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**United Nations
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United Nations Environment Assembly of the
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**Promoting gender equality and the human rights and
empowerment of women and girls in environmental
governance***

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Reaffirming the principles of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW 1979), and the Conclusions of the 60th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 2016), that contribute to the international legal and political framework for realising gender equality, the empowerment of all women and girls and the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all women and girls,

Affirming the importance of states respecting, protecting and fulfilling their human rights obligations, including women’s rights, when implementing environmental laws and policies, including in the context of strengthening international, regional, and national policy making in the area of climate change and environmental issues, as well as in promoting policy coherence, legitimacy and sustainable outcomes,

Noting that HRC Resolution 37/8 stated “more than 100 States have recognized some form of a right to a healthy environment in, inter alia, international agreements, their constitutions, legislation or policies,”¹

Acknowledging that the States Parties to all three Rio Conventions – the Convention on Biological Diversity,² the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change,³ and the UN Convention to Combat Desertification⁴ - as well as the Ramsar Convention⁵ have recognized the importance of

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

¹ Agreed language from UN Human Rights Council resolution 37/8 (last preambular para).

² 2015-2020 Gender Action Plan. Convention on Biological Diversity (2015). At: <https://www.cbd.int/gender/action-plan/>.

³ Gender Action Plan. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (2017). At: https://unfccc.int/files/meetings/bonn_nov_2017/application/pdf/cp23_auv_gender.pdf.

⁴ Gender, Drought, and Sand and Dust Storms. UN Convention to Combat Desertification. (2017) At: http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2017-08/ICCD_COP%2813%29_19-1711042E.pdf.

⁵ 13th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands “Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future”, 21-29 October 2018 Resolution XIII.18 Gender and wetlands: https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/library/xiii.18_gender_e.pdf.

addressing gender equality and women's empowerment in their implementation, consequently developing individual gender action plans to support Parties in their actions,

Also acknowledging that major environmental funds, including the Global Environment Facility, Climate Investment Fund, Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, have approved gender policies or frameworks,

Recognizing that, conversely, the impacts of climate change, pollution, the unsustainable management and use of natural resources, the unsound management of chemicals and waste, the resulting loss of biodiversity and the decline in services provided by ecosystems may interfere with the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and that environmental damage can have negative implications, both direct and indirect, for the effective enjoyment of all human rights" especially for "those segments of the population that are already in vulnerable situations" including women and girls,⁶

Considering that women and girls, are often disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change and other environmental issues, including, inter alia, deforestation, the loss of biodiversity, desertification, pollution and natural disasters owing to existing gender inequalities, and recognizing also the active and meaningful role of women as key agents of change in developing innovative solutions to climate change, and promoting sustainable and inclusive consumption and production,

Recognizing that the role of women as agents of change could receive more emphasis as advocated in the UN Environment Programme's Global Gender Environment Outlook (G GEO) which is supported by the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for the Environment, highlighting essential gender-and-environment approaches and pursuing a transformative agenda recognizing gender equality as a driver of change, leading to more people-smart environmental policies,

Acknowledging that identifying and addressing both women's and men's needs, as well as promoting women as decision makers, are critical to ensuring the sustainability of environmental policy, planning and programming,

Taking note of General Assembly resolution 72/247,

Noting the role of the For All Coalition, an alliance of Member States, in collectively and simultaneously advancing human rights, gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment across the various multilateral environmental agreements,

Underlining the importance that the United Nations Environment Program, within its organizational mandate works towards the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in its planning instruments, investment frameworks and sector-wide programs, in particular by revising and updating its Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014-2017, to articulate its commitment to the achievement of meaningful gender equality results in its internal operations and in all its programming in line with the 2030 Agenda and its gender-specific SDG targets,

Acknowledging that women's knowledge, and collective action have a huge potential to improve resource productivity, enhance ecosystem conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and to create more sustainable, low-carbon food, energy, water and health systems,

1. *Invites* Member States:

(a) To provide UNEA, in accordance with their capabilities, with information on the progress at the national and local levels in gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programmes highlighting the challenges and opportunities, to inform the revision of the Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014-2017;

(b) To consider joining the FOR ALL Coalition in order to strengthen the reflection and raise the visibility of gender equality and human rights messages and garner broader support for gender-responsive and human rights commitments and action across the different multilateral environmental agreements;

(c) To prioritize the implementation of gender policies and action plans developed under other multilateral environmental agreements to which they are a party;

⁶ Agreed language from UN Human Rights Council resolution 37/8 sponsored by Costa Rica and others. The resolution was adopted by consensus with the explicit support of over 70 states. http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/37/8.

- (d) To establish social and gender criteria in the national level project implementation and financing mechanisms for environment-related projects and programmes;
- (e) To continue and enhance international cooperation and assistance, in particular in financing, the voluntary transfer of technology on mutually agreed terms and capacity-building, to promote gender responsive, non-discriminatory environmental policies and measures for all women and girls and to help ensure women's rights and their access to food and nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation, health-care services, education and training, adequate housing and decent work, clean energy, science and technology;
- (f) To strengthen and implement policies aimed at increasing the participation and leadership of women in environmental decision-making and measures at the local, national, regional and international levels, and request, when appropriate, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and other United Nations agencies to support upon request national programmes and projects in this regard;
- (g) To recognize the importance of gender equality, the empowerment of women and role women play as managers of natural resources and agents of change in safeguarding the environment;
- (h) To support training and capacity-building efforts for women and men on gender mainstreaming and enhancing all women's active and meaningful participation in global processes, as a contribution to realizing the goal of gender balance;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director:

- (a) To facilitate the collection of data disaggregated by inter alia, sex, age, and disability and lessons learned from Member States and stakeholders, including through consultations and call for submissions, on the progress made in achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in global, national and local environmental policies, programmes and initiatives;
- (b) To report at the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA 5), on the implementation of UNEP's Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014-2017, including in UNEP's planning instruments, investment frameworks and the networks and sector-wide programs, based on the information gathered from Parties and stakeholders, and taking into consideration its synergies and interlinkages with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, multilateral environmental agreements, gender action plans and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production, as well as on the way forward;
- (c) To enhance collaborations with the United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, and civil society organizations, to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women and girls perspectives in developing innovative solutions to environmental challenges, and accelerating the shift towards sustainable consumption and production;
- (d) To continue to support initiatives to encourage and support the participation of women delegates and their leadership in UNEA and in related intergovernmental meetings, including through awareness-raising, training and capacity-building efforts in cooperation with UN Women, UNDP and other stakeholders, inter alia, in conjunction with sessions of the subsidiary bodies;
- (e) To ensure that UNEP programmes funded by the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility incorporate the UNEP Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment and the UNEP Gender Implementation Plan.