

UNEA Monitor

UNEA Monitor is a daily newsletter powered by Major Groups during the UN Environment Assembly. The newsletter tracks the most important negotiations and events and delivers the daily news through the lens of civil society.

Major Groups Opening Statement at UNEP@50



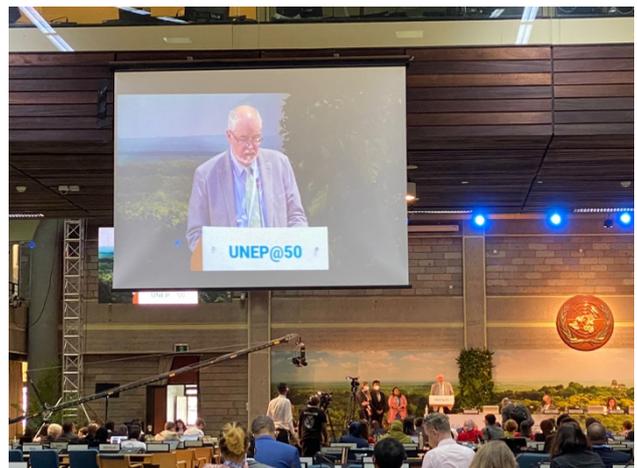
Djatougbe AZIAKA , delivering the opening statement at UNEP@50

2022 marks a historic milestone of fifty years since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in, which was widely seen as the first international meeting on the environment. This kick started the formation of environmental ministries and agencies around the world, hosting new global agreements to collectively protect the environment. Eventually, it led to the formation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Since then, UNEP has coordinated global efforts to confront the planet's biggest environmental challenges, including initiatives to repair the ozone layer, phase out leaded fuel, stop some endangered species from going extinct and more. UNEP's global power and rigorous scientific research has served as a platform for countries to engage and advance the global environmental agenda.

To mark UNEP's 50th anniversary, a year-long series of activities and outreach events are taking place under the UNEP@50 name, honoring and reflecting up the significant progress achieved in global environmental matters and new challenges to come.

The theme for the UNEP@50 event is "Strengthening UNEP for the implementation of the environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development".





Stephen Stec and Yugratna Srivastava presenting the “UNEP we want” report at UNEP@50

Major Groups Closing Statement at UNEP@50



Christopher Chin, Executive Director, Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education, giving a statement at the High-Level Closing Ceremony of the Special Session to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the UN Environment Programme.

Major groups at Multi Stakeholder Dialogue

UNEP is the authority within the UN to protect the environment. The only one. And with a huge challenge that we all know, the triple planetary crisis etc. Environmental policies should be as strong as the challenges are. That’s why I don’t get the fact that UNEP every

time again is limiting herself as “only covering the implementation of the env dimension of the SDGs”. If you want to think about the future of UNEP: let’s look broader than that and most of all beyond 2030 – which is only in 8 years.

UNEP should not behave as a branch of ECOSOCs to take care of the weakest dimension of the 2030 Agenda, but should act as the authority, the protagonist to protect the environment, develop policies and instruments to implement them, facilitate and guide the governments in that. Environmental policies are a “stand alone” issue. But, we see less and less ministers for the environment are existing worldwide, “awaystreamed” as ministers for energy and climate, or ministers of infrastructure, or ministers of natural resources, and they do feel responsible for the overall environment.

Without a strong environmental governance and rule of law: the adopted policies, conventions and treaties will remain dead paper. So there I think there is still a lot to do, and for that we need a strong secretariat, leadership of UNEP too.

I was following quite intensively the negotiations for the Res 73/333, now better known as the political declaration for UNEP50. Although the outcome doc is mainly a list of already agreed language on the issues, there is some good language in: a reference to the Human Rights Council decision was made on the acknowledgement of having a safe, healthy and sustainable environment as a Human Right. This will have positive impact on UNEP’s work.. The whole outcome document of UNEP@50 is presented as a package, with goals, some targets, some instruments and means of implementation to strengthen environmental policies and rule of law.



Leida Rijnhout, MGOs speaking during MSD

The declaration includes the request to the ED to improve the implementation (§23). It is indeed now the task of the secretariat (the ED should really take leadership here, as this is core business for UNEP, and without the implementation and enforcement of policies and law, nothing is going to change). UNEP should develop a framework, or if you don't like the word: information hub/platform that clearly lists all obligations, goals and targets for the member states to achieve.

Strong monitoring schemes are very important, but as stated you can only monitor something if you know what the goals are, to check the progress. The review mechanism that the HRC uses is a very interesting one (UPR), less voluntary as the VNR they use at the HLPF, because that is nothing more than PR for the countries: all is fine – great success booked, but the reality is quite different.

UNEP should strengthen and support civil society in making the bridge between international language and implementation on the national levels. That is not happening enough now. Stakeholders' participation is not about sitting here in Nairobi only, it is about having national organisations, with the knowledge (and the funding) to support and when necessary, push their national government for the implementation and enforcement. The success of the plastic treaty

is also thanks to a huge network of civil society organisations worldwide that had the knowledge and the capacity to do advocacy the whole year around.

By Leida Rijnhout

Stories from the Green Room

The Green Room is the designated Civil Society space at UNEA-5. The UNEA Monitor is covering some of the Green Room events throughout the week of the Assembly.

The agenda of the Green Room during the UNEA 5 week is available at this link:

<https://www.unep.org/events/green-room/unea-52-green-room-events>

The road to COP27 "From UNEA 5.2 to Sharm ElSheikh"

A team of global representatives are working to integrate various processes with different multilateral groups, including representation of youth advocating for environmental sustainability. We have a unique opportunity to better understand specific needs of the youth in advance of the COP 27 conference.

Youth from around the world gathered in Sweden in November, 2021, in the form of the Youth Task Force at the Stockholm+50 event, to drive environmental change with 80 global representatives. Their work focused on issues including biodiversity, climate change, pollution, and peace. A lot of work needs to be done to get youth access to work on the ground, so they can continue to push things through leading up to COP 27.

In the Arab region, there is little to no youth participation. COP 27 would be a good avenue for them to engage, and the region is encouraging youth attendance at the convention. This region is specifically pursuing ways to enhance and build capacity for the youth to organize and participate in the event. [Participation and Key Issues of Interest](#)

- To participate in COP 27 one can:
- Organize side events
- Take part in training leading to the COP 27
- Be a part of the academic think tanks

Issues of interest include: Adaptation, Finance specific climate finance and loss and damage, Integrated efforts of governments and civil society



Major Groups Meeting with Ambassador Johanna Lissinger-Peitz of Sweden, on Stockholm+50

Africa has participated during the COP since the very beginning, and there is a continued demand for involvement, but limited available funds. As such, Africa is underrepresented, socially excluded, and often leaves conventions without achieving set goals. COP 27 will take place in Egypt, and presents an important opportunity to focus on Africa’s implementation and representation. It will be important for all to focus on the perspectives they represent.



Dialogue between Major Groups and Stakeholders (MGS) and UNEA 6 President, Hon. Ms. Leila Benali, Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco, on 4 March 2022

Major Groups around the event



Major Groups environmental activists Photo Action

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