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**United Nations
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**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
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Innovation on biodiversity and land degradation*

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, and also acknowledging the importance of conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and land restoration conservation and sustainable management in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Noting the outcomes of the 13th COP to UNCCCD held in Ordos, China in September 2017 and the 2018 UN Biodiversity Conference held in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt in November 2018, and Resolution 73/233 of the General Assembly on the implementation of the UNCCD,

Noting with appreciation the preparatory process adopted in Sharm el Sheikh for the development of an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Summit on Biodiversity for Heads of State as adopted by UNGA Resolution 73/234, the Sharm El Sheikh Declaration Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet, the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Enhanced Resilience, and the Sharm El Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People, which all aim at mobilizing broad political and stakeholder engagement, as well as the launch of the land degradation neutrality fund,

Acknowledging that action to combat desertification, restoration of degraded land and ecosystems can deliver multiple benefits with the potential to act as an accelerator for achieving sustainable development goals,

Noting with appreciation the Resolution 73/284 of the General Assembly which designates 2021-2030 as the UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration,

Recognizing the importance of addressing drivers of wildlife and ecosystem loss, including the urgent measures to combat illegal trade in and overexploitation of wildlife and wildlife products and strengthening enforcement measures,

Recognizing also that climate change is a major and growing driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and further recognizing that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem functions and services, significantly contribute to climate change adaptation, mitigation, and disaster risk reduction, as well as food security and nutrition,

Noting that long-lasting droughts and the negative effects of unsustainable land management practices that can be exacerbated by climate change, increase range of areas affected by sand and dust

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storms, contribute to natural resources and ecosystems degradation, and increase desertification, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and negatively impacts land productivity as well as human well-being and livelihoods and therefore stressing the need to address this issue collaboratively at national, regional, and global levels,

Recognizing the benefits of sustainable and innovative ecosystem-based solutions to address biodiversity loss and land degradation and the need to enhance nature's capacity to continue providing these benefits,

Recognizing also the importance of investing in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, mobilizing financial resources from all sources capacity building, international cooperation, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and mainstreaming across all sectors as enabling mechanisms for addressing biodiversity loss,

Noting that indigenous peoples and local communities, women, girls and youth play an important role in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, are disproportionately impacted by biodiversity loss and land degradation, and should therefore be meaningfully engaged, as appropriate, in efforts to address these issues,

Taking note with appreciation of the thematic assessments on land degradation and restoration and the regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services conducted by the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), the first edition of the UNCCD Global Land Outlook as well as the FAO's State of World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture, and their key messages and recommendations,

Deeply concerned by the continued high loss of biodiversity and the latest assessment showing most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are not on track to be achieved by 2020, and stressing the importance of an integrated and robust monitoring on the status of biodiversity that is based on up-to-date scientific data at national, regional and global levels for the Post 2020 Global Biodiversity Framework,

Noting with appreciation the initiative of the Government of Egypt to promote a coherent approach for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and land and ecosystem degradation,

1. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen commitments and step up their efforts to prevent the loss of biological diversity and the degradation of land and soil, including through their conservation and sustainable use and appropriate policies and innovative measures such as partnership arrangements, mutually agreed transfer of technology, and financing mechanisms;

2. *Also encourages* member States to undertake Strategic Environmental and other Assessments to support policy decisions and actions to minimize and avoid the potential negative impacts of programmes, projects and plans on biological diversity and ecosystems functions and services;

3. *Urges* member states, and invites non-state actors and other relevant stakeholders to mainstream biodiversity in all relevant sectors and to fully engage in the process of developing the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework to be adopted at the 2020 UN Biodiversity Conference in Kunming;

4. *Calls upon* member States, and invites, the private sector, academia and relevant stakeholders to support innovative measures for strengthening and developing nationally and regionally based centres of excellence on sustainable biodiversity management and monitoring of land degradation;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNEP, upon request and subject to availability of resources, to support the Members States also party to the UNCCD, and in accordance with domestic circumstances, to apply and align with the 2018-2030 Strategic Framework in their national policies, programmes, plans and processes relating to desertification, land degradation and droughts;

6. *Also requests* the Executive Director of UNEP, upon request and subject to availability of resources, to support the Members States also party to the UNCCD, which have pledged to do so, do develop and implement voluntary targets on land degradation neutrality, including the definition of national baselines, targets and associated measures to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, as appropriate;

7. *Encourages* member states, and invites international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to reduce and reverse biodiversity loss and contribute to the sustainable development goals, through, as appropriate, the integration of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures into wider land- and seascapes, within national jurisdiction, and mainstreaming

across sectors, taking into account COP14/8, to foster innovative sustainable practices and by considering spatial and regional approaches as well as measures to address threatened habitats and species and strengthening ecosystem resilience;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNEP, in partnership with other UN entities and other relevant stakeholders, and within available resources, to support Member States, to develop domestic policies and measures, to restore, conserve and sustainably use biological diversity and to strengthen ecosystem resilience, functions and services in and outside of protected areas, in support of the relevant Aichi targets, to explore:

(a) Developing, promoting, strengthening and building on, as appropriate, effective practices for sustainable and resilient coexistence of humans and wildlife, including sustainable wildlife-based economies, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of livelihoods, particularly of indigenous peoples and local communities, taking into account, inter alia, the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector as adopted by the parties to the CBD in decision COP 14.7;

(b) Innovative financing for ecosystem restoration and ecosystem-based approaches for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(c) Addressing sand and dust storms, which can pose a great challenge to the sustainable development of affected regions, especially ecosystems in arid and semi-arid regions such as highlands, and threaten the lives and economies in those areas, by encouraging relevant information sharing, best practices, lessons-learned, transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms, mobilization of resources, and development of early warning systems and impact assessment mechanisms based on existing regional and international initiatives such as United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms established by the Environment Management Group in accordance with UNGA Resolution 72/225;

9. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNEP to continue collaboration with the UN FAO and its global soil partnership, the CBD, the UNFCCC, UNCCD and other related conventions, including, CITES, CMS, and the ITPGR and Ramsar and relevant intergovernmental panels, where appropriate, to foster innovative ways to address biodiversity loss, climate change and soil, land and ecosystems degradation in an integrated manner;

10. *Urges* member states, to cooperate on programmes to address threats to biodiversity, particularly overexploitation and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, by ensuring that any use is legal and sustainable and by implementing appropriate strategies and action plans to conserve and sustainably use species and ecosystems;

11. *Encourages* member states to strengthen their efforts to identify, including through modelling and risk analysis efforts, at an appropriate scale, current and future risks and impacts from climate change, on biodiversity and biodiversity-based livelihoods, particularly of indigenous peoples and local communities, taking into account their importance for climate change adaptation and mitigation, land restoration and disaster risk reduction and management;

12. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNEP, in response to the invitation contained in UN General Assembly Resolution, 73-284, to lead the implementation of the Decade for ecosystem restoration, together with FAO, and in collaboration with the Secretariats of the Rio Conventions, other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the UN System;

13. *Also requests* the Executive Director of UNEP, to support and promote the implementation of the initiative of the government of Egypt to promote a coherent approach for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystem degradation, in line with decision CBD 14/30;

14. *Calls on* the Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme to contribute, in close cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity, to the preparations of the UN General Assembly Heads of State Summit;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session on progress towards implementation of the present resolution.