

**Summary of the Fifth Forum of Ministers and
Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific:
1-5 October 2023**

The Asia-Pacific region is home to some of the planet’s most unique biodiversity and to a remarkable diversity of ecosystems, ranging from lush rainforests and tropical coral reefs to vast deserts and towering mountain ranges. This rich tapestry of nature supports an array of unique and often endangered species, making it a globally significant hotspot for biodiversity conservation. Such unparalleled biodiversity not only has cultural significance for the Indigenous communities who call this region home, but it also plays a crucial role in maintaining the planet’s ecological balance.

However, the region is also facing devastating impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. This crisis not only undermines sustainable development but threatens the hard-earned economic progress in the region.

The recently concluded 2023 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Summit, which took place in September 2023 in New York, revealed a concerning reality: the world is not on track to achieving the SDGs by 2030. Despite some progress in various areas, the global community still faces substantial challenges in meeting the ambitious targets set forth in the SDGs. Urgent and coordinated efforts are needed at all levels to address these shortfalls and accelerate progress towards a more sustainable future.

The need for collective action is at the forefront of the region’s environmental conservation and restoration efforts, alongside a concerted push for political good will, often garnered at high-level meetings, such as the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. The Forum brings together diverse countries with unique environmental challenges, fostering a spirit of collaboration to address the crisis in the region. This vital gathering has been convening biennially since 2015.

The 2023 Forum convened in the wake of global and regional struggles to rebound from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, a struggle exacerbated by the challenges posed by the triple planetary crisis. The foremost objective of the post-pandemic green recovery has been to foster increased regional solidarity, aimed at constructing resilient economies that prioritize the well-being of both humanity and the environment.

The Forum focused on the theme of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), namely

“Effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.” This theme perfectly encapsulates the region’s unwavering commitment to forging a collective response to these interconnected global challenges, reflecting its determination to overcome the triple planetary crisis and work towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

The Forum is a platform for governments, intergovernmental organizations, and major groups and other stakeholders, to discuss the regional environmental priorities. The outcomes will inform deliberations at UNEA-6, which will convene in Nairobi, Kenya, from 26 February to 1 March 2024.

Around 474 delegates representatives of governments, intergovernmental and international organizations, and Major Groups and Other Stakeholders (MGOS) (376 on-site and 98 online), 15 ministers and vice-ministers of environment, and the President of Sri Lanka attended the Forum.

The Forum’s events took place in Colombo, Sri Lanka, from 1-5 October 2023, and in four sessions. The Asia-Pacific Youth Environment Forum 2023, held from 1-2 October 2023, centered around the theme, “Children and the environment,” and sought to empower children and youth to champion their rights in the context of environmental protection and climate change. The event highlighted the significance of the [2023 General Comment No. 26 \(GC26\)](#) on children’s rights and the environment, emphasizing the urgent need to address the adverse impacts of environmental degradation on children’s rights. In

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the Youth Manifesto for Action, young people from the region urged the Ministers and Environment Authorities to propose a UNEA-6 resolution on the rights of children and youth to a clean and healthy environment.

The Asia-Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum on Environment, which convened on 3 October 2023, provided a platform for MGOS to share insights, and advocate for recognition of their role in the region's solutions to pressing environmental challenges. The discussions highlighted the importance of inclusive and rights-based approaches to environmental protection and sustainable development.

On 4 October 2023, the Senior Officials Meeting of the Forum convened. It was attended by high-ranking officials of environment ministries from the region, as well as other stakeholders, to review implementation of UNEA resolutions and discuss the region's inputs to UNEA-6.

The Ministerial Segment convened on 5 October 2023 and was attended by dignitaries, including the President of Sri Lanka, who opened the meeting. The meeting featured dialogue sessions on the role of multilateral actions and cooperation in facilitating regional solutions and solidarity.

The following draft resolutions to UNEA-6 are summarized in the Senior Officials Meeting Chair's Summary:

- Japan presented its draft resolution on 'Promoting synergistic approaches to address the triple crisis on climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, and support sustainable development.' The resolution would scale up synergies to address the SDGs including through compiling best practice and methodologies to promote them in science-based policymaking. The draft also calls on UNEP to prepare an assessment report summarizing actions to promote synergistic actions.
- Sri Lanka presented its draft resolution on 'Effective, Inclusive, and Sustainable Multilateral Actions towards Climate Justice,' which would promote the establishment of a Climate Justice Forum, to increase awareness and advocacy on climate justice.
- Sri Lanka also proposed another potential draft resolution to promote cascade systems for sustainable management of ancient and traditionally managed ecosystems, including agricultural ecosystems, which could also provide insights into natural resource management more widely.
- Nepal presented its draft resolution on the Hindu Kush Himalayas to address snow melt and environmental damage caused by climate change that challenges livelihoods and called for urgent action to conserve this ecosystem.

In addition, India noted they were considering a UNEA-6 resolution on sustainable lifestyles in line with the discussions and commitments on this issue by the G20. Fiji expressed support for the Japanese resolution and that Pacific countries would also discuss a potential resolution.

The Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) also called on governments to sponsor a resolution on the rights of children and youth to a clean and healthy environment, advocating for their active participation in shaping a cleaner and healthier world.

A Brief History of the Forum

The Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific stems from a decision taken at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012. Paragraph 88(g) of the Rio+20 Outcome, [The Future We Want](#), called for strengthening the regional presence of the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP) to assist countries, upon request, in implementing their national environmental policies. The Forums take place in the context of the overall goal of strengthening UNEP.

