

A Call for Action on the Environment

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Thank you, Mr. Co-Facilitators, Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates. We offer three points in the follow up and review section:

1. Science-Policy Interface: Environmental and development challenges must have an effective science-policy interface. We suggest inserting “evidence based” or “scientifically rigorous” regarding reviews and “the scientific and technological community” in Paragraph 61. Paragraph 70 should highlight the role of the scientific and technological community in the HLPF’s work. Scientific research is largely funded by governments and should address vital global challenges, and while technology can be a game-changer, it must serve People and Planet and not only Prosperity. The Scientific and Technological Community² is fully committed in this regard.

2. Thematic Reviews in the Environmental Dimension: Thematic reviews are critical in the environmental dimension.³ The follow up and review section is “siloeed” by its separation into national, regional and global subsections. Cross cutting issues can be lost in silos. We suggest strengthening Paragraph 67 by inserting: “We recognize that many environmental challenges are cross-cutting and transboundary in nature, which highlights the importance of thematic reviews in the environmental dimension. We commit to undertake regular follow-up and review of environmental themes across national, regional and global levels, consistent with the other provisions of this chapter.”

3. Planetary Boundaries: We support certain Member States, including Belgium and Finland, in calling for recognition of “planetary boundaries”. We have specific language suggestions to Paragraphs 35, 43, and 65 in our written submission. Natural resources underpin our economic and

¹ Being listed as a contributor does not indicate that the person or the organization endorses this statement, in whole or in any part.

² The scientific and technological community has the capacity to appreciate the inherent complexity of the process for implementing the SDGs. Given the dynamic and complex relationships among stakeholders, clear roles for the science and technology community should be established in order to achieve better understanding of how science and technology can contribute to the harmonization of policy frameworks and strategies vis-à-vis the goals and targets.

³ Thematic reviews should also include a focus on interlinkages within and across goals and targets, assist in identifying challenges and bottlenecks, and mobilize action to address them.

social progress and our lives. We suggest adding a component of “Natural Resource Governance and Accountability” as subsection (g) in Paragraph 57. This would account for the natural resource usage and depletion patterns of countries and corporate actors. Follow up and review must consider humanity’s ecological footprint and impact on Nature!

Member States should commit to the implementation of the full set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets as an integrated, holistic agenda and avoid “cherry-picking”. Indicators should be developed that link environmental trends to economic and social dimensions.

The extraordinary Kenyan Wangari Maathai⁴ once said: “All of us have a God in us, and that God is the spirit that unites all life, everything that is on this planet.” **Let us keep this spirit alive.**

Thank you.

⁴ Wangari Maathai – environmentalist, feminist, politician, professor, rabble-rouser, human rights advocate – was the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. N.Y. Times, Sept. 26, 2011.

Annex

Paragraph 61:

We also encourage member states to conduct regular **[EVIDENCE BASED/SCIENTIFICALLY RIGOROUS]** reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels. Such reviews can benefit from contributions by civil society, **THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY**, the private sector and other actors in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities. National parliaments as well as other institutions can also support these processes.

Paragraph 70:

The HLPF will support participation in follow up and review processes by the major groups, **THE SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY**, private sector and other stakeholders in line with Resolution 67/290. We encourage these actors to report on their contribution to the implementation of this Agenda.

Paragraph 35:

We recognize the central role that science, technology and innovation play in enabling the international community to respond to sustainable development challenges. We recognize the power of communications technologies, technical cooperation and capacity-building for sustainable development. We commit to strengthen the role of the science-policy interface in environmental governance. **[ADD- such as the preparation of regular assessments and digests of the science around such concepts as “planetary boundaries”, “tipping points” and “environmental thresholds” in the context of sustainable development.]**

Paragraph 43:

Indicators are being developed to assist this work. Quality disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress beyond GDP and to ensure that no one is left behind. **[ADD- and that we respect planetary boundaries/thresholds/limits]**. We agree to intensify our efforts to strengthen statistical capacities in developing countries, particularly least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states and other countries in special situations.

Paragraph 65:

Follow-up and review at the HLPF will be informed by an annual SDG Progress Report to be prepared by the Secretary General in cooperation with the UN System, based on the global indicator framework and data produced by national statistical systems. The HLPF will also be informed by the Global Sustainable Development Report, which shall strengthen the science-policy interface **[ADD- such as the preparation of regular assessments and digests of the science around such concepts as “planetary boundaries”, “tipping points” and “environmental thresholds” in the context of sustainable development.]** and could provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development

“In the course of history, there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness, to reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.” -- Wangari Maathai