliver the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development or other international frameworks. Yet it is still the poorest and most vulnerable people in society who are disproportionately affected.
4. This Assembly recognizes that everyone on this planet is entitled to live in a clean environment, with safe access to clean water, air and soil. Any threat to these precious natural resources is a threat to our health, our society, our economy, our ecosystems, our security and our very survival. Pollution is not new, but with the global population expected to reach 10 billion people by 2050 - accompanied with a global increase in demand for resources, these self-imposed threats and the need for a preventive approach have never been greater.
5. We also acknowledge that determination, collaboration, knowledge generation and sharing, innovation and clean technology can help transform these challenges into opportunities. The transition to a pollution-free planet is not only achievable, but can help tackle poverty and inequalities, improve health, create decent jobs and drive inclusive and sustainable economic development, improve life below water and on land, and reduce global warming.
6. We must recapture and reinvest the 300 tonnes of gold buried in electronic waste every year; the

Comment [EU1]: This is important for the EU

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Comment [EU2]: EU/MS would like to see a reference to pesticides here and would be happy to update this figure with a more globally relevant figure that may be published in the upcoming report of the Commission on pollution and health.

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Comment [EU3]: To avoid excluding biodiversity, oceans et al. among the most precious resources

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Comment [EU4]: The declaration should state clearly that prevention should be a priority over mitigation and rehabilitation

Comment [EU5]: This is SDG8 language

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billions of dollars in plastic packaging being thrown away; the immense economic loss from exposing children to lead in paint; the US\$8.7 billion annual cost of intelligence quotient loss from exposure to by-products emissions of mercury, and the US\$5 trillion spent on healthcare because of air pollution.

7. Many actors have already taken the lead on this journey and have been very successful at addressing pollution. Governments have adopted targeted multilateral or regional environmental agreements that aim to address pollution in its various aspects and, if effectively implemented, they will help turn the tide on pollution. Solutions to prevent and help remove pollutants and detoxify our environment exist around the world. We must dramatically scale up and accelerate the solutions that countries, cities, businesses and individuals are already using to avoid risking further exposure of humans and ecosystems to existing and growing pollution.
8. We acknowledge the magnitude of challenges and opportunities identified in the United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director's Report, *Towards a Pollution-Free Planet*.
9. We commit to preventing, mitigating and managing the pollution of air, land and soil, freshwater and oceans by:
  - a. Supporting the development, collation and use of reliable scientific data. This includes better multidisciplinary indicators; and gender disaggregated data; capacity for efficient data gathering and monitoring; easier access to and wider availability of data and information; and greater transparency and open sharing of data. Promoting evidence-based decision making in the public and private sectors, effective standard setting by all stakeholders and greater participation by individuals from all walks of life.
  - b. Targeting pollutants through cross-sectoral approaches, environmental agreements and tailored action, taking into account the precautionary principle. First and foremost, by implementing existing multilateral agreements, conventions and regulations to prevent, control and reduce pollution. By developing global policies to prevent, reduce and control pollutants where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage or where the science is clear, but actions do not yet exist. And by increasing research on pollutants, including on emerging issues, such as endocrine disruptors, antimicrobial resistance or cocktail effects of multiple contaminants, where the impact is not yet clear.
  - c. Fostering inclusive and sustainable economic development and job creation, while promoting innovation and the uptake and transfer of new clean and environmentally sound technologies, making use of the opportunities offered by resource efficiency and circular economy approaches, including sustainable nutrient management. Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns providing reliable sustainability information to consumers, making it easier for producers and consumers to rethink, reuse, recycle, repair, recover and remake any products, materials or services.
  - d. Promoting the adoption and implementation of policies and approaches for the sound management of chemicals and waste, including safe non chemical alternatives, the use of integrated life cycle and value chain approaches and sustainable chemistry, and making best use of policy interlinkages, trade, investment, and innovation opportunities.
  - e. Working with local governments towards promoting sustainable models of rural and urban development that address, in an integrated manner, cleaner and more liveable cities.
  - f. Promoting incentives, including fiscal, to stimulate systemic and behavioural changes. This includes applying the polluter-pays principle, understanding and including the true cost of pollution in financial decisions and redirecting investments from the short-term profits of polluting activities to the more

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sustainable profits of greener alternatives.

- g. Strengthening and enforcing more integrated [and gender sensitive](#) policies, regulations and laws. This will be achieved by supporting institutions and building capacity; bolstering monitoring and accountability systems; and sharing best practices, standards, policy instruments and tools.
  - h. Creating and expanding multistakeholder partnerships between governments, academia, civil society, individuals [and the private sector, which has a special role in combating pollution](#). This includes emphasizing the enormous potential of partnerships between different stakeholders. Increased coordination amongst United Nations agencies and bodies is fundamental to target pollution in all its aspects.
10. As ministers of the environment [and other high-level government representatives](#), we recognize that we [are accountable](#) in delivering on these commitments, taking into account the different capacities amongst countries, and the need for greater cooperation at multilateral and bilateral levels through means such as the exchange of experiences, resources, and technologies.
11. The responsibility for combatting pollution does not rest with national governments alone; it is an international endeavour with crucial roles for the private sector, international organizations, civil society, and individuals. As just a few of the 7.5 billion people living on planet Earth, [while we stress the important role of education and awareness raising](#), we urge our fellow citizens to recognize that everyone of us is responsible for making that happen. And, as mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, partners, sisters and brothers, friends, colleagues, neighbours and communities, we cannot overstate the need to make it happen quickly.
12. We recognize that moving towards a pollution-free planet is a long-term enterprise. [We commit ourselves to undertake and scale-up actions agreed in this Assembly and request the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to engage interested stakeholders in establishing a common platform for action on pollution for our consideration at the next session of the Assembly. We also call for a global coalition for a pollution-free planet fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals to inspire action and promote collaboration amongst existing frameworks.](#)
13. We warmly welcome the resolutions adopted at the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. We applaud the many pledges announced by diverse stakeholders towards reducing pollution in our planet. [As addressing pollution is a crucial element for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, we take upon ourselves to advocate for the message of this declaration in all relevant fora, including the High-level Political Forum](#), and to follow up on its implementation at our next session in 2019. This is our commitment to work towards a pollution-free planet.

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Comment [EU6]: FI and MS support the idea on addressing follow up and mobilizing actions after UNEA3. However, the formulation may be confusing, given the ongoing discussions on a "Coalition towards a pollution free planet" proposed by the Secretariat and that we suggest to keep this paragraph open until it is more clear how Members would like to see follow up after UNEA

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