In 2016, UNEA-2 adopted a resolution to strengthen the regional environment ministerial forums as part of the preparatory process for UNEA sessions. UNEA, UNEP's high-level decision-making body with universal membership, first convened in 2014. Forum outcomes are communicated to various regional and global fora besides UNEA, including the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development. The latter replaces the Subregional Environmental Policy Dialogues that UNEP convened from 2003 to 2014.

Due to the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated travel restrictions, UNEA-5 was scheduled in two parts, under the theme, "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals." The first session, UNEA-5.1, took place online in February 2021 and focused on urgent and procedural decisions.

Key Turning Points

First Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: This Forum took place from 19-20 May 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, and contributed to negotiations on the SDGs, which the UN General Assembly adopted in September 2015. Delegates identified challenges for the region, namely: air pollution and its health impacts; the need for sound chemicals and waste management, including transboundary approaches; and the promotion of the green and blue economies.

Second Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: This Forum took place from 5-8 September 2017 in conjunction with the seventh Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development in Asia and the Pacific. It was organized jointly with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok, Thailand. The joint meeting, referred to as the First Asia-Pacific Ministerial Summit, reviewed implementation of sustainable development commitments and presented examples of policy and practice supporting delivery of the SDGs, multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and UNEA commitments. Ministers supported concerted action on such issues as waste management, environmental health strategies, transboundary pollution, and marine litter.

Third Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: This Forum took place from 23-25 January 2019 in Singapore. The meeting was the first such Forum to be organized jointly by UNEP with a Member State and to take place outside Bangkok, Thailand, where the regional secretariat of UNEP

is based. The Forum focused on innovations in sustainable consumption and production (SCP).

Delegates shared their national actions and experiences with implementing SCP solutions, discussed progress within the region on achieving the SDGs, and provided their perspectives on draft UNEA resolutions proposed by Asia-Pacific countries. The resolutions addressed such issues as marine litter, ecosystem protection, sustainable infrastructure, dust storms, and waste management. During the ministerial segment, delegates took part in two high-level panels, which addressed policy support and financing.

Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: The Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific convened from 2-7 October 2021 in a hybrid format, with online participation and in-person attendance in the Republic of Korea. The Forum took place amid the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, which pushed millions more into extreme poverty in the region. The meeting aimed to provide regional insights into necessary post-pandemic recovery efforts and policy priorities for UNEA-5.2. The Forum evaluated the Asia Pacific region's ambition for two crucial global processes: the Glasgow UN Climate Change Conference and the Kunming-Montreal UN Biodiversity Conference. The Forum emphasized investing in nature for pandemic recovery, tackling marine pollution, promoting technology and innovation, and involving youth in green technology and decision-making.

The **resumed fifth session of UNEA (UNEA-5.2)** convened from 28 February – 2 March 2022, in Nairobi, Kenya, and took the historic decision to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The meeting also resolved to, among others, establish a science-policy platform on chemicals, waste, and pollution.

Report of the Forum

Asia Pacific Youth Environment Forum 2023

The Asia Pacific Youth Environment Forum themed, “Children and the Environment,” convened on 1-2 October 2023. Young people met to address this crucial nexus, empower children and youth in championing their rights, and ensure a brighter and more sustainable future for all, where every child can thrive in harmony with nature. These sentiments are outlined in the [2023 GC26](#), which emphasizes the urgency of addressing the adverse effects of environmental degradation, particularly climate change, on the enjoyment of children's rights, and clarifies the obligations of UN Member States to address environmental harm and climate change.

The Youth Forum delivered the Asia-Pacific Youth Environment Manifesto to the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific. The Manifesto expresses the calls for action of children and youth, for inclusion in the Asia-Pacific region's message to UNEA-6.

Children and the Environment: Katie Reid, Children's Environmental Rights and Participation Officer, Terre des

Hommes, and coordinator of the GC26 steering group, moderated the session.

Christian Skoog, Representative for Sri Lanka, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), noted that over 50% of children and youth live in climate-vulnerable conditions. He drew attention to the GC26, encouraging its use to pressure governments to act on climate change.

Mithra, child human rights activist, Malaysia, underscored that children from all backgrounds should be included in decision making, and called on adults to make room for the next generation by sharing their experience and knowledge.

Philip D. Jaffé, Vice Chair, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, welcomed the GC26 as “the children's General Comment.” He stated that the document recognizes the rights of children to a healthy environment, which in turn obliges governments to fulfill these rights. He called on all to protect children as human and environmental rights' defenders.

Delegates then watched a short child-friendly animation video, “GC26 for Children by Children.”

What the GC26 Means for Us: During this panel segment, moderator Reid invited reflections on the GC26 co-creation process. Aniva Clarke, GC26 Child Advisor, Samoa, underlined the importance of the GC26 to help children and youth understand their rights. Kartik Verma, GC26 Child Advisor, and UNEP Children Affairs Focal Point, India, welcomed having both gender and language balance among participants of the co-creation process.

Addressing the intersection of children's rights and environmental conservation in her country, Zainab, child delegate, Sri Lanka, outlined the Green Skills for All initiative. The panelists warned that “youth with no voice today will be adults with no choice tomorrow.”

Lianne Minasian, Child Rights International Network, noted that children are often excluded from decision making due to age restrictions and said that the GC26 provides an opportunity for intergenerational action where children, young people, and adults work together. She reported that the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 27) to the UN Framework



Katie Reid, Children's Environmental Rights and Participation Officer, Terre des Hommes



Kartik Verma, GC26 Child Advisor and UNEP Children Affairs Focal Point, India

Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in 2022, was a major milestone for children's rights in climate action, as the negotiation outcomes explicitly referred to the role of children in enhancing implementation, and encouraged Member States to include young representatives and negotiators in national delegations. The COP decision calling for UN Member States to include children in climate policies and actions, she added, is also a significant step in the right direction.

