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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fourth session
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**Resolution adopted by the United Nations Environment
Assembly on 15 March 2019**

4/10. Innovation on biodiversity and land degradation

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and acknowledging the importance of conservation, the sustainable use of biodiversity, land restoration and sustainable management in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Noting the outcomes of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, held in Ordos, China, in September 2017; the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2018; and General Assembly resolution 73/233 on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,

Noting with appreciation the preparatory process adopted in Sharm el-Sheikh for the development of an ambitious and transformational post-2020 global biodiversity framework; the decision by the General Assembly to convene a summit on biodiversity at the level of Heads of State and Government, as set out in its resolution 73/234 on the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its contribution to sustainable development; the Sharm El-Sheikh Declaration “Investing in Biodiversity for People and Planet”; the Pan-African Action Agenda on Ecosystem Restoration for Enhanced Resilience; and the Sharm El-Sheikh to Beijing Action Agenda for Nature and People, all of which aim to mobilize broad political and stakeholder engagement,

Also noting with appreciation the launch of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund,

Acknowledging that action to combat desertification and restore degraded land and ecosystems can deliver multiple benefits, with the potential to act as an accelerator for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Noting with appreciation General Assembly resolution 73/284 on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, which designates 2021–2030 as the United Nations Decade for Ecosystem Restoration,

Recognizing the importance of addressing drivers of wildlife and ecosystem loss, including the urgent measures required to combat illegal trade in and overexploitation of wildlife and wildlife products and the need to strengthen enforcement measures,

Recognizing also that climate change is a major and growing driver of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and that conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ecosystem functions and services, contribute significantly to climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, and food security and nutrition,

Noting that long-lasting droughts and the negative effects of unsustainable land management practices that can be exacerbated by climate change increase the range of areas affected by sand and dust storms; contribute to the degradation of natural resources and ecosystems; increase desertification, deforestation and loss of biodiversity; and have a negative impact on land productivity, human well-being and livelihoods, meaning that the matter needs to be addressed collaboratively at the national, regional and global levels,

Recognizing the benefits of sustainable and innovative ecosystem-based solutions to address biodiversity loss and land degradation, and the need to enhance the capacity of nature to continue providing those benefits,

Recognizing also the importance of investing in conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, mobilizing financial resources from all potential sources, capacity-building, international cooperation, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms and mainstreaming across all sectors as enabling mechanisms for addressing biodiversity loss,

Noting that indigenous peoples and local communities, women, girls and youth all play an important role in conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity, yet are disproportionately affected by biodiversity loss and land degradation, and should therefore be meaningfully engaged, as appropriate, in efforts to address such matters,

Taking note with appreciation of the thematic assessments on land degradation and restoration and the regional assessments on biodiversity and ecosystem services conducted by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the first edition of the Global Land Outlook, published by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the *State of the World's Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture*, published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and their key messages and recommendations,

Deeply concerned by the continued high loss of biodiversity and the latest assessment¹ showing that most of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets are not likely to be achieved by 2020, and stressing the importance of integrated and robust monitoring of the status of biodiversity that is based on up-to-date scientific data at the national, regional and global levels for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework,

Noting with appreciation the initiative of the Government of Egypt to promote a coherent approach to addressing biodiversity loss, climate change, and land and ecosystem degradation,

1. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen their commitments and step up their efforts to prevent the loss of biological diversity and the degradation of land and soil, including through conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and appropriate policies and innovative measures, such as partnership arrangements, mutually agreed transfer of technology, and financing mechanisms;
2. *Also encourages* Member States to undertake strategic environmental assessments and other assessments to support policy decisions and other actions to minimize and avoid the potential negative impact of programmes, projects and plans on biological diversity and ecosystem functions and services;
3. *Urges* Member States, and invites non-State actors and other stakeholders, to mainstream biodiversity in all relevant sectors and fully engage in the process of developing the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the fifteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Kunming, China, in 2020;
4. *Calls upon* Member States, and invites the private sector, academia and other stakeholders, to support innovative measures to strengthen and develop national and regional centres of excellence for the sustainable management of biodiversity and the monitoring of land degradation;
5. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, upon request and subject to the availability of resources, to support those Member States that are also party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious

¹ Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, *Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (forthcoming).

Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to apply the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the Convention in their national policies, programmes, plans and processes relating to desertification, land degradation and drought, in accordance with the domestic circumstances of those countries, and to align those policies, programmes, plans and processes with the Strategic Framework;

6. *Also requests* the Executive Director, upon request and subject to the availability of resources, to support those Member States that are also party to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and that have pledged to do so, to develop and implement voluntary targets with regard to land degradation neutrality, including the definition of national baselines, targets and associated measures, to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, as appropriate;

7. *Encourages* Member States, and invites international organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to reduce and reverse biodiversity loss and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals through, as appropriate, the integration of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures into wider landscapes and seascapes within national jurisdiction; by mainstreaming across sectors, taking into consideration Convention on Biological Diversity decision 14/8, on protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, to foster innovative sustainable practices; and by considering spatial and regional approaches, measures to address threatened habitats and species, and strengthening ecosystem resilience;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director, in partnership with other United Nations entities and other stakeholders, and subject to the availability of resources, to support Member States in developing national policies and measures to restore, conserve and sustainably use biological diversity and strengthen ecosystem resilience, functions and services, both within and outside protected areas, to support relevant Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and to explore:

(a) Developing, promoting, strengthening and building on, as appropriate, effective practices for the sustainable and resilient coexistence of humans and wildlife, including sustainable wildlife-based economies, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of livelihoods, particularly of indigenous peoples and local communities, taking into account, inter alia, the voluntary guidance for a sustainable wild meat sector as adopted by the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in its decision 14/7 on sustainable wildlife management;

(b) Innovative financing for ecosystem restoration and ecosystem-based approaches for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(c) Addressing sand and dust storms, which can pose a significant challenge to the sustainable development of affected regions, especially ecosystems in arid and semi-arid regions, such as highlands, and can threaten lives and economies in those areas, by encouraging the sharing of information, best practice, lessons learned, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, resource mobilization and the development of early warning systems and impact assessment mechanisms based on existing regional and international initiatives, such as the Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms, established by the United Nations Environment Management Group pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/225 on combating sand and dust storms;

9. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and its Global Soil Partnership, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and other related conventions, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat, and relevant intergovernmental panels, where appropriate, to foster innovative ways to address biodiversity loss, climate change, and the degradation of soil, land and ecosystems in an integrated manner;

10. *Urges* Member States to cooperate with regard to programmes that address threats to biodiversity, in particular those that address overexploitation and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, by ensuring that any use is both legal and sustainable and by implementing appropriate strategies and action plans to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of species and ecosystems;

11. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen their efforts to identify, including through modelling and risk analysis efforts, at an appropriate scale, current and future risks and effects of climate change on biodiversity and biodiversity-based livelihoods, in particular of indigenous peoples and local communities, taking into consideration their importance for climate change adaptation and mitigation, land restoration and disaster risk reduction and management;

12. *Requests* the Executive Director, in response to the invitation set out in General Assembly resolution 73/284 on the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030), together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and in collaboration with the secretariats of the “Rio Conventions” (the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements and entities of the United Nations system, to lead the implementation of the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;

13. *Also requests* the Executive Director to support and promote the implementation of the initiative of the Government of Egypt to promote a coherent approach for addressing biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystem degradation, in line with Convention on Biological Diversity decision 14/30 on cooperation with other conventions, international organizations and initiatives;

14. *Calls on* the Executive Director to contribute, in close cooperation with the Convention on Biological Diversity, to the preparations for the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be convened by the General Assembly at the level of Heads of State and Government in New York on 24 and 25 September 2019;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session on progress towards implementation of the present resolution.
