

Global Joint Statement
from Major Groups and Stakeholders
for the 7th UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7)

supported by NGOs, Children and Youth, Women, Farmers, Local Authorities,
Indigenous Peoples and their communities, Science & Technology Community as
well as Workers and Trade Unions

adopted by the 21st Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum (GMGSF)

Preamble

We, representatives of the above-mentioned Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) from all regions of the world, have gathered at the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (GMGSF) prior to the UNEA 7. We stress the **urgent need for global coordination, collaboration, partnership and action to tackle the systemic threats driving the planetary crisis** of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss and all environmental challenges, as well as accelerating land degradation, desertification and water scarcity. These interconnected crises are severely destabilising ecosystems, human wellbeing, food systems and economic development, harming animal health as well as eroding peace and security.

The degradation of ecosystems and the exploitation of natural resources are inseparable from **systemic power imbalances and inequalities** that keep billions of people in poverty and hunger. These injustices are further aggravated by an increasing number of human-caused disasters, armed conflicts and wars, violence and oppression, all of which come with severe long-term environmental consequences. **Peace, justice and equity are the prerequisites for sustainable development.**

While most stakeholders recognise the urgency, **action is too slow or even worse, regressing in certain areas**. Implementation of existing agreements remains weak and there is often a lack of accountability for those that do not respect their obligations. Developing countries and countries in transition, in particular Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, face a lack of support and partnership in financing and implementing environmental protection measures for all ecosystems - from ridge to reef. Five years before 2030, the realisation of the **Agenda 2030 and of the Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs) is off track** across all regions of the world.

Global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise, and the **climate crisis** is already unleashing severe floods, droughts, storms, the rapid degradation of wetlands and forests, melting glaciers, with whole ecosystems at risk of collapse. **Biodiversity loss** is accelerating driven by human pressure and invasive species. **Pollution** has infiltrated every ecosystem due to unsustainable production and irresponsible consumption, wasteful agricultural practices, urbanisation and urban sprawl and weak environmental enforcement. Indigenous Peoples, children and youths, women, farmers and persons with disabilities are exposed to plastic particles and highly hazardous chemicals before they are even born. An increasing number of Indigenous

Peoples, farmers and rural communities and workers in many sectors are lacking occupational health and safety protections to protect them from chemicals and pollution. The triple planetary crisis is also a public **health emergency** that demands ambitious and coordinated political action.

Ensuring **sustainable food systems** is essential to achieving global environmental and social goals, as they directly influence biodiversity, climate resilience, and human and animal well-being. Indigenous food systems exemplify sustainability by fostering ecological balance, preserving agrobiodiversity, and strengthening community resilience. UNEA 7 must therefore prioritise policies that promote equitable, sustainable food systems for present and future generations.

Siloed environmental and climate policies and narrow technology-focused solutions alone will not solve the triple crisis and rising inequalities. We must confront the **root causes**. A whole of society and integrated approach must be rights-based, community-led and science-informed.

These crises threaten **future generations and erode intergenerational justice**. They **disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples and other marginalised and underrepresented groups and people**, such as farmers, workers, women and girls, children and youths, persons with disability, refugees and displaced persons, Peoples of African Descent and other communities subject to racism and discrimination. Those in already vulnerable situations are less resilient to withstand climate and environmental risks.

Engagement with rights-holders, stakeholders and civil society is under threat. In many parts of the world, we experience a shrinking of civic space, fundamental labour rights are under pressure, the exclusion of rights-holders and stakeholders, in particular of community and citizens driven organisations and of environmental defenders from policymaking, including mounting repression if not direct attacks against critical voices who challenge those in power.

We remain **deeply concerned about the weakening of gender language**, especially as women in conflict-affected regions suffer the most from pollution, climate change, and environmental degradation. These crises intensify insecurity, limit access to health and resources, and disproportionately harm displaced and marginalized women. UNEA must uphold gender as a cross-cutting priority, safeguard women's rights, and ensure the collection of gender-disaggregated data to inform effective responses. Environmental justice cannot be achieved without justice for women living in conflict and crisis contexts.

We appreciate the efforts made by Member States to advance solutions through UNEA and those **championing environmental multilateralism and high ambition** in a time of global tensions and increasing conflict.

We highly appreciate Member States **supporting the engagement of stakeholders** in the UNEA process and count on you to protect and strengthen **public participation in international fora**.