Suhana, child climate activist, India, said the rights of young citizens are critical, including those of newborns and infants who are unable to give voice to their concerns. She acknowledged the major steps taken in listening to children and youth voices and called for implementation of the GC26, which will lead to universal and indivisible protection of the rights of children and youth.

Mehwish, youth participant, Pakistan, emphasized that the GC26 is not just a document but a commitment to guarantee the well-being of children and ensure a lasting impact on the children and youth rights and environment nexus.

Advancing Circularity in Asia Pacific for Climate Resilience: This Zoom session was moderated by Zainab Naem, youth advisor, Green Jobs for Youth Pact.

Describing recycling as a "failure" of the circular economy, Paul Faulkes Arellano, Founder, Circulathon Consulting, discussed the region's circularity progress, noting developments in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka (through repair and sharing economies), and Indonesia, which encourage the rethink, reduce, reuse, repair, refurbish, remanufacture, repurpose, and recycle model.

Ali Syed, CEO, Ouroboros Waste Management, said that his company focuses on waste circularity, including for plastics, and works with the informal waste management sector. He noted that the company also works to reduce emissions, and shared challenges in recycling materials such as polyethylene terephthalate.

Amna Farrukh, Assistant Professor, National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences, Pakistan, noted that the up-, mid-, and downstream sections of the packaging supply chain require different solutions, and prioritized the reduction of

unsustainable materials in the packaging supply-chain, pointing to New Zealand's incentive scheme to encourage reduction.

Hafiz Jawad Sohail, youth climate activist, Pakistan, underlined the importance of integrating, rescaling, and upscaling informal sectors and workforces for a green economic transition, which must be facilitated by formalized mechanisms and frameworks. He called for job creation that ensures green jobs are also decent ones.

Shiza Aslam, Circular Practice Institute, Karachi School of Business and Leadership, said that misunderstandings on circularity and sustainability persist in Pakistan despite greater awareness of the climate crisis. She noted that communications strategies for disseminating research must be adapted to engage with the more "human-focused" younger generations and provide greater exposure to circularity and sustainable consumption.

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) for Youth-Led Adaptation Actions: The session, moderated by Manisha, climate activist, India, sought to provide youth with a better understanding of their role in locally-led NbS action, while amplifying NbS in national adaptation plans and strategies.

Marie-Yon Strücker, One Health Consultant, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), provided context on the NbS development within regional and UNEA processes, noting the intersectional benefits of using NbS for addressing societal challenges. She encouraged local action and noted that delegates can make a difference through their own future and career choices.

Kasumi Ranasinghe Arachchige, youth speaker, Sri Lanka, underscored that this generation is the most affected by the climate crisis, but also has the most to gain. She highlighted the negative impacts of biodiversity loss to human health, including mental health difficulties, and climate anxiety. She further outlined the benefits of improved and restored access to nature, including attention restoration and stress reduction.

Subhashi Tania de Silva, Steering Committee, Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), underlined the importance of ensuring that NbS and Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA)



Hafiz Jawad Sohail, Youth Climate Activist, Pakistan



Kasumi Ranasinghe Arachchige, Youth Speaker, Sri Lanka

concepts are understood from the outset, and shared community and youth-led NbS initiatives at larger and more impactful scales.

Trisna, UNICEF Young People's Action Team, shared NbS initiatives undertaken in Indonesia to facilitate adaptive agricultural practices and management, and to address the lack of environmental awareness and wasteful practices within education systems.

Science-Policy-Business Forum Youth Segment: This session, moderated by Thaybah Mohamed, SLYCAN Trust, was convened to foster collaboration among youth, policymakers, scientists, and businesses to incorporate youth voices in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, natural resource depletion, and air/plastic pollution in the Asia-Pacific region. The discussions from this segment were considered during the [second regional session of the Science-Policy Business Forum for Asia and the Pacific](#), held on 3 October 2023.

Mohamed noted that the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum (UN-SPBF) is ready to integrate the voices of youth into decision-making processes.

Youssef Aboali, UN-SPBF, underlined that the voices of youth must be heard to chart the vision of the future. He underscored that policy fragmentation hinders development, business, job creation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, before emphasizing that policy should not only regulate but also incentivize entrepreneurship.

Buddhi Marambe, Senior Professor, University of Peradeniya, underlined the importance of multidisciplinary integrated approaches for promoting effective climate solutions. He highlighted the role of start-ups in exploration and innovation to inform national target-setting processes.

To develop the start-up ecosystem in Sri Lanka and in the region, Kavindu Ediriweera, Deputy Director of Programmes, SLYCAN Trust, prioritized: training to ensure they can attract financing; capacity-building and technical support for entrepreneurs from relevant government ministries; and establishing platforms which connect science, finance, and policy.

Ravindu Nawanjana, Founder and CEO, CuteFela, discussed the challenges of youth engagement in social entrepreneurship. He noted the need to ensure potential entrepreneurs can access

financing information, as well as develop an understanding of when to enter the market.

Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF): Leveraging the Power of Youth for the Implementation of Our Common Biodiversity Goals: Sakura Takahashi, Keio University, moderated this session, noting that empowering youth in implementing the GBF is essential for conserving the region's biodiverse ecosystems.

In opening remarks, Hendri Surya, youth representative, Indonesia, said the GBF provides a pathway to reverse the devastating trend of biodiversity loss. He urged the Youth Forum to emphasize action for forging partnerships, restoring wellbeing, and connecting human societies and ecosystems.

Joe Appiott, Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity, described the GBF goals as outcome-oriented and its targets as action-oriented. He noted the need for rapid alignment of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) with the GBF without interrupting their implementation.

