

UNEP intervention

79th Commission Session

“Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development”
May 15-19th (exact time/session for intervention TBD)

Thank you chair.

UNEP welcomes the focus of this year’s Commission on Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development.

Last month the IPCC report released the *Climate Change 2023: Synthesis Report* which condenses nearly a decade of climate science. It says the world is already 1.1°C warmer than in pre-industrial times, and that “deep, rapid and sustained mitigation and adaptation actions” are needed this decade to stave off the worst of climate change. The report lays out the devastating effects of a full-blown climate crisis, including extreme heat, torrential rains, hunger and water shortages. Indeed, in the last year in our region we have seen wide ranging impacts, from floods in Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Thailand, drought in China, Kiribati and Tuvalu, typhoons Megi and Nalgae in the Philippines, heatwaves in India, Japan and Pakistan and most recently, last week’s record high temperature in Vietnam of 44.1 degrees Celsius. This pain is felt across all countries and sectors of society, nevertheless, the poorer are those most impacted.

UNEP, as co-chair of the Regional UN issue-based coalition on Raising Ambitions on Climate Action, looks forward to scaling up joint action across the UN system to support member states in our region in three priority areas in particular. Firstly, in support of the **Asia-Pacific Regional Action Programme on Air Pollution**. In March this year, UNEP and the East Asia Acid Deposition Monitoring Network (EANET), collaborated in the organization of the High-Level Forum on Clean Air, alongside the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia and ESCAP to discuss the operationalization of the new regional programme on air pollution. And secondly, on **coal**

retirement. Many member states are participants in international efforts to end coal utilization in the power sector. Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore and Viet Nam signed on to the Global Coal to Clean Power Transition statement during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) and in Southeast Asia for example, these commitments cover three-quarters of the coal emissions. Many countries in the region are also participating in an early coal retirement initiative under the leadership of the Asian Development Bank, which has signed up around 25 GW for early retirement. Finally, UNEP looks forward to exploring opportunities, together with the broader UN system, to support the **Just Energy Transition Partnerships** in Vietnam and Indonesia, while supporting the realization of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment including access to information, participation and justice in environmental and climate matters as a fundamental part of the Just Energy Transition.

I am pleased to inform you that the **5th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific** will take place in-person and with an opportunity for virtual participation from 3 to 6 October 2023 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The meeting will be jointly organized by the Government of Sri Lanka's Ministry of Environment and UNEP. The Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum and the Asia Pacific Science, Policy and Business Forum will also take place under the Forum. The Forum is a platform for governments, intergovernmental organizations, and major groups and other stakeholders, to discuss the regional environmental priorities and provide regional inputs to the outcome of the 6th session of the **UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-6)** scheduled to be held from 26 February to 1 March 2024 in Nairobi under the theme "Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution". Further information on the programme and participation would be available soon in the Forum website.

Thank you.