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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):
- Third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent
Representatives (OECPR-3) (Nairobi, 29 November - 1 December 2017)
- Third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3)
(Nairobi, 4-6 December 2017)
= Statements by the European Union and its Member States

Delegations will find in the [Annex](#) for information a compilation of statements, as delivered during the OECPR-3 and UNEA-3 meetings, including the High-level Segment.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

**Third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-3)
(Nairobi, 29 November - 1 December 2017)**

**Third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3)
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= Statements by the European Union and its Member States

Opening Statement at OECPR-3

Mr. Chair,
Excellences,
Distinguished colleagues,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement."

We would like to express our appreciation to the Executive Director Mr. Erik Solheim, to the Secretariat of the UN Environment Programme, the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and to the UNEA Bureau for their hard work in preparing this meeting.

We also truly appreciate the process led by Minister Gutiérrez, the President of UNEA, involving transparent and inclusive consultations on a final draft of the Ministerial Declaration, which we want our Ministers to adopt next week.

The EU and its Member States are looking forward to productive discussions amongst all member states at this OECPR meeting. We trust that our common aim is to reach good and meaningful results by Friday on the Ministerial Outcome Document, draft resolutions and decisions and on all other relevant documents to be presented to the UNEA-3 for adoption.

During the following three days of negotiations, we should keep in mind that our goal is to prepare a UNEA which sends a clear and strong signal to the broader public that Member States are committed to proactively address pollution in all its dimensions.

Mr. Chair,

The third Session of the Assembly will convene under the overarching theme "Towards a Pollution Free Planet" with the aim of putting forward ambitious, effective and collaborative action towards preventing and reducing pollution. It is our responsibility to make the best and most constructive use of the meeting this week in order to provide the Assembly with meaningful and actionable input for its consideration that meets this forward-looking theme. We welcome the Executive Director's background report which helped formulate our proposals for resolutions and will inspire the leadership discussions during the UNEA.

We are faced with many persistent and even growing pollution challenges, and this trend has to be turned. We recognize the utmost importance of concerted and ambitious action and wide international mobilization to tackle pollution, considering that pollution affects water and food security, economic development, social justice and human health.

We explicitly emphasize the strong inter-linkages between environment and health and the importance to address them jointly, and in doing so implementing the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development.

In this context we also welcome the report of the Lancet Commission on pollution and health, which provides valuable information about the burden that pollution places on health and economic development. We have submitted a proposal for a resolution on this matter, which we hope will be supported by all given its importance for people and the environment worldwide.

A pollution-free planet cannot be achieved without active participation of all relevant stakeholders. Also in the context of pollution, we see that the SDGs provide an overarching global framework agreed by all UN Member States and thus an opportunity for all actors to aim at and take action collaboratively towards the common targets. We need all actors - governments, academia, science, industry and civil society alike, to boost the efforts necessary for its implementation.

Our priority for this week would be to reach a common understanding and agree on a set of resolutions and encourage actions needed to address pollution by all relevant stakeholders. With the necessary constructive spirit and political will we are confident that a final agreement can be achieved and paved the way for a successful UNEA-3 next week.

Mr. Chair,

The EU and its Member States will collaborate in a positive spirit and build on the progress made so far to foster meaningful consensus.

Opening Statement (Committee of the Whole)

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

This third meeting of the United Nations Environment Assembly is a unique exercise due to the change of cycle and the back to back meeting of the Open Ended Committee of the Permanent Representatives. We want to congratulate the UNEA President and the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme for their contributions into delivering of this third session of the Assembly. Looking at the results of the OECPR, we are certain it will be a success.

We welcome the very constructive and fruitful consultations at OECPR-3 led by the UNEA President and the Ministerial Outcome Document that has been endorsed by the OECPR and has been built on in-depth consultations, spirit of compromise and consensus. We will be proud to adopt and communicate to our people a global and a common and proactive consensual message to the world about the need to achieve a pollution-free planet.

The European Union and its Member States want to conclude this week with a meaningful and long-term vision to address pollution in all its complexity. This outcome document provides valuable guidance for all Member States and stakeholders for this.

We would also like to emphasize the interlinkages of pollution with biodiversity, climate change and health. Most importantly, it is the health and well-being of both the people and the planet and its ecosystems that we must protect.

In the resolution on Environment and Health, presented by the European Union and its Member States and co-sponsored by a number of other countries, we address the need to base our common action on the precautionary principle and take a cross-cutting approach. Among other actions, we call on the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme to continue with his ongoing efforts in collaboration with the World Health Organisation, relevant UN entities and stakeholders, including the private sector, to support countries, upon request, in developing integrated environment and health policies and measures, and to develop methods, tools, and guidelines to promote integrated environmental and health risk assessments. Advancing the environmental agenda means addressing the health agenda.