Eshadi Mendis, Regional Coordinator of Asia, GYBN, presented youth-led activities in Sri Lanka, including a beach clean-up carried out along the coast of Gurunagar in collaboration with Jaffna University.

Manisha, climate activist, India, reported work with children in informal settlements, including tree planting, plastics removal and clean up, and carbon footprint reduction by advocating for public transportation.

Karisma Putera Abd Rahman, Bat Al-Amanah (House of Trust), pointed to the milestones achieved by the Malaysia Nature Society in tree planting, environmental awareness, and wildlife photography. He also drew attention to EcoKnights, a youth-led initiative that has launched the Green Awards to incentivize youth projects and activities.

On how to leverage successful youth-led initiatives and participation in the GBF, Mendis noted that Target 21 of the GBF explicitly references effective participation of young people. She noted Sri Lanka's youth engagement in updating the country's NBSAP, underscoring this as a major win for youth.

Regarding barriers and opportunities for effective youth involvement, Abd Rahman highlighted the need to promote



Youssef Aboali, Innovation and Partnerships Officer, UN Science-Policy-Business Forum

emotive, genuine, and heartfelt storytelling to enable youth reconnection with biodiversity, and to enhance appreciation of youth initiatives by policymakers.

Mendis highlighted that funding is a major constraint, urging better accessibility of funds from the Global Environment Facility for youth-led GBF implementation.

Asia Pacific Youth Environment Manifesto 2023: Youth Participants Rubina Adhikari, Nepal, and Tuan Anh Khong, Viet Nam, moderated this session. Vikrant Srivastava, Regional Focal Point Asia Pacific, CYMG, presented the Asia Pacific Youth Environment Manifesto 2023. Recalling UN Secretary General António Guterres' statement that "humanity has opened the gates to hell" regarding the climate crisis, Srivastava emphasized that "we the youth will close the gates."

The Asia Pacific Youth Environment Manifesto, *inter alia*:

- calls on UN Member States to prioritize youth involvement in crucial decision-making processes, especially in science-policy interfaces and multilateral financial mechanisms, to ensure intergenerational perspectives to drive innovative solutions and practical applications in local contexts;
- urges Asia-Pacific countries to establish a just and equitable funding mechanism, including a youth-friendly approach to capacity building and fund management to support children and youth-organized initiatives, programmes, and projects; and
- calls upon UN Member States to sponsor a resolution on children and youth, emphasizing the importance of protecting children's fundamental right to live in a clean and healthy environment.

Closing Ceremony: Ajay Kumar Jha, Asia Pacific Regional Facilitator, MGOS, praised the quantity and quality of work undertaken by youth actors, saying he considers youth engagement to be the most promising development of the last decade. He warned against "youth washing," and encouraged youth participants to continue engaging strategically in multilateral and domestic decision-making processes.

Azusa Kubota, Resident Representative in Sri Lanka, UN Development Programme, remarked on the intergenerational and transboundary impacts of climate change, and welcomed cross-generational partnerships. She highlighted initiatives that ensure talk is translated into tangible action, including through cultural shifts.

Dechen Tsering, Regional Representative and Director, UNEP ROAP, underlined the need for rights-based approaches, access to finance, and transparency. She stressed that though we may not know what will happen when we cross planetary boundaries, a holistic, collaborative approach to solving planetary problems is required.

Stating that every success "has small beginnings," Anil Jasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka, drew attention to the shared responsibility required to revolutionize economies while guarding against environmental degradation and climate change.

Sajani Gamage, youth participant, Sri Lanka, thanked regional leaders for recognizing the importance of youth voices in decision making. Zuhair Ahmed Kowshik, Global Focal Point,



Ajay Kumar Jha, Asia Pacific Regional Facilitator, MGOS

CYMG, urged greater recognition for children in the region, and called for renaming the Youth Forum, referring to it instead as the "Asia Pacific Children and Youth Forum."

Jha closed the meeting at 4:49pm.

Asia Pacific Major Groups Forum on the Environment

On Tuesday, 3 October 2023, the Asia Major Groups Forum on the Environment convened to discuss and organize the position of MGOS and their inputs to the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

Jha, MGOS, opened the session. Jasinghe, Sri Lanka, welcomed Major Group participants, and called for open and candid discussions, highlighting the opportunity for MGOS to forge partnerships that transcend borders, thereby contributing to a better future for the region and for the rest of the world.

Underlining UNEP's commitment to uphold multilateralism, Tsering, UNEP ROAP, highlighted that, even against the backdrop of global challenges, the world was still able to come together to agree on addressing plastic pollution at UNEA-5.2 in March 2022.

Road to UNEA-6: State of Affairs and Regional Priorities:

This panel, moderated by Karin Fernando, Centre for Poverty Analysis, assessed the state of affairs in the region on the



Anil Jasinghe, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka

triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Panelists deliberated on the environmental realities, contributions and challenges faced by communities. Firas Khouri, Jordan, and Chair, Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to UNEP, looked forward to constructive engagement in the lead-up to UNEA-6.

Radhika Ochalik, Secretary, Governing Bodies, UNEP, described the role of the CPR, and highlighted the functions of the Open-ended CPR (OECPR), which is charged with assessing UNEA draft resolutions, inviting MGOS to engage with the OECPR. She further drew attention to the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum, to convene just prior to UNEA-6, which will provide MGOS the opportunity to ensure their input to and participation in UNEA.

Subrata Sinha, Secretary of the Forum, reported on Sri Lanka's plans to launch the Climate Justice Forum for vulnerable and developing countries at COP 28.

Moderator Wali Haider, Roots for Equity, noting that any future sustainable development cannot be achieved without organizing and mobilizing communities and stakeholders, invited panelists to share on-the-ground issues, opportunities, and priorities.