Recommendations

- We call on Member States to adopt a **strong Ministerial Declaration** that recommits the international community to environmental multilateralism and the urgency to act together.
- We welcome the process that delivered **GEO7** in a participatory way, in particular the contribution of the science community worldwide, consulting all Major Groups and Stakeholders along the way. We appreciate the efforts to embed Indigenous Peoples' knowledge for the first time. We urge Member States to refrain from making GEO7 political: the report stands for scientific facts and evidence, and these should be non-negotiable. We emphasise that the independent voice of science is integral to strengthening the science-policy interface.
- The rapidly advancing methods and programmes of **citizen science** are now touching the lives of millions of people on this planet. These approaches are available to governments and civil society alike. With the rapid pace of data sharing technology, citizen science will outpace regulation and governance. Citizen science provides complementary data to professional science and Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, and governments will be vulnerable if they do not embrace these approaches to help you implement your resolution and improve the lives of the citizens you stand for.
- We call on all Member States to uphold and strengthen **full and meaningful public participation in international fora** and to protect and **strengthen public participation and stakeholder engagement at national and local level**, including through protection measures for environmental defenders, journalists, artists and cultural practitioners, through social dialogue with social partners, through true engagement with independent non-government scientists and through meaningful intergenerational, intersectional and inclusive environmental action involving all stakeholder groups.
- We call on Member States to honour their obligations under international law, including **UNDRIP**, to fully uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and acknowledge the rights and protections for Indigenous Peoples in voluntary isolation and initial contact, in accordance with relevant international human rights instruments and principles.
- We call on Member States to respect and implement the **ILO's Fundamental Rights at work** as a way to guarantee social justice in environmental policy making.
- We call on Member States to integrate **local and regional governments** in all phases of policy design, implementation, monitoring and review, ensuring a coherent and **effective multilevel governance framework**.
- We further underscore the vital role of **artists, cultural practitioners and the creative economy** as independent contributors to environmental governance, public participation, and just transition outcomes. Arts and culture are not merely tools for awareness-raising, entertainment, or cultural diplomacy; they

are forms of civic expression and knowledge production that help societies interpret evidence, confront complexity, and engage meaningfully with environmental decision-making. We call on Member States and UNEP to recognise arts and culture as integral to environmental governance, and to support artist representation as part of inclusive, participatory, and people-centred responses to the triple planetary crisis.

Regarding the draft resolutions presented to UNEA, MGS strongly welcome the initiatives and the leadership of Member States, in particular proponents and co-sponsors, in presenting solutions to pressing environmental issues.

Regarding Cluster A, MGS welcomes the efforts made to accelerate the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems through dedicated resolutions on seaweed blooms, coral reefs, the management of wildfires, karst ecosystems, the preservation of glaciers and of deep-sea ecosystems. Stakeholders across Major Groups and regions urge Member States to halt biodiversity loss and to ensure the rapid implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Wildfire governance needs to centre communities and integrate the knowledge systems, sciences and practices of Indigenous Peoples. MGS urge Member States to bridge the technology and capacity divide to support developing countries, and countries in transition, in wildfire prevention, early warning systems, invasive species management and effective tools adapted to local needs and to secure dedicated financing for prevention, community capacity building and low-cost innovation to shift from reactive firefighting to prevention and resilience measures.

MGS appreciate that **karst ecosystems** are the subject of a UNEA resolution. We recognize the vital role of speleology and karst-specialized civil society organizations in advancing the understanding, conservation, and sustainable management of karst areas. We urge you to centre Indigenous Peoples knowledge and leadership in the management of karst geo- and ecosystems. It is key to reduce dependence on karst water while protecting existing water supplies, to reverse biodiversity loss such as bat populations, and to protect lands and waters that are of ecological, cultural, economic, and scientific value. We also emphasize the importance of integrating circular economy principles to promote sustainable resource use, mitigate waste, and prevent irreversible damage - since karst ecosystems, once degraded, cannot be restored and are lost forever. We call for 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.

MGS urge UNEA to adopt a resolution making **glaciers and the cryosphere** a governance priority, mandating UNEP to establish a framework that integrates holistic water management approaches, water security, disaster risk reduction, climate adaptation and biodiversity protection. Governments must commit to stronger early-warning systems, with UNEP leading a global cryosphere knowledge platform linked to the WMO and IPCC, ensuring inclusive monitoring and collaboration with rural communities, women, youths, farmers and Indigenous Peoples.

We uphold the **ocean** as a living and life-giving system that sustains all people, cultures, and ecosystems. It is not a resource to be exploited. Recognising the limits of our knowledge and the interconnected nature of marine ecosystems, we stress that safeguarding the deep sea requires an independent, precautionary, and science-based approach. This must include the knowledge systems, sciences, practices, and governance systems of Indigenous Peoples, which are grounded in balance, precaution, and intergenerational responsibility. We therefore support global efforts to address critical gaps of understanding of **deep-sea ecosystems** through UNEP-led transparent, independent research and processes free from commercial extractive influence.

Stakeholders call on Member 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 prevent seaweed blooms. Accountability for transboundary effects and reparatory measures, including compensation for coastal communities and the fisherfolk most affected, are key.

Stakeholders recognise the urgent need to protect **coral reefs**. The resolution should be fully consistent with the BBNJ and CBD. We would welcome support for more research on on-site reef protection measures. We stress the vital role of Indigenous Peoples, coastal communities, fisherfolk, children and youth and women in protecting coral reefs.

Regarding Cluster B, MGS fully support all efforts to **strengthen synergies between MEAs and their implementation** in order to streamline global multilevel environmental governance and address fragmentation. We call for the establishment of an independent high-level task force to produce a report identifying concrete opportunities to advance synergies among specific MEAs and develop a roadmap for implementation ahead of the SDGs and Climate Synergies Conference and UNEA-8. This is crucial in order to identify tangible steps to advance synergies.

Stakeholders strongly welcome Kenya's initiative to address **sustainability and AI**. We call on Member States to ensure equitable access and ownership of AI technologies and environmental data, ensuring data democratisation and participation of marginalised and underrepresented groups, including Indigenous Peoples, farmers, women and youth. We ask for the protection of safe and secure work conditions for all workers confronted with AI on the job. An integrated approach should integrate both environmental and socio-economic dimensions across the AI life cycle with an emphasis on human rights, data protection and privacy, fairness and non-discrimination and rights-based approaches. We urge environmental authorities and related bodies to utilise AI to enhance environmental sustainability and we call for technology support and capacity building for the countries of the Global South.

Stakeholders strongly welcome the draft resolution on the **meaningful participation of children and youth** in environmental and climate action. We underscore the importance of inclusive, accessible and meaningful platforms for engagement and call for tangible steps to strengthen meaningful, full and effective engagement of children and youth in the full decision-making and policymaking cycle at the local, national and international levels. This must include acknowledgement of and support for existing efforts to strengthen youth engagement, including by recognising the outcomes of the Youth Environment Assembly and predictable funding and support for its future

sessions, as a way of ensuring an avenue for youth engagement and preparation. This includes mandating official, gender-balanced youth representation as national and international negotiators and representatives in delegations to spaces like UNEA-7 with a fair and harmonised selection process. Young people's voices must be actively included, not tokenised. We recognise the vital role of children and youth diverse experiences and intersecting social identities, in shaping their contributions to environmental stewardship, including gender, nationality, disability, and Indigenous identities.

The environmental crises threaten **future generations and erode intergenerational equity**. They disproportionately affect Indigenous Peoples, marginalised and underrepresented communities such as farmers, refugees and displaced persons, communities subject to racism and discrimination, or women and girls. Those in already vulnerable situations are less resilient to withstand climate and environmental risks.

Stakeholders support the **promotion of sustainable solutions through sport** for a resilient planet. Sustainable sports must be achieved by greening the sports equipment value chain, addressing the informal workers and tackling irresponsible sourcing of plastics and other environmentally harmful materials, sustainable event management that embrace energy efficiency, and galvanizing the role of civil society and youth in using sports as a campaign to promote a resilient planet.

MGS support the initiative to **enhance the international response to crimes that affect the environment**. Stakeholders suggest strengthening the synergies between the work of UNODC, the open-ended intergovernmental expert group on crimes that affect the environment falling within the scope of the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime as well as UNEP's work. We furthermore recommend that UNEP should create synergies with other national and regional processes such as the African Union, and the Council of Europe draft convention on the protection of the environment through criminal law. We stress the need to recognise the victims of environmental crimes and to ensure the protection of witnesses, whistleblowers and environmental defenders, and the need for accountability mechanisms. UNEP should be enabled to further support the response by offering technical guidance on the documentation of environmental crimes, including where crimes that affect the environment happen in situations of weak governance or conflict.

While the draft resolution on ecocide was withdrawn on this occasion, MGS believe it is essential to address severe environmental damage, often referred to as **ecocide**, both in peacetime and as a result of armed conflicts and military activities including contamination and pollution of water bodies and agricultural land, destruction of ecosystems and biodiversity, illegal wildlife trafficking, mismanagement of solid and hazardous waste including tailings and risks from industrial and chemical facilities, and to acknowledge the need for remediation and restoration, health protection and accountability for environmental damage. MGS endorse the recognition of ecocide as a crime at national and international levels and encourage UNEA to elaborate support for this over the coming two years, including through collaborating proactively with states working to codify and address environmental crimes (including ecocide) under national and international criminal law, in alignment with the recent policy paper on environmental damage issued by the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

We deeply regret that the draft resolution on **Living Well in Balance and Harmony with Mother Earth** has been withdrawn. As stakeholders, we recognise the importance of diverse knowledge systems, Indigenous knowledge, farmer experience, heritage and worldviews, and the need to support these views for integrated environmental action.

Regarding Cluster C, MGS welcome further efforts to address chemicals and waste at global level. Stakeholders call for the recognition of the consequences of chemical pollution and contamination on human, animal, ecosystem, and planetary health, recognising disproportionate burdens on Indigenous Peoples, women and children, Farmers, workers and communities in vulnerable situations. We call for greater recognition of the link between climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution through chemicals and waste, including plastic pollution and biological pollution. 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 for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP).

As stakeholders we urge Member States to support a leading role for UNEP in the quadripartite arrangement for tackling environmental dimensions of **Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)** with urgency under the oversight by the UN General Assembly. There is a clear need for a comprehensive surveillance approach, tackling root causes and preventing AMR. There are several sectors that contribute significantly to AMR, in particular intensive terrestrial and aquatic animal production systems which should be meaningfully reflected in the resolution. Given that livestock production has accounted for roughly 70% of global antimicrobial use in recent decades, with usage expected to rise by 30% by 2040, integrating animal welfare into science-based strategies is critical for robust surveillance and One Health outcomes. Tackling AMR requires a transition towards sustainable and diversified food systems that reduces reliance on routine antimicrobial use. As stakeholders, we call for clear responsibility for the polluters. AMR is also of increasing concern during armed conflicts. We call on Member States to recognise the impacts of AMR in particular on vulnerable groups such as women, children, farmers, workers in the informal sectors or displaced persons. We support the commitments for developing and implementing multisectoral national implementation plans on addressing AMR and urge Member States to genuinely involve civil society in all policy processes. A leading role for UNEP is critical in the proposed Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against AMR (IPEA), as invited by UNGA.

Major groups and stakeholders welcome the leadership towards more international cooperation for the **Environmentally Sustainable Management of Minerals and Metals**. At the time when mineral demand around the world is exponentially increasing, environmental costs, human rights violations and geopolitical contentions increase with it. To avoid a global race to the bottom, the protection of environmental and human rights is of utmost importance. This cooperation will be crucial to create a new level playing field around the world for the best environmental standards for communities, economies and our planet. In addition, this should aim to enhance the human rights due diligence of the full lifecycle of minerals and metals. We welcome an open-ended working group to advance international cooperation on environmentally sound management of metals and minerals across the full supply

chain. Such cooperation needs to be based on human rights, the rights of Indigenous Peoples and the protection and promotion of fundamental labour rights. This instrument should lay the ground for the designation of restricted areas based on a clear, strong science and Indigenous knowledge-based criteria. This resolution will not only be an important opportunity for states to work together but it will be key to create a global framework to improve mining practices around the world, protect communities and ecosystems, generate trust and collaboration with all stakeholders and rights-holders. We call on states to come to a constructive compromise.

Stakeholders regret that a draft resolution on **circular economy** has been withdrawn. We urge Member States to promote a fair, inclusive and gender-balanced transition to a non-toxic and regenerative circular economy that maintains and keeps resources in use at their highest societal value at all times, centred on sustainable production and consumption, and social innovations, while respecting cultural contexts and knowledge systems, including those of Indigenous Peoples. As stakeholders we stress the need for resource justice as well as the protection of individual human rights and collective human rights, including the rights of Indigenous Peoples. We support a leadership role for UNEP to guide a global process for the transition to a non-toxic and harmful 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 and the International Resource Panel.

Regarding Cluster D, we also welcome the draft resolution on the **role of UNEP HQ in Nairobi** given its potential to address fragmentation and enhance the political authority, institutional coherence, and convening power of UNEP and UNEA, ultimately helping build a more coordinated and impactful multilateral system. However, efforts to consolidate environmental governance in a single location should be accompanied by measures to ensure regional balance and equitable access, including for stakeholders.

Regarding the **Medium-term strategy** for the period 2026-2029 and programme of work and budget for 2026-2027, we recall its commitment to the environmental dimensions of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development and recognize that the time frame of the proposed medium-term strategy and the programme of work and budget represents the final strategic period before the 2030 deadline.