



# **Overview of the 4th UN Environment Assembly**

Matthias K. Boehning

Director World Evangelical Alliance Sustainability Center



# 4th session of the UN Environment Assembly

- 11 to 15 March 2019
- Nairobi, Kenya
- world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment
- Bringing together governments, entrepreneurs, activists and others

Siim Kiisler, President of UN Environment Assembly



*“This historic Assembly, with its theme on Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production, will give us the framework for shifting our global economic systems towards more sustainable trajectories that tackle our environmental challenges and bring us closer to the ‘future we want’.”*



# Goals of the 4th UNEA

- share ideas and commit to action
- ambitiously scale-up efforts to tackle common environmental challenges through
  - fostering sustainable and efficient resource management
  - ensuring the access and use of environmental data
  - engaging civil society, citizens, private sector and academia



## Theme of the 4th UNEA

“Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”



# Culture of Innovation

- key features:
  - Creativity
  - Openness
  - Participation
- cuts across sectors and actors and ensures their right to participation
- Required conditions:
  - leadership and governance instruments that reward innovation and circularity while stimulating openness and collaboration
  - education and continuous capacity building that facilitate the transition to a knowledge society
  - the dedication of finance and technology to sustainability
  - unleashing the creativity and entrepreneurship of women



# Leaving no one behind

- Guiding principle in promoting a culture of innovation
- a holistic, inclusive, and participatory approach to development
- underpinned by human rights
- Recognizing interlinkages and the integrated nature of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development



# Three areas of focus

- (a) tackling the environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting biodiversity loss
- (b) introducing life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management
- (c) ensuring sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change





# Calendar of Main Events UNEA 2019

- Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR), 4-8 March
- Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, 7+8 March
- Science, Policy and Business Forum, 9+10 March
- UN Environment Assembly, 11-15 March
  - Regional Group Meetings, Bureau Meetings
  - UNEA Committee of the Whole (1<sup>st</sup> part of the week)
  - UNEA National Statements (2<sup>nd</sup> part of the week)
  - UNEA Side Events
  - Receptions
  - CITIES SUMMIT
  - ONE PLANET SUMMIT

WEA Sustainability Center



# Draft Ministerial Declaration of the 2019 UNEA

*“We (...) are dedicated to moving towards sustainable, prosperous and inclusive societies with sustainable consumption and production patterns that prevent and address environmental challenges with innovative solutions”*

*“creative approaches and innovative solutions”*

*“our Planet is increasingly polluted, rapidly warming and quickly losing its biodiversity”*

*“widespread unsustainable use of our natural resources”*



# Intended Actions I

- improve national resource management strategies
- achieve a resource-efficient and circular economy
- foster opportunities for the innovative substitution of hazardous substances in material cycles with the aim of achieving safe and non-toxic material flows
- promote sustainable food systems by implementing sustainable agricultural practices, improving value generation and addressing food security, environmental health and human well-being in an integrated manner
- implement sustainable land and soil management measures, including afforestation,
- wetland and landscape restoration, to combat desertification, deforestation, soil pollution, biodiversity loss and to improve climate change mitigation and adaptation



# Intended Actions II

- harmonise international environmental data standards
- Support the development of a global environmental data strategy by 2025
- improve environmental monitoring systems
- Support the development of national environmental data management capacities
- work towards ensuring transparency of and open access to environmental data
- Work towards defining appropriate and ambitious national targets for reducing waste generation, increasing the reuse of products, and recycling of waste by 2025



# Intended Actions III

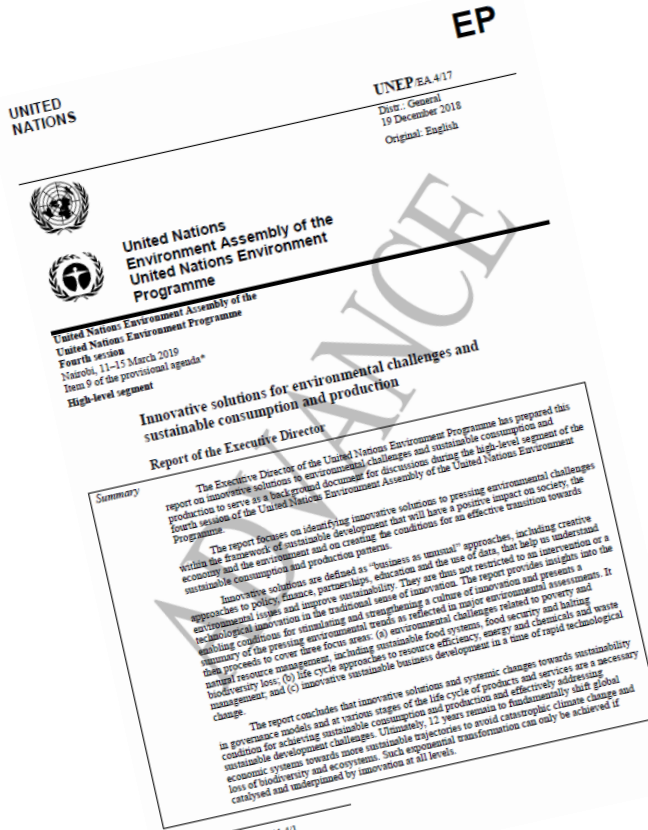
- decisively address the damage to our ecosystems caused by the unsustainable use and disposal of single-use plastic products, including by phasing-out most problematic single-use plastic products as early as 2025
- support the efforts to develop global products sustainability and circularity criteria by 2025
- set ambitious national targets on the use of sustainable public procurements to stimulate demand for environmentally sound products, processes and services
- encourage the disclosure of product information to consumers and communities
- promote the development of solutions, with special emphasis on digital solutions, to increase transparency in product chains;



# Intended Actions IV

- invest in environmental education in the framework of sustainable development with a strong gender focus and promote a wider use of innovative approaches, such as inclusive citizen science and social innovation programmes;
- promote and incentivize new eco-innovative business models
- advocate the wider application of indigenous traditional knowledge about environmentally friendly practices for more sustainable economies and resilient societies
- accelerate sustainable and innovative financing opportunities and solutions, and we will build innovative partnerships to unlock new capital for sustainable investments
- improve good practices of engagement to ensure the meaningful involvement of civil society, citizens, private sector and academia in the policy making process;

# Background Report



- “Governments and regulators must pay increased attention to the “rules of the game” governing financial and capital markets” (14)
- “Principles for Responsible Banking” (14)
- “Promoting standardization” (of environmental products and services, 16)
- “broader adoption of smart, “frugal” innovations that could have a substantial positive environmental impact with very limited investments” (16)

[https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/k1804136\\_unep-ea.4-17\\_advance.pdf](https://papersmart.unon.org/resolution/uploads/k1804136_unep-ea.4-17_advance.pdf)





# Thank You!