DRAFT RESOLUTION ON STRENGTHENING HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AND SUPPORTING THE INITIATIVES OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL FORUM ON HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

Considering the long history of global commitments to sustainable development, united by the common goal of attaining healthy lives through healthy environments from the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on Agenda 21 to the 2015 United Nations resolution, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change;

Recognizing that nowhere in human existence has there been a rate of environmental change that profoundly threatens the health of people and the planet, that degrades our habitat and destabilizes our climate and limits access to the most fundamental requisites for human existence: safe water, clean air, safe food and shelter;

Acknowledging that despite the extraordinary gains made toward the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), universal sustainable access to safe water and basic sanitation has not been fully achieved; and communities, schools, and health-care facilities are still inadequate in terms of resilience to climate-related disasters, and poor air and water quality have become major environmental threats to human health;

Being aware that never before have the environment and health sectors felt the need to collaborate more closely, the time for business as usual is over, hence, extreme weather events and their effects on the health of communities are overwhelming and thus, the environment and health sectors need convergence and synergy to mitigate, adapt and respond to the changing environment;

Reminding that globally, an estimated 6.5 million premature deaths were associated with indoor and outdoor air pollution in 2012, and that an alarmingly high 7.3 million deaths annually are due to adverse environmental conditions prevailing in the Asia-Pacific region;

Noting that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide the renewed opportunity to work on common goals and targets to reverse the deterioration of our fragile habitat and restore development to a sustainable path, thus, demanding resolution of environmental issues to achieve health targets;

Commending the commitments made by the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment including the Manila Declaration to enhance the way of working together to achieve tangible progress on realistic and measurable targets in environmental health to wit:
1. Encourage Member States and stakeholders to participate in the work of the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment particularly in the following priority areas:

a. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (SDG 13) and to orient development and public health systems to become more climate resilient;

b. Take urgent action to improve outdoor air quality and to reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from the adverse effects of air pollution, and to realize the health benefits of mitigation actions by ensuring clean air for health and well-being, including prevention of the recurrence of transboundary haze through the promotion of sustainable management of forests and the prevention of land degradation and biodiversity losses (SDG 15);

c. Ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. This includes universal access to safely managed water and sanitation services, and hygiene, especially for women and girls, wastewater management and integrated water resource management (SDG 6);

d. Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water, and soil pollution and contamination (SDG 3.9), through environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life-cycle (SDG 12.4) and substantial reduction of waste through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse (SDG 12.5); and

e. Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, by adopting sustainable urban design principles that promote healthy lifestyles and sound environmental management including safe walking and cycling, efficient public transport, safe waste management, reduced carbon emissions, renewable energy sources, and safe and healthy workplaces (SDG 11.6) as well as vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria;

f. Address emerging priority issues relevant to:

i. Transboundary haze and air pollution, in consideration of the World Health Assembly Resolution on the health impact of air pollution 3 (SDGs 3, 11, 12);

ii. Illegal transboundary Shipment and dumping of waste (SDGs 3, 11, 12);

iii. Destruction of coral reefs and marine pollution, which threaten marine biodiversity, in consideration of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (SDG 14);

iv. Antimicrobial resistance stemming among others from unsafe management of health-care wastes and wastewater in general requiring collaboration with the agriculture sector among others and by reducing the incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures (SDGs
3, 6) with reference to the World Health Assembly Resolution on Antimicrobial Resistance\(^1\); and

v. Promotion of environment and health impact assessment as one of the tools for achieving more sustainable and equitable development, including valuation of economic costs of health and environmental impacts due to pollution.

2. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate and available resources, to:

   a. Collaborate with the WHO, other UN agencies and international partners in pursuing the SDG goals relevant to environment with significant impact on human health;
   
   b. Support the joint commitments made by ministers of health and ministers of environment at the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment;
   
   c. Develop a long-term plan in supporting Member States achieve their commitments for relevant SDGs for health and environment;
   
   d. Strengthen efforts in the areas of education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and cooperation;
   
   e. Accelerate support to countries, especially developing countries, for building national readiness capacity to implement relevant health and environment SDG activities and capacity to access finance and technology; and
   
   f. Prepare a progress report on this Resolution for consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) at its next session.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED, that the UNEA, through its President, shall provide a mechanism to establish formal linkages between the Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Health and Environment and the UN Environment Assembly, the UN Environment Regional Ministerial Meetings on Health and Environment, the Regional Meetings of the World Health Organization South-East Asia and Western Pacific Regions, the Governing Bodies of the Multilateral Environment Agreements related to health and the environment and key regional bodies like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Asia-Pacific Economic Forum (APEC) and other regional bodies.

Likewise, the UNEP Executive Director is hereby enjoined to periodically report the progress of the implementation of this resolution to the UNEA.