

Intervention at ESCAP's 7th Session of the Committee on Environment and Development

1 December 2022, 10.30-12.00, Ministerial Roundtable 1: Agenda item 6: Protecting our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific, CR-1

Your Excellency, Ms. Zulfiya Suleimenova, Ms. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Honorable ministers, distinguished delegates,

- I am pleased to update you on some of the outcomes of the 5th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly 5.2 that took place in Nairobi from the 28th of February to the 2nd of March 2022, under the theme of "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" as well as on regional priorities for action.
- At this UN Environment Assembly, the world's ministers for the environment agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee with the mandate to forge an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution. The instrument is to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic. The negotiating committee will consider how to promote sustainable production and consumption of plastics from product design to environmentally sound waste management through resource efficiency and circular economy approaches. This first session of the committee is taking place as we speak in Uruguay.
- Along with combating plastic pollution, a second key UN environment assembly resolution that supports the establishment of a comprehensive and ambitious intergovernmental science policy panel on the sound management of chemicals and waste and preventing pollution. This will ensure that science informs action together with the already existing science policy panels on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and climate change. The ad hoc Open-Ended Working Group on the Science Policy Panel (OEWG-1.2) will be held in person at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand, from 30 January to 3 February 2023.

UNEP would also like to reiterate its support to coordinated UN action to address triple planetary crisis with member states. In particular:

- On **pollution**, UNEP looks forward to working with ESCAP, the broader UN system and member states in exploring a regional mechanism on clean air in line with the UN Environment Assembly Resolution 3/8 on "Preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally." We welcome the increased scope of EANET to include air pollution and and we also welcome the regional action programme on air pollution.

- On **nature** an important global milestone will be the upcoming Convention on Biological Diversity's fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CBD COP-15) that will be held later this month in Montreal, Canada, where Parties will work towards adopting a robust Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, which is essential for a sustainable shared future and ensuring the vision of living in harmony with nature. Conserving, protecting and restoring the health of our planet is foundational to supporting our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.
- And on **climate** we look forward to supporting member states in raising NDC ambitions, phasing out coal and energy transitions given that Asia emits more than 53% of global greenhouse gases. Energy transition for the region also mean creating more green jobs. The 2022 Review of Climate Ambition in Asia and the Pacific of the Asia-Pacific region report developed by ESCAP, UNEP and UNICEF under the issue-based coalition on raising ambitions on climate actions notes that even with full implementation of unconditional and conditional NDC commitments, emission in our region will grow 16% by 2030 compared to 2010 level. This report recommends that we must a) align the National Determined Contributions (NDCs) with long-term low emissions development strategies, b) develop and implement deep decarbonization sectoral pathways for energy, transport, urban development, trade and investment, by utilizing new forms of technology and innovation, c) invest in nature-based climate solutions.

Excellencies, this year has also seen the landmark adoption in July of the General Assembly resolution recognizing the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment. UNEP is committed to supporting members states to advance regional cooperation enhancing rights-based approaches to environmental protection which enable public participation, access to information and access to justice in environmental matters.

Lastly, the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific is due to take place in 2023. This is a key mechanism for ensuring the voice of Asia and the Pacific is heard at the UN Environment Assembly and we will keep member states updated on the details of the planned Forum.

I thank you for your kind attention.