

## **United Nations Environment Assembly-6 (UNEA-6) Echo Report**

### **Background**

The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) convened from February 26 to March 1, 2024, at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The session's main theme was "Effective, Inclusive, and Sustainable Multilateral Actions to tackle the triple planetary crisis Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, Pollution, and Waste." Prior to UNEA-6, the sixth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-6) took place from February 19 to 23, 2024. During OECPR-6, delegates engaged in negotiations regarding resolutions and decisions, which were subsequently transmitted to UNEA for final negotiations and adoption. The primary objective was to gather stakeholders from around the world to discuss and address pressing environmental challenges.

UNEA-6 witnessed substantial engagement, attracting 7,000 delegates representing 182 UN Member States, as well as participants from civil society, Indigenous Peoples, international organizations, scientists, and the private sector. Throughout the session, a series of leadership dialogues were conducted, focusing on transformative actions and solutions for the planetary triple crisis. Additionally, a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue provided a unique platform for representatives of Member States, Major Groups, and the Private Sector to engage with high-level decision-makers.

### **Objectives**

Under the theme "Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution," UNEA 6 aimed to expedite efforts in addressing the triple planetary crisis, mitigating climate change, restoring nature and land, and fostering a pollution-free world. Several side events organized by Major Groups enriched the UNEA-6 sessions, fostering discussions, knowledge sharing, solution identification, and partnership building. These events, held before or alongside UNEA-6, included the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, the Youth Environment Assembly, meetings of the International Resource Panel, the Climate and Clean Air Conference, the United Nations Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment, the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, and the Cities and Regions Summit, among others.

Covering a wide range of topics, discussions encompassed youth involvement, indigenous perspectives on biodiversity preservation, innovations in the private sector, climate financing, circular bio-economy systems in agriculture, agro ecology farming, animal welfare assurance, and the prudent management of chemicals and waste, with a specific focus on highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture.

Recognizing the importance of inclusivity, it is essential to note that women and youth often face barriers to participation in multilateral global actions due to patriarchal systems, cultural pressures, and financial constraints. Despite their critical roles in environmental stewardship and sustainability, they are frequently marginalized in decision-making processes and leadership positions.

### **Women and Youth Participation in Multilateral Actions**

Efforts to address these challenges must include measures to empower and support the participation of women and youth in environmental initiatives. This involves providing financial resources, creating supportive policies, and challenging cultural norms that limit their engagement. Additionally, promoting gender equality and youth inclusion within multilateral forums is crucial for ensuring diverse perspectives are heard and integrated into decision-making processes.

By actively addressing these barriers and promoting the meaningful participation of women and youth, we can harness the full potential of all stakeholders in tackling global environmental challenges effectively. This inclusivity is essential for achieving sustainable and equitable outcomes for both present and future generations.

During UNEA-6, stakeholders engaged in discussions on various pressing environmental challenges, aiming to foster effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions. The session centred on addressing the triple planetary crisis, focusing on climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and waste management. Key issues that emerged from the debates included:

1. **Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation:** Deliberations emphasized the urgent need for strategies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the adverse effects of climate change.
2. **Biodiversity Conservation:** Participants underscored the importance of preserving biodiversity, combatting desertification, and restoring degraded land to promote land conservation and sustainable land management.
3. **Pollution Reduction:** Efforts were directed towards reducing pollution levels, particularly air pollution, and improving the sound management of chemicals and waste to safeguard environmental and human health.
4. **Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems:** Discussions revolved around promoting sustainable agricultural practices, including circularity in sugar cane production and the phasing out of highly hazardous pesticides to ensure food security and environmental sustainability.
5. **Sustainable Water Resource Management:** Attention was drawn to the necessity of strengthening water policies to achieve sustainable development goals, especially amidst challenges posed by climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
6. **Marine and Coastal Conservation:** Emphasis was placed on enhancing international efforts to address marine biodiversity loss, combat marine pollution, and mitigate the impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems.
7. **Post-Conflict Environmental Recovery:** Recognizing the significance of environmental assistance and recovery in conflict-affected areas, discussions highlighted the importance of integrating environmental considerations into post-conflict reconstruction efforts.
8. **Regional and International Cooperation:** Frameworks for regional and international cooperation were explored to promote synergies between multilateral environmental agreements and enhance collaboration on combating desertification, improving air quality, and addressing other environmental challenges.

## **Resolutions Adopted**

1. **Circularity of a Resilient and Low-carbon Sugar Cane Agro-industry**
2. **Amendments to the Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility**
3. **Enhancing the Role and Viability of Regional Forums of Environment Ministers and United Nations Environment Programme Regional Offices in Achieving Multilateral Cooperation in Tackling Environmental Challenges**
4. **Promoting Synergies, Cooperation, or Collaboration for National Implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and Other Relevant Environmental Instruments**
5. **Environmental Aspects of Minerals and Metals**
6. **Fostering National Action to Address Global Environmental Challenges Through Increased Cooperation Between the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme, and Multilateral Environmental Agreements**
7. **Combating Sand and Dust Storms**
8. **Promoting Sustainable Lifestyles**
9. **Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste**
10. **Promoting Regional Cooperation on Air Pollution to Improve Air Quality Globally**
11. **Highly Hazardous Pesticides**
12. **Environmental Assistance and Recovery in Areas Affected by Armed Conflict**
13. **Effective and Inclusive Solutions for Strengthening Water Policies to Achieve Sustainable Development in the Context of Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution**

14. Strengthening International Efforts to Combat Desertification and Land Degradation, Restore Degraded Land, Promote Land Conservation and Sustainable Land Management, contribute to Land Degradation Neutrality, and Enhance Drought Resilience
15. Strengthening Ocean Efforts to Tackle Climate Change, Marine Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution.

## **Withdrawn Resolutions**

1. Following extensive discussions and consultations during UNEA-6, several resolutions were withdrawn after members reached a consensus. However, despite initial proposals, the following resolutions were ultimately withdrawn:
2. Solar Radiation Modification (SRM), proposed by Guinea, Monaco, Senegal, and Switzerland.
3. Development of criteria, norms, standards, and guidelines for nature-based solutions to support sustainable development, submitted by Cameroon.
4. Effective, Inclusive, and Sustainable Multilateral Actions towards Climate Justice, proposed by Sri Lanka.
5. Stepping up efforts for enhancing the circular economy transition domestically, regionally, and globally, submitted by the EU.
6. Living Well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth and Mother Earth Centric Actions, proposed by Bolivia

## **Conclusion**

The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) marked a significant milestone in global efforts to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and waste. Through robust discussions and negotiations, stakeholders reaffirmed their commitment to effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions.

With the adoption of 15 resolutions and two decisions, UNEA-6 underscored the importance of collective action in addressing pressing environmental challenges. These resolutions cover a wide range of topics, including climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, pollution reduction, sustainable agriculture, water resource management, marine conservation, and post-conflict environmental recovery.

Efforts were also made to address the barriers faced by women and youth in participating in multilateral actions. Recognizing their vital roles in environmental stewardship, measures were proposed to empower and support their involvement, aiming to ensure diverse perspectives are integrated into decision-making processes.

Moving forward, it is imperative to implement these resolutions effectively, prioritize environmental sustainability, and promote international cooperation. This proactive approach is essential for restoring harmony between humanity and nature, ensuring a sustainable and equitable future for all generations.

UNEA-6 serves as both a culmination of collective efforts and a catalyst for continued action and collaboration in safeguarding our planet. It underscores the urgency of addressing environmental challenges and provides a framework for concerted global action to protect and preserve our natural resources for generations to come.

***Submitted by Suzan and Daquin Iyo***

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