Mamta Kujur, Founder, Jashpur Jan Vikas Sanstha, noted grassroots-level initiatives implementing national legislation on food security and forest rights in India. She remarked on the need to ensure policy is correctly implemented at local and domestic levels, and to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities, pointing to forcible displacement resulting from extractive industry land grabbing.

Isagani Bacasmas, Chair and CEO, Ladlad Caraga Incorporated, underlined the importance of considering the intersectional dimensions of the triple planetary crisis, particularly on the multiple, disproportionate effects experienced by LGBTQ+ communities. They noted that delivering on environmental justice cannot occur without including communities that experience multiple systems of oppression and discrimination.

Visaka Dharmadasa, Founder, Association of War Affected Women, noted that peacebuilding is fundamental to action on the triple planetary crisis. She called for rethinking unsustainable



L-R: Panel on the Road to UNEA-6 with: **Mamta Kujur**, Founder, Jashpur Jan Vikas Sanstha; **Isagani Bacasmas**, Chairman and CEO, Ladlad Caraga Incorporated; and **Visaka Dharmadasa**, Founder, Association of War Affected Women

practices such as hazardous pesticide use, and unplanned, unregulated infrastructure development and consumption practices, as well as an accelerated renewable energy transition.

Jha provided an overview of the region's state of affairs for development and the triple planetary crisis, reflecting on progress and regression regarding the SDGs. He noted the contrast between the Asia Pacific being perceived as a "growth region," with the on-the-ground situation revealing persistent poverty and food insecurity. Jha called for: strengthened global efforts to achieve transformative multilateralism; partnerships that work to bridge the North-South divide and prioritize the inclusion of lower income countries; and prioritizing discussions about systemic inequalities at the global level.

In the discussion, participants noted the relationship between sustainable peacebuilding and grassroots-led environmental work, underscoring the role of the traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples in this regard. They also discussed the difficulties faced by human rights and environmental defenders in the region, lamenting the fast-shrinking civil society space. Others considered the need to adopt multistakeholder agendas at the country level, with broader participation "outside of these rooms." Some called for an observer seat at the UN General Assembly for civil society to have representation at the decision-making table. One participant shared their experience of SDG awareness raising on climate change in grassroots communities, calling for more collaborative work with local leaders and parliamentarians.

Looking Ahead: This panel, facilitated by Fernando, focused on progress made in implementing UNEA-5 resolutions. Panelists and participants further considered how to incorporate emerging challenges, while ensuring regional concerns and interests of specific groups are accounted for.

Elenita "Neth" Daño, Co-Executive Director, Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration (ETC Group), focused on the need to account for the role of Indigenous knowledge in the circular economy. On the environmental approach to minerals and metals management, Daño said human rights and the



Firas Khouri, Chair, CPR to UNEP, Jordan

impact on people are key issues due to the exploitative nature of extractive practices.

Discussing the UNEA decision on a science-policy panel on chemicals, waste, and pollution, Hemantha Withanage, Executive Director, Centre for Environmental Justice, said evidence-based research is required to provide localized and nationalized data and information. He lamented the widespread use of toxic chemicals in the region, noting links to cancer and chronic kidney disease since the early 1990s, and urged more use of legal instruments to pursue justice against waste-related offenses.

Prem Singh Tharu, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, discussed progress achieved in the INC to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. He urged MGOS to be strategic to ensure meaningful engagement and inputs in each draft document.

Reporting on progress on NbS, Haider, Roots for Equity, lamented the influence of corporate interests alongside the push for genetically modified organisms and large tree plantation monocultures. He urged solutions that lead to practical implementation and legislation within countries, while supporting achieving food, nutrition, and climate resilience.

Kowshik, CYMG, praised the Global Environment Outlook for providing a space for youth engagement in the assessments, and urged UNEP to similarly support MGOS engagement in other processes.

Participants emphasized the need for social and environmental safeguards, and for curbing the production of toxic chemicals rather than only managing their spread and impact.

They underlined that the core of MGOS involvement is ensuring that the rights of people and of the environment are considered explicitly in negotiations.

In concluding, Fernando stated that meaningful engagement in negotiations should not be about numbers of MGOS participants, but rather about the engagement mechanisms provided for centering issues affecting people and the environment.

Peoples' Solutions and Innovations: This session, facilitated by Gomer Padong, Institute for Social Entrepreneurship in Asia, considered challenges, solutions, and achievements in addressing

the triple planetary crisis at the grassroots level, including through implementing rights-based approaches.

Fazly Noor Mohamed, Lanka Organic Agriculture Movement, presented an agroecology-based food-forest project for women in northern Sri Lanka, and described co-benefits, including increased crop diversity, cooler microclimate, increased biodiversity, and improved livelihoods.

Hanieh Moghani, Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment, drew attention to the suffering of Indigenous Peoples and local communities due to such actions as unilateral coercive measures, including sanctions. She lamented that only three countries in the region recognize Indigenous Peoples' rights.

Kala Peiris, Sri Lanka Centre for Development Facilitation, stressed that the climate crisis is not "gender neutral" but has a multiplier effect, escalating social, political, and economic tensions. She presented an example of good practice involving partnerships between the private sector and women-based organizations in promoting river basin management.

Ravadee Prasertcharoensuk, Director, Sustainable Development Foundation, shared her experience working with small-scale fishers in Thailand, noting they have "become invisible" due to commercial fisheries' expansion. She discussed examples of "community mangrove forests," which excluded the local community, contrasting these against traditional land management practices which created more biodiverse spaces.

