

UNEP intervention APFSD

“Accelerating the recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at all levels in Asia and the Pacific”

March 27, 2023

Either

11.15-12.00 under Agenda item 2: Accelerating the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific

Or

16:00-17:00 under Agenda item 3: Towards the 2023 Sustainable Development Goals Summit

*APFSD plenary session
ESCAP guidance: 2-minute verbal intervention*

*Speaking points for Dechen Tsering,
UNEP Regional Director and Representative*

- Thank you chair.
- If I may I'd like to start by setting the broader context for this weeks APFSD. The last year has been in many ways a 'super year of commitments for the environment' with agreements made by member states:
 - On **nature** through the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework** under China's Presidency,
 - On **climate**, through the UNFCCC COP 27 meeting in Egypt saw major breakthrough on the establishment of loss and damage financing mechanism including transitional committee to develop operational modalities of the fund,
 - On **pollution** through **the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2)**, commitment to deliver on the negotiations to develop an international legally

binding instrument on plastic pollution by the end of 2024 and adopt the instrument by 2025.

- Further, our appreciation to the Government of Thailand, for successfully hosting the resumed first session of the ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, that took place in Bangkok, from 30 January to 3 February 2023.
 - And also more broadly on environmental rights through the historic **United Nations General Assembly decision** on July 28, 2022, that declared that “a clean, healthy and sustainable environment” is a universal human right.
- The challenge for us now is to make these commitments through action at the regional and country levels. And this challenge is urgent. Last week the IPCC report released the *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report* that condenses nearly a decade of climate science. It says the world is already 1.1°C warmer than it was in pre-industrial times, and that “deep, rapid and sustained mitigation and adaptation actions” are needed this decade in order to prevent the worst adverse impacts of climate change.
- Systemic change needs to happen across all sectors of the economy across Asia and the Pacific. That's especially true of the energy industry, which will need to dramatically scale back its reliance on fossil fuels and rapid transition to cleaner energy. A just energy transition should ensure equal access to energy services and benefits generated, in order to leave no one behind.
- To achieve sustainable development and human and planetary well-being, we must address the triple planetary crises of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste in an integrated manner.
- The UN system through the Issue Based Coalition on Scaling up Climate Action, co-chaired by UNEP and ESCAP, is supporting members states through three core focus areas of action:
 - Raising ambitions on climate action through Nation
 - ally Determined Contributions.
 - Accelerating action on air pollution in Asia Pacific to move towards achieving World Health Organization air quality guidelines by 2030, and
 - Accelerating the phase out of coal in Asia Pacific
- Allow me to end by informing honorable delegates that the UNEP's fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific will be held in the final

quarter of 2023. The Forum is a platform for governments, intergovernmental organizations, and major groups and other stakeholders, to discuss the regional environmental priorities and provide regional inputs to the outcome of the 6th session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) scheduled to be held from 26 February to 1 March 2024 in Nairobi under the theme “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution”.

- Thank you.