

Expected Outcomes from UNEA-3

Submitted by the Women's Major Group to UN Environment
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1. The input and expectations of your Major Group from the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2017 Assembly session

- A short but strong message regarding human actions that can reverse pollution and realistic governments' commitments to achieve this. Perhaps the section on Transformative Steps and Actions can be further developed over introductory comments and all other information that has been reiterated previously throughout the years.
- The message should not just urge governments and citizens to take actions but private sector and other sectors' involvement need to understand impacts from their actions and urgent need to change not just processes but production and consumption habits. This is not reflected so far in the Draft document.
- Language in outcome documents should reflect diversity of all stakeholders involved and recognize the importance of each and everyone of them as agents of change.
- Recognition that a "pollution free planet" and a healthy environment overall, needs to take into consideration gender equality and women's rights; women are bearers of traditional knowledge often associated to natural resources that surround them and that they interact with on a daily basis which make them have a key role in conservation, role that is often ignored thus leaving them out of decision-making, decisions that will ultimately affect them; women's and men's health is affected differently by pollution and we need to understand biological factors and gender roles in order to find solutions; the most vulnerable to pollution are women and children, as exposure to persistent and hormone disrupting pollutants in early years leads to irreversible damage, therefore they need protection; women often carry the role of care-taking including for the sick and elderly which add up a burden on women's lives often barring them from different activities that can mean steady income or other opportunities to help them thrive.
- Realistic transformative steps and actions that consider differences between rural and urban areas; we are concerned about draft documents calling for the private sector to identify and implement market-based solutions and alternatives as many rural communities often face barriers for entering into market dynamics, especially women who often lack capital assets, do not participate and/or are uninformed of such market deals that will ultimately affect them, among others. The private sector needs a profound change on the way they do business and this needs to go in hand with a strong consumer campaign that lead to real transformation over

the patterns of consumption and production. Companies need to face the reality and understand that production processes not only need to be replaced by innovation with non-toxic materials but that production rates need to go down in order to end all forms of pollution.

- During UNEA-3, all Parties realize that perverse subsidies to polluting sectors need to be phased out, and a careful look at this issue cannot be overemphasized: when biofuels were promoted as a cleaner, more environmentally-friendly “solution”, organizations already warned about potential damages to peoples and biodiversity. A couple of years later the evidence came out.
- Elimination of harmful non-recyclable waste at the source by mandatory substitution with safe and non-chemical alternatives in line with international commitments by 2020
- Resolutions and commitments to work with the local governments of the world towards promoting sustainable models of urban development that address, in an integrated manner, cleaner and livable cities including by public procurement measures that eliminate one-way plastics and packaging, eliminate pesticide-use in public spaces and phase-out fossil fuels in the energy and transportation sectors;
- Significantly expand the application and distribution in all countries of the best available science and technologies towards combating the threat of pollution in all its forms while applying the precautionary principle;
- Expand existing and create new multi-stakeholder partnerships, bringing together Governments, the private sector, civil society, the United Nations system and the people of the world ensuring policy coherence, good governance, rule of law and transparency.
- Recognition and measures to be taken in order to address the health Risks associated with environmental pollution. As the impact of human activities and issues of environmental health have become increasingly global in scale and context. Pollution affects both urban and rural areas, and people living in poverty including women and girls, who cannot afford to protect themselves from the negative impacts of pollution, end up suffering the most.

2. The input and expectations of your Major Group from resolutions to be adopted at the 2017 Assembly, existing drafts and proposals for new resolutions

- We strongly support a Resolution to be introduced on Gender and Pollution, as said before, men and women are impacted differently from pollution, and international policy fora and other sectors need to understand this so that measures are taken, for instance, by phasing out of toxic materials that are known to have serious impacts on children and women’s reproductive ability. The fact that all forms of pollution - air (both indoor and outdoor), soil and water - are disproportionately weighing in on women and children should be addressed in a separate Resolution at UNEA-3, or at the very least addressed explicitly in every Resolution across themes.
- The Resolutions should not be formulated in silos, but should take into account the close interlinkages among issues in pollution across ecosystems. Soil pollution caused by over-

dependence on synthetic and fossil-based fertilizers is linked with marine pollution issues such as ocean acidification, eutrophication, etc. The emission of nitrous oxide from soil caused by dependence on synthetic fertilizers substantially contribute to air pollution. Despite the increasing recognition of the livestock industry as a major GHG emitter and closely linked to climate change, and other forms of pollution including through GMO contamination, no Resolution addresses this. There are many other examples of interlinkages in issues in pollution that UNEA-3 Resolutions should address, which could be overlooked if each Resolution is treated in silos.

- The potential impacts of technologies being promoted as solution of development challenges such as climate change in aggravating pollution should be looked into at UNEA-3.
- 3. Geoengineering technologies, such as ocean fertilization which involves the dumping of iron or urea particles into seas and oceans to promote plankton bloom will only aggravate acidification and marine pollution in general. Stratospheric injection of sulfur and other particles for the purpose of solar radiation manager will only aggravate air pollution and would have impact on marine and soil environment as well. Geoengineering should be banned, or at the very least strictly regulated along the lines established in the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the London Convention/Protocol on marine dumping.
- The issues in Wastes should not be limited to Urban Pollution since the waste crisis - including the massive environmental catastrophe from the use of plastic - is not limited to urban environment, but in rural areas too and cuts across ecosystems, including the remotest uninhabited islands and deepest trenches of the oceans.
- Pollution caused by electronic wastes does not seem to be covered by any of the proposed Resolutions.
- The impacts of pollution on the achievement of the SDGs and its contribution to development problems that the SDGs are addressing should be tackled in a separate Resolution. This should be a basis for actionable proposals that will involve the government, civil society and all sectors such as a mechanism for participatory and multi-sectoral assessment of technologies to ensure that these will not cause pollution.
- There is a lack of recognition of local community and indigenous people's initiatives that have helped curbed pollution as well as local livelihoods that contribute to the conservation of ecosystems, such as Indigenous and Local Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs), as recognized by the CBD.

3. The expectations of your Major Group from UN Environment in general

- UNEA-1 & 2 were especially gender blind. Most panels in all fora, panels, and events showed a lack of gender balance and the themes seldom touched upon gender issues in the different fields of environment. Although we saw a slight improvement, and commend UNEP for supporting the very first GGEO-6, UNEA-2 didn't reflect UNEP's commitments towards gender equality. We expect that UNEA-3 will be 100% gender-aware and that UNE will champion this

achievement.

- We hope that the schedules and overall organization of the event allows for all Major Groups and rightsholders to participate effectively in each of the spaces. Given the reduced funding for civil society participation, year by year numbers diminish making it difficult for the different constituencies to track the different sessions, especially when parallel. Therefore, we encourage the organizers of the event to take this into consideration. It would be ideal if each of the constituencies are able to follow the different leadership Dialogues, but also the CoW and related sessions.
- We expect that spaces for side events are open and inclusive and that it doesn't represent a challenge; the Secretariat and Parties need to understand that civil society have reduced spaces for participation and side events are key to their work. The shrinking of this space represents a step back and it hinders our work.
- We hope to see clearer links from UN Environment to HLPF.
- We hope that Major Groups will be able to access the virtual platform for consultation on draft resolutions
- We welcome initiatives such as the Clean Planet's Charter/People's Pledge as we expect its openness and inclusiveness