Ajaykumar V.B., Executive Director, Equities Foundation, lamented the systemic discrimination and violence faced by the Dalit community, marginalized due to the region's class-based caste system. Noting that the Dalits are at the frontlines of the climate crisis, he urged recognition of their knowledge systems in decision making, financing, and implementation.

Ngo Thi Lan Phuong, Director, Centre for Sustainable Community Development, underscored local communities' lack of empowerment and voice in top-down policy implementation. She described a wind farm project in Viet Nam, operationalized without an environmental impact assessment (EIA), that was established in an environment unsuitable for wind-generated energy and resulted in forced displacement of local communities.

Arvi Bastian, Founder, Free and Equal Rights, underscored the intersectional nature of the triple planetary crisis, and noted the persistent lack of meaningful civil society engagement and capacity building. She called for, among others: improved due diligence in EIAs; facilitation of public inter-ministerial discussions; application of gender- and rights-based approaches; and prioritizing representation of marginalized groups within official government delegations to high-level negotiations.

In discussions, participants reflected on the global-local scale of the issues under discussion, and shared insights on strategies for localization and regional initiative integration. They pointed to a "macro-micro" approach through both horizontal and vertical networking and partnerships, to make use of UN-level policy agendas and domestic multi-stakeholder engagement. They also cautioned that applying a global lens, and top-down approaches, loses sight of nuance by only capturing local experiences that fit the global narrative. Participants further noted that SDG



L-R: Sivapragasam Perumal, Sri Lanka; Prem Singh Tharu, Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact; and Wali Haider, Roots for Equity, Pakistan

localization is typically done at the local authority level instead of on the ground, and called for meaningful action rather than continued talks.

Enhancing Transformative Multilateral Actions: This session, facilitated by Joy Hernandez, International Trade Union Confederation, discussed multilateral actions that can help overcome climate change and pollution, ensure GBF implementation, and improve global environmental governance.

Henaka Rallage Chiranthi Thavisha, Hype Sri Lanka, explained that the lack of mainstreaming and integration is visible in outdated conservation legislature, corruption, and the lack of public conscience regarding environmental conservation.

Daño, ETC Group, decried the current bias in the science-policy interface, which leans heavily on modern science while ignoring Indigenous knowledge and promoting academic expertise. She quoted UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen's comment on the issue, urging that this message be included in the MGOS declaration: "the science-policy interface should not be only about scientists sitting in their academic spires and delivering wisdom to politicians, who decide what is best for the people. It should not be the preserve of the western world, or wealthy elites."

Jayantha Wijesingha, Co-Founder, Rainforest Protectors of Sri Lanka, referred to UNEA as the "world's parliament on the environment," noting that its role should be similar to an elected parliament that represents the people, including through providing finances to support policy implementation.

Mahesh Pandya, Director, Paryavaran Mitra, questioned the validity of EIA processes, noting that private sector interests hamper effective conservation measures. Similarly, he remarked that the Polluter Pays Principle has been made ineffective, as the private sector is always willing to pay, preferring to refer instead to a "Pay to Pollute Principle."

Syed Jahangir Hasan Masum, Executive Director, Coastal Development Partnership, called for an end to the "tyranny of experts and for embracing of Indigenous knowledge." He said fragmentation of MEAs into different components of nature, such as biodiversity, climate change, and chemicals, results in the fragmentation of different conservation measures. He noted that, in contrast, Indigenous concepts such as "Mother Earth" are indivisible.

In the discussion, participants considered: the need to assess the neo-colonial commodification of traditional knowledge and Indigenous practices from the Global South; the glacial pace of climate change negotiations where "everybody still loses"; and the need for a harmonized baseline towards carbon reduction goals.

Closing Session: Jha, MGOS, noted that the MGOS Forum statement contains broad recommendations to the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, including those related to the need:

- to further develop agroecology;
- to reduce energy consumption, particularly from extractive sources;

- to re-examine NbS as a concept as it could open the door for technologies such as geoenengineering;
- for strong NBSAPs aligned with the GBF;
- to include civil society organizations in assessing new and emerging technologies;
- for Member States and the private sector to commit no harm and protect environmental and human rights defenders; and
- to ensure meaningful participation of MGOS in environmental governance.

Participants also called for the statement to address, *inter alia*: global power inequalities; corporate capture of environmental issues that fosters false solutions; customary rights related to ecosystem management; and meaningful participation.

Thanking participants for their engagement, Fernando and Jha closed the meeting at 6:04pm.

Senior Officials Meeting

Opening: On Wednesday, 4 October 2023, Subrata Sinha, Secretary of the Forum, opened the meeting.

Jasinghe, Sri Lanka, and Chair, Fourth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, moderated this session.

Anura Dissanayake, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Sri Lanka, underscored the need to enhance good governance to promote sustainable development, urging delegates to propose strong resolutions for UNEA-6.

Dechen Tsering, UNEP ROAP, drew attention to the outcomes of meetings held prior to the Forum, including the children and youth, MGOS, and science-policy-business forums.

CPR Chair Khouri, Jordan, pointed to the work of the OECPR in drafting resolutions for consideration at UNEA. He called for bold, timebound resolutions from UNEA-6 to spur global environmental action.

Election of Officials and Adoption of the Agenda: The Forum re-elected Jasinghe as Chair. Phakkavanh Phissamay,



Dais during the opening plenary of the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific with (L-R): **Dechen Tsering**, Regional Director and Representative, UNEP ROAP; **Firas Khouri**, Chair, CPR to UNEP; **Anura Dissanayake**, Secretary to the Prime Minister, Sri Lanka; **Anil Jasinghe**, Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Sri Lanka; and **Subrata Sinha**, UNEP ROAP

Director General, Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Moira Faletutulu, Assistant CEO, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Samoa, were elected Vice-Chairs.

Delegates then adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/L.1).