We wish to facilitate environment ministers' discussion of this important environment and health nexus. We invite all ministers and heads of delegations to a breakfast on Wednesday 6 December at 8.00 am to discuss the main co-operative actions and solutions towards preventing pollution and reducing its adverse impacts on health and the environment.

We also wish to underline the need to adopt cross-sectoral approaches for solution-oriented action. Sustainable consumption and production, life cycle approaches, circular economy, and gender mainstreaming are an opportunity to address environmental issues in coherence with sustainability, climate change and economic development. The European Union and its Member States invite you all to a side event on Tuesday 5 December at 1:15 pm in room 1 on the topic of "The role of circular Economy in the transition "Towards a pollution-Free Planet". This side event aims at setting the frame for global action on sustainable consumption and production, exploring how a circular economy can address resource constraints and generate economic opportunities for a pollution free world.

Dear colleagues,

During the third session of OECPR, we have already reached a common understanding on 8 resolutions and decisions. Work has been intense and constructive during the weekend to achieve this consensual understanding on those resolutions that were discussed during OECPR-3 and we appreciate the efforts that all Member States and the Secretariat have put into this process.

Furthermore, we welcome all resolutions that have been endorsed by the OECPR. It is clear that behind each of these resolutions is a need for action that the countries, the private sector and other stakeholders, United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant institutions need to address now.

This third session of the Assembly will be a success because of its clear purpose and a common goal of addressing pollution. I am sure that when we move further on the global environmental agenda in the coming years and prepare for the fourth session, we will put our full efforts to envisaging the environmental agenda and the vision for united global action. What we discuss and agree upon during the UN Environment Assembly must benefit to the health and well-being of the people, our living environment and biodiversity.

Last but not least, we would like to highlight that we, as Environment Ministers, have the opportunity and responsibility to communicate the main political message from this global meeting to the High Level Political Forum and to the wider global public of the importance of pollution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. The European Union and its Member States have the following message – a commitment to a global joint action to address pollution that will make a real difference. But really acting on it, will make the change even faster.

Mr President, Excellences, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentleman
I wish you a successful week of solution-oriented contributions.

Progress reports on UNEA-2 resolutions

The EU and its Member States appreciate the updates by UN Environment's Executive Director on the progress made to implement various resolutions. At this stage we would like to provide our general comments and will submit our detailed comments in writing.

In relation to the **2030 Agenda**, we would like to recall the major role of UNEA and the UN Environment Programme in the implementation and follow-up of Agenda 2030. In the report, we would have appreciated more analysis on how successful the UN Environment Programme has been in influencing HLPF outcomes and reports and recommendation on how to further strengthen UN Environment's involvement. We encourage the Executive Director to further use opportunities at the HLPF to highlight and strengthen the environmental dimension of the Agenda and to increase awareness on the key role the environment has for overall sustainable development, including through effects on health, social costs, negative effects on economic growth and resilience.

We would also have appreciated receiving more information on what concrete changes the UN Environment Programme's participation in the UN development system reform has brought.

We note with concern that several sections in the resolution 2/5 were not covered in the progress report. We would welcome a brief update in relation to those. We would like the Environment Programme to provide information on its actions related to support to scientific panels as well as for strengthening policy relevance through increasing visibility of scientific reports. Concerning the **Paris Agreement**, EU and its Member States welcome the result of COP 23. We must continue to build on this momentum, considering the work ahead of us before COP 24 next year, including the Facilitative Dialogue that will be another milestone.

We acknowledge the Paris Agreement is irreversible and its full integrity and implementation are key for security and prosperity.

While the EU and its Member States are the largest provider of public climate finance, we call for future participation of a broader range of contributors. We also urge all countries to proceed with preparations and implementation of their nationally determined contributions and country-driven adaptation planning processes.

In relation to the **sound management of chemicals and waste**, we call on the UN Environment Programme, governments and all relevant stakeholders to enhance efforts to reach the 2020 goal, as contained in the SDG target 12.4. and on UNEP's work in relation to the beyond 2020 process going on under SAICM. It will be very important in relation to ensuring that we will after 2020 be able to undertake effective international efforts for the sound management of chemical and wastes.

EU and its Member States have included the cross-cutting matter of sound management of chemicals and waste as one of the basic pillars in the resolution on Environment and Health. Moreover, we find that the sound management of chemicals and waste should be clearly reflected in relevant outcome documents from UNEA-3, including the Ministerial Declaration.

We expect the delayed overview for policymakers to implement the SDGs on this matter, as requested in resolution 2/7, to be issued in early 2018. We would also be interested to obtain more information on the state of play of the update to Global Waste Management Outlook, including on the complementarity and interlinkages with the Global Chemicals Outlook.

Regarding the report on **sustainable consumption and production** (SCP), we urge the UN Environment Programme to achieve more coherence and synergies among its different sustainable consumption and production related actions. We encourage striving for concrete implementation projects that facilitate the shift towards more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

We share the concern on the inadequate financial resources for the implementation of SDG 12 in general and the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP) in particular. We urge countries and others in a position to do so to become more involved in 10YFP. We also note, that there is a huge untapped potential from the private sector.

Regarding **marine plastic litter and micro plastics**, we note that the recommendations in the report are reflected in the Norwegian proposal for a new marine litter resolution, and they should be discussed in that context.

Concerning the **biodiversity-related Conventions**, we fully agree with the priorities of capacity building, monitoring and reporting mentioned in the report.

We underline, that the tool for modular reporting that is under development should help to improve and streamline reporting, and thus significantly reduce the related workload. We find that streamlined and efficient monitoring and reporting is crucial to improve the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

With regard to the **multilateral environmental agreements** for which the UN Environment Programme provides the Secretariat, we note that a new update has been presented by the Secretariat late last week, hence our comments are preliminary. We find it especially important that the programmatic priorities of the MEA-s were reflected in the UN Environment Programme's medium-term strategy 2018–2021 and the programme of work. We encourage strengthening this mutual supportiveness of the work programs in the future cycles.

We also welcome that the framework of Delegations of Authority to MEAs Secretariats has been simplified. However, the work on the flexible template to govern the provision of Secretariat Services has slipped to March next year. We hope there will be no further slippage since this work will be very useful in relation to several MEAs, including the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions.

In the revised version of the report the commitment to waive the collection of the Programme Support Costs in relation to voluntary contributions to support the participation of developing countries in conferences of parties has been deleted. This important provision requested in resolution 2/18 and contained in the financial rules of many MEAs, is necessary to foster broader participation of developing countries and its deletion is thus disappointing.

We would like to hear more about the change in the allocation of tasks between the MEAs Management Team and the Expanded Leadership Group.

Finally, and more generally, we are concerned that the regular oversight of the implementation of resolutions is not fully integrated with the Performance Review of the Programme of Work and Budget. We would like to recommend that a reporting format for both the resolutions and the Programme of Work and Budget are discussed and adopted by CPR and that this reporting is introduced as a standing agenda item in all regular meetings of the CPR, in line with its mandate.

Trust funds

The EU and its Member States thank the Executive Director and the Secretariat for the presentation of the draft decision "*Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions*". This important decision is necessary for the continuity of the Trust Funds supporting the implementation of the Programme of Work of UN Environment Programme and the Multilateral Environmental Agreements as well as the establishment of new Trust Funds.

While straight-forward in its objective, we found the initial draft not fully "user-friendly" and we thank the Secretariat for the substantial improvements done in a collaborative spirit.

We also welcome the Executive Director's Report highlighting the challenges of managing multiple trust funds and to propose steps which could be taken to reduce the administrative burden of maintaining these Trust Funds requested by the Governing Council Decision [27/14](#) and the UNEA resolution [2/23](#).

As shown in that document, some of the Trust Funds are very old and inactive. The EU and its Member States made a recommendation that the inactive Trust Funds are closed. Where appropriate and in accordance to agreements with the respective donors, the "dormant" amounts can be relocated to activities agreed under the Programme of Work or respective MEAs, or if the trust fund concerns a single donor, to the donor, if it so wishes.

We advocate that the language in the Decision should be further strengthened to ensure that a meaningful and comprehensive action is taken to create a better overview of the funds and the areas they pertain to, and to review and close all relevant inactive Trust Funds, in agreement with donors and parties, where appropriate.

We look forward to a constructive discussion on this decision. As we believe the dormant funds remain quite significant at the moment, the effort to release them for relevant activities will be an important achievement, especially in light of the currently decreasing contributions from Member States.

GEO-6 progress report

The EU and its Member States thank UN Environment's Executive Director for the update on the progress in preparing the GEO-6. Keeping the environment under review is a part of the core mandate of UN Environment, therefore it should be a priority under the Environment Fund. We express strong support to the overall GEO-6 process, which is the flagship project of UN Environment.

This is because, we find that science-policy interface enables sound policy making for the benefit of the environment. Therefore, producing a high quality global environment outlook is a crucial part of delivering on the science-policy interface.

However, the EU and its Member States note with concern the financing shortages in the GEO-6 process and would welcome further clarification on the core budget allocations from the Environment Fund, including projections and flexibility.

We invite the UN Environment's Executive Director to prepare at his earliest convenience a detailed written information on the financial issues related to the finalization of GEO-6.

African Group Headquarters resolution

We are greatly disappointed about the fact that new draft resolutions are being introduced on the last day of the Open-Ended meeting of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives.

We agreed during the Annual Subcommittee that there will be few resolutions that are proposed timely to ensure their successful finalisation. We think that the success is not ensured for these resolutions due to the late proposal and this is weakening the work of UN Environment.

Furthermore, we have agreed to the theme of "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet" and to address the urgent topic of pollution.

The new resolutions address relevant issues but they are not contributing to the global theme, thus diluting the focus from our common aim.

In conclusion, we regret the practice of presenting resolutions at this late stages, that makes it unable for the Member States to have constructive and conclusive discussions on the text.

Ministerial Outcome Document

Mr President

On behalf of the European Union and its Member States, we highly appreciate your work in building towards consensus on a Declaration of world Environment Ministers.

Our Ministers of the Environment agreed already on 13 October that we are committed to effectively tackle pollution and hope Ministers from all UN Member States will show their commitment also.

The European Union and its Member States emphasize the global framework of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs for any global long term plan.

We emphasize the utmost importance of concerted and ambitious action and wide international mobilization to tackle pollution. This should take into account the links with climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification. Pollution affects water and food security, economic development and social justice, including health equality. We also find it important to promote the science policy interface in decision making. And we find it necessary to engage in multilateral collaboration to address pollution effectively.

You have achieved a remarkable result in your consultations so far. The European Union and its Member States can support the work you have done. We encourage others to do likewise. Consensus among United Nations Member States on specific pollution issues will provide a strong mandate for further action by the United Nations Environment Programme.

We are very satisfied with the final draft of the MOD circulated this week by the President. It succeeds in conveying the urgency of the challenges and our commitment to address them; and as such we believe that it can serve as a strong communication tool for UNEA. We look forward to engaging in the discussions to finalize the MOD over the next three days.

We encourage you to continue to show strong leadership and guide us towards meaningful text to which all ministers can align to. What matters most is the advancement of essence of the messages and incentivising action.

Mr President

We look forward to the results of this week's discussions in arriving at a substantial and successful United Nations Environment Assembly.

Closing statement

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates,

I have the honour to deliver this closing statement on behalf of the European Union and its 28 Member States. [*alignment candidate countries*]

We came to this session of the Assembly with high hopes. Today, the results of Assembly confirm the role of UNEA as the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment, and its important contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The Ministerial Declaration we have just adopted is a clear signal of our collective willingness to step up action against pollution. We are very grateful to you, Mr President, for your leadership in steering this process in an inclusive manner, and towards a successful conclusion.

The substantive resolutions that we have adopted will provide further guidance to our national policies and for international cooperation in the fight against pollution.

We are grateful for the broad support given to the resolution on environment and health that the EU and its Member States had submitted. The scientific evidence is clear on the many linkages between environmental pollution and human health, and the biosphere. We count on all of you to join us in putting our agreement into action.

We have also made another significant step in the fight against marine litter and plastic pollution, by agreeing to address and remove the barriers to combating these types of pollution more effectively. We have recognised the importance of eliminating all such discharge into the oceans. This will not be easy but now our actions have a clearer sense of direction.

On behalf of the European Union, we have put forward 20 different policies and initiatives as voluntary commitments against pollution. Many of these also involve countries from other parts of the world. EU Member States are adding to this with many more commitments on their own behalf – and more than 2 million citizens from all over the world have signed the pledge to “Beat pollution”. Let us all remind each other of these commitments as we move forward after this meeting!

It is important also that we continue to focus on the science-policy interface to enable good data, indicators, knowledge and assessments, as a basis for sound decision-making at all levels. We therefore look forward to the delivery of the 6th edition of the Global Environmental Outlook to UNEA-4.

We reemphasise the importance to send the right economic signals and redirect investments to prevent and minimize pollution. And look forward to continue working on this issue also with private sector.

Let me also stress the positive spirit generated by all participants at this UNEA session, who have shown strong commitment and determination towards our goal of a pollution free planet. Let's keep the momentum.

We have very much appreciated the different opportunities for engaging with stakeholders from civil society, private sector, science etc., and I am impressed with their contributions to our common cause. This engagement with stakeholders should be further strengthened at subsequent meetings of UNEA.

Let me conclude by congratulating Minister Siim Kiisler of Estonia on his election as President of UNEA-4. We are proud to see an EU Member State leading the Assembly during the next phase, and we are confident that the UNEA Presidency continues in safe hands.

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