Draft resolution on environment and health

Proposed by the European Union and its member States

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

[The resolution may be revised in the light of the findings of the report by the Commission on Pollution and Health that will be released in The Lancet on 19 October, 2017]

[A paragraph welcoming the report of the Executive Director entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet” may be added if not done elsewhere]

Recalling General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015 adopting the outcome document of the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including target 3.9 (by 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination),

Recalling also the report of the Executive Director for the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, entitled “Healthy Environment, Healthy People”,

Welcoming the entry into force of the Minamata Convention on Mercury on 16 August 2017,

Welcoming also the work of the World Health Organization on environmental and health issues, such as air pollution, chemicals and waste, including heavy metals, and appreciating relevant World Health Assembly resolutions,

Welcoming further decision XIII/6 of 14 December 2016 on the linkages between biodiversity and health, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,

Recognizing the essential work undertaken by collaborative platforms and initiatives to protect health and the environment,

Deeply concerned about the burden of disease from environmental risks, which according to recent estimates from the World Health Organization1 amounts to nearly 1 in 4 of total global deaths, and the associated costs to society,

1. Affirms the strong interlinkages between environment and health, including health inequalities, and the importance of addressing them jointly, including through the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

2. Reaffirms the importance of applying the precautionary principle when there is a lack of scientific certainty and where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage;

3. Stresses the importance of cross-cutting and preventive approaches, including gender mainstreaming and ecosystem-based approaches, to health and well-being at all stages, and the health benefits of addressing global environmental challenges such as air, marine, water and soil pollution, chemicals exposure, climate change and biodiversity loss, and their interrelations;

4. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to continue to work on the environment and health nexus in close collaboration with the following entities in order to avoid duplication and improve effectiveness and mutual reinforcement: the World Health Organization; the World Meteorological Organization; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women; the United Nations Population Fund and other relevant organizations; the secretariats of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

5. **Also requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, subject to the availability of resources, to help countries to build capacity on the environment and health nexus, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, relevant United Nations entities and other organizations;

6. **Further requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with relevant organizations, including the World Health Organization, to develop methods, tools and guidelines, building on existing work in that regard, to promote integrated environmental and health risk assessments;

[Chemicals and waste]

7. **Urges** member States to intensify efforts to achieve the 2020 goal for the sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle as an essential cross-cutting issue for the achievement of sustainable development and the protection of human health and the environment, in accordance with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the overall orientation and guidance for achieving the 2020 goal of sound management of chemicals, and also urges member States to actively engage in the intersessional process considering the Strategic Approach and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;

8. **Underlines** the availability of alternatives to lead paint, which is still a problem in many countries, and urges member States to take action to eliminate lead paint, mindful of the work of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint;

9. **Also underlines** the importance for human and environmental health of avoiding or minimizing the presence of harmful chemicals in products, which through the use of the products and their disposal as waste may negatively affect humans and biodiversity and hamper reuse and recovery, including recycling;

10. **Calls upon** States Members of the United Nations that have not yet done so to adopt and enforce national laws aiming to eliminate the risks posed by chemicals, including heavy metals, endocrine disruptors and pesticides, in particular to pregnant women, infants and children;

11. **Recalls** the shared responsibility of producers and downstream users, and encourages all relevant private sector actors to ensure the sound management of chemicals throughout their life cycle, including participation in the voluntary Responsible Care Programme and the Global Product Strategy;

12. **Requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to present a report on the environmental and health impacts of pesticides and fertilizers in collaboration with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant organizations by 2019, given the lack of data in those areas;

[Climate]

13. **Recognizes** that climate change is a major health risk multiplier, including by aggravating environmental challenges, and welcomes the efforts undertaken to address climate change, most notably the implementation of the Paris Agreement, as essential contributions to improving health;

14. **Also recognizes** the impact of climate change on vector-borne diseases and the need for a preventive approach and integrated collaboration between the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Health Organization in that regard;

15. **Welcomes** the adoption in Marrakech of the Ministerial Declaration on Health, Environment and Climate Change and calls upon all States Members of the United Nations to support the objectives of the Declaration;

16. **Requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to regularly report to the Committee of Permanent Representatives on the consultations between the secretariats of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to prepare a joint plan on health and environment;

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2. [https://www.icca-chem.org/responsible-care/](https://www.icca-chem.org/responsible-care/).

17. Also requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, subject to the availability of resources, to assess the health co-benefits of the Programme’s current climate-change-related projects, notably for vulnerable groups, and to report on the results of this work to the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

[Biodiversity]

18. Recognizes that biodiversity loss is a major health risk multiplier, including by aggravating environmental challenges, and underlines the benefits for health and well-being of protecting and restoring biodiversity, ecosystems and their services;

19. Also recognizes that human, animal, plant and ecosystem health are interdependent, and emphasizes the value in that regard of the integrated “One World, One Health” approach that fosters cooperation between human health, animal health, plant health and environmental protection sectors;

20. Encourages member States and invites relevant organizations to enhance ecosystem resilience, including by taking actions to halt biodiversity loss, and promote synergies between biodiversity conservation, food safety and human health as an insurance policy for current and future health and human well-being;

21. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to include human health factors in the Programme’s projects on ecosystem valuation and accounting and, subject to the availability of resources, to assess the health co-benefits of the current biodiversity-related projects and to report on the results of that work to the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

[Antimicrobial resistance]

22. Recognizes that antimicrobial-resistant infections are becoming more frequent and increasingly difficult to treat and are already responsible for more than half a million deaths globally each year, and welcomes in that regard the efforts and investments by the World Health Organization, other United Nations entities and member States in their coordinated international action to tackle antimicrobial resistance;

23. Underlines the limited use of environmental surveillance and the limited understanding of long-term effects to the health of humans, animals and ecosystems caused by anthropogenic sourced antimicrobial resistance;

24. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to work in close collaboration with the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and all other relevant organizations to support efforts to quantify the human and animal health risk, as well as the risk to biodiversity, arising from anthropogenic sourced antimicrobial resistance in the environment;

25. Also requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and subject to the availability of resources, to prepare, taking into account country-specific data and prior to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, a report on the main causes behind, and the environmental impact of, antimicrobial resistance, including on the role of agricultural and urban waste and wastewater management practices and technologies in the dispersal of antimicrobial resistance into the environment, and to assess whether there is an “acceptable” level of antimicrobial resistance in the environment;

26. Calls upon member States to put in place, evaluate and amend as appropriate, discharge control measures and/or policies and environmental regulations, including those applicable to manufacturers of antibiotics, biocides and heavy metals, to ensure that their waste and wastewater do not contaminate the natural environment;

[Sustainable consumption and production]

27. Underlines that sustainable consumption and production, resource efficiency, circular economy, green and blue economy, sustainable finance and similar approaches provide key cross-cutting and preventive solutions to tackling pollution and thereby improve health and the environment synergistically;

28. Welcomes the report by the International Resource Panel, entitled “Assessing global resource use: a systems approach to resource efficiency and pollution reduction”; underlines that environmental impacts, including pollution, cannot be effectively mitigated by focusing on emissions
abatement alone and calls for the development of strategies for resource management and efficiency; and strongly encourages further work by the International Resource Panel on the link between resource use, pollution and other environmental impacts;

29. **Recommends** the inclusion of health and well-being for all, at all stages, as a cross-cutting monitored criterion in the work of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns;

30. **Requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, to promote and identify opportunities for healthy lifestyles and sustainable production and consumption patterns and associated behavioural change that would benefit the environment and human health through, inter alia, the promotion of public health campaigns.