Review of Implementation of UNEA Resolutions in Asia Pacific:

Tsering reported on the region's implementation of UNEA resolutions, as detailed in background document UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/1. She outlined progress on the implementation of 40 UNEA resolutions in the region under the following UNEP sub-programmes: climate action; nature action; chemicals and pollution action; science-policy; environmental governance; and finance and economic transformations. She drew attention to achievements and priorities, including on:

- EbA initiatives in eight countries, including degraded river zone rehabilitation;
- inclusive initiatives that facilitate the renewable energy transition in partnership with women stakeholders;
- strengthening capacity in 24 countries to improve knowledge sharing on SDG progress;
- good progress in enhancing climate information and knowledge services to strengthen climate resilience in five Pacific Island countries, through a Green Climate Fund-funded programme;
- strengthening the rights of environmental defenders as a priority for the region; and
- training on sustainable consumption and production, including an initiative for "climate-smart," sustainable rice production, involving over 600 thousand farmers across 24 countries.

Hiroshi Ono, Japan, and Asia-Pacific Bureau Member, INC on plastic pollution, reported on the regional consultations on INC-3, to be held in November 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya. He noted that states have broadly welcomed the zero-draft of the future agreement, and recognized the importance of upcoming intersessional work to advance the negotiations towards their conclusion by the end of 2024.



Dechen Tsering, Regional Director and Representative, UNEP ROAP



Phakkavanh Phissamay, Director General, Department of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao People's Democratic Republic, was elected Vice-Chair of the Forum.

In country statements, the COOK ISLANDS underscored long-term challenges of climate change impacts, thanked UNEP for climate-related capacity-building support, and welcomed discussions at INC-3.

INDIA pointed to the country's guidelines on extended producer responsibility to address plastic pollution and electronic waste (e-waste), and highlighted India's ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

CHINA underscored that the future plastic pollution agreement must be based on common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR) and underpinned by financial and technical assistance. He reported national implementation of NbS and nitrogen management, and participation in the science-policy platform on chemicals, waste, and pollution.

JAPAN called on INC-3 to prioritize issues for inclusion in the treaty, and reported national actions on sustainable lake management, NbS, and sustainable nitrogen management.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA described the country's fight against air pollution, and noted cooperation with China, Mongolia, and Japan to address yellow dust. SAMOA reported on implementation of the SAMOA Pathway towards achievement of the SDGs.

SRI LANKA reported progress on nitrogen management through the appointment of an interagency committee, mangrove conservation and restoration, and seagrass and marsh protection. THAILAND highlighted the outcomes of the seventh session of the Committee on Environment and Development, which convened at the end of 2022 under the theme "Protecting our Planet through Regional Cooperation and Solidarity in Asia and the Pacific." IRAN reported on hosting the September 2023 UN Conference on sand and dust storms aimed at mobilizing coordinated actions at the sub-regional, regional, interregional, and global levels.

Regional Input to the UNEA-6: Marlene Nilsson, Deputy Regional Director, UNEP ROAP, presented the document on sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution in Asia and the Pacific (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/2). She outlined opportunities for scaling up multilateral actions to address the triple planetary crisis, support

implementation of UNEA resolutions, and accelerate SDG implementation, *inter alia*:

- raising ambition for the just energy transition;
- accelerating implementation of the GBF;
- strengthening the environmental dimension of One Health approaches;
- the One Plastic Initiative to strengthen capacity; and
- the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia in support of reducing air pollution.

AUSTRALIA pointed to impacts of ocean warming addressed through the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan. INDIA noted that localized and national approaches involving local communities have been effective for implementation.

JAPAN said tackling the triple planetary crisis requires a synergistic approach and promotion of the circular economy, and called for including both in the region's message to UNEA-6. FIJI called for a synergistic approach at the global level to enable clearer implementation pathways, and to prioritize the mobilization of climate financial resources. REPUBLIC OF KOREA reported on Korea Global Adaptation Week 2023, held on 28 August – 1 September 2023, to showcase and promote climate change adaptation actions and practices.

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) urged continued institutional support and regional-level mechanisms for rapid and coordinated on-the-ground action. The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) noted ongoing work to accelerate SDG implementation under its 2050 Strategy, and emphasized the relevance and urgency of “keeping 1.5°C alive” for Pacific Island states. The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies underlined the need for a common reporting framework to achieve synergies between environmental conventions, and to address the connections between finance and development, urging for a reduction in interest rates and increased development finance.

Delegates considered the outcomes of the MGOS Forum held on 3 October 2023, noting key messages to the Ministerial Forum, including, placing the rights of Indigenous Peoples and communities at the core of multilateralism, addressing barriers to meaningful MGOS participation in decision-making spaces, and prioritizing the safety and protection of environmental rights defenders.

They also considered the outcomes of the Youth Forum, including a call for a UNEA-6 resolution dedicated to the meaningful engagement of children and youth in environmental decision-making processes.

UNEA-6 Outcome: CPR Chair Khouri informed delegates of a joint bureau retreat held in July 2023 in Morocco, where members agreed on [Guidance to Member States on the submission of draft resolutions and decisions to UNEA-6](#) (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/3) and urged delegates to adhere to the 18 December 2023 deadline for submission of draft resolutions to be considered by the CPR.

Ochalik, Governing Bodies, UNEP, expounded on timelines and modalities for submission of draft resolutions and decisions



Radhika Ochalik, Secretary, Governing Bodies, UNEP

to UNEA-6, noting that submissions should be accompanied by a concept note that includes, among others, any financial implications of the draft resolution.

JAPAN introduced a draft resolution on a synergistic approach to address the triple planetary crisis, noting its alignment to the SDGs, which requires a maximization of synergies to achieve success. He invited support for the resolution, noting it also requests the UNEP Secretariat to undertake an assessment on development of this approach.

NEPAL introduced a draft resolution on protecting ice and snow cover in the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region, aimed at addressing climate-related threats due to ice-cap melt.

SRI LANKA introduced a draft resolution on climate justice, noting that extreme climate events in the region have adverse impacts on all aspects of human life on Earth. She also proposed a draft resolution on sustainable management of cascade systems, highlighting the country's village tank cascade irrigation systems. She noted that the latter proposal is linked to the UNEA resolution on sustainable lake management, among others.

UNEA-6 Draft Ministerial Declaration: Abderrazzak Laassel, Representative of the UNEA-6 Presidency, Morocco, introduced the [UNEA-6 draft ministerial declaration](#) (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/4). He noted that the Presidency had incorporated comments received on the zero-draft that was discussed during informal CPR consultations. He reminded delegates that agreement on the declaration is consensus-based.

AUSTRALIA welcomed the draft declaration and called for the document to focus on the UNEA-6 theme and deliver on previous commitments on climate change, the GBF, and the SDGs.

CHINA appreciated the inclusion of the GBF in the draft and called for states to adhere to CBDR and respective capacities in addressing climate change. He urged for unity among Asia-Pacific countries towards a multilateral approach to address the triple planetary crisis.

INDIA emphasized the importance of including global environmental challenges other than the triple planetary crisis, including ocean acidification and waste. She pointed to

opportunities for synergies with other multilateral processes. She drew attention to reference to NbS within the outcomes of the 2023 G20 Environment and Climate Ministers' meeting.

JAPAN stated that resource efficiency and circularity are critical elements that must be included in the draft and expressed concern regarding the reference to CBDR, opining that it goes beyond current agreements. NEPAL recommended that the declaration expand its references to ecosystems in the region, pointing to high-altitude environments on the frontlines of climate change impacts.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA restated the need to recognize the global scale of plastic pollution. IRAN stressed the importance of recognizing the exacerbating effects of sand and dust storms on biodiversity loss and pollution in the region.

FIJI requested clarification on the timelines and opportunities for intraregional consultation on UNEA draft resolutions. In response, Ochalik noted that the process for input to declarations is led by the UNEA President and all versions are made available to Member States on the UNEA-6 website. FIJI also expressed concern that the draft declaration is unbalanced and requires further work.

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN welcomed the draft's emphasis on the [One Health approach](#) and recommendations to promote circularity in the region. He recommended that the declaration note the importance of sustainable multilateral actions for food system transformation alongside the One Health approach. WWF recommended inclusion of language on plastic pollution.

MGOS raised concerns that the draft is unbalanced, calling for greater focus on SDG financing as an effective enabler for environmental action, and for UNEP to lead an assessment of the impact of wars and conflicts on the environment for UNEA-7. CYMG recommended, among others, stronger and more precise language on limiting global warming to 1.5°C, inclusion of language on the [Green Jobs for Youth Pact](#), and reference to the Youth Assembly set to take place immediately prior to UNEA-6.

Senior Officials Meeting Report and Closing:

Chair Jasinghe noted that the Chair's summary (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/5) of the day's meeting had been circulated. Stating that the document does not require endorsement, he called on delegates to take note of the summary, which would be submitted to the Ministerial segment. Following minor editorial amendments, delegates took note of the summary. Thanking participants, Jasinghe gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:48 pm.

Ministerial Segment

Opening: The Ministerial Segment convened on Thursday, 5 October, opening with cultural and dance performances. Naseer Ahamed, Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka, underscored that urgent, transformative actions are needed to "bail out" the planet, calling for emergency financial resources that prioritize the most climate-vulnerable countries. He lauded the proposed Biosphere Reserve Bank, a green transition-focused multilateral development bank, as part of the solution.

In a video message, Leila Benali, UNEA-6 President, and Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development,



The Ministerial segment of the meeting opened with a Sri Lankan dance performance.

Morocco, emphasized the key role of regional voices, and expressed hope for an ambitious declaration from the Forum to UNEA-6. She called for strengthening the science, policy, and decision-making interface, and prioritizing access to low interest finance and triangular partnerships. She noted that the incoming UNEA presidency will be assumed by the Asia Pacific region.

Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP, emphasizing that no single country or region can tackle the challenges and weight of the triple planetary crisis alone. She encouraged coordinated actions over siloed ones to make, in the words of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, "peace with nature."

Sitiveni Rabuka, Prime Minister, Fiji, in a video message, noted the particular impact of the triple planetary crisis on Pacific small island developing states (SIDS), underscoring the need to address greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste production as priorities to mitigate negative spillover effects hindering SDG progress in the region. He expressed hope for scaled-up partnerships and effective multilateral assistance to spur concrete action.



Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director, UNEP



Ranil Wickremesinghe, President, Sri Lanka

Ali Salajegheh, Vice President, Iran, pointed to the importance of both multilateral- and community-level initiatives in fostering comprehensive environmental protection and management. He called on the global community to respect its share of responsibility for the triple planetary crisis, and to support developing countries through cooperation and resource-sharing.

On behalf of CYMG, Āniva Clarke, Samoa, lamented that “no child born today gets to drink clean water, breathe clean air, or eat food that is not contaminated.” She urged states to prioritize climate resilience and tackle plastic pollution, underlining the need for inclusive participation in regional policymaking spaces, and advocated for the protection of environmental defenders. She called for a UN resolution on a clean and healthy environment for children and youth.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe, Sri Lanka, underscored that humanity is facing an existential threat due to the triple planetary crisis. He outlined the country’s goal of reaching net zero by 2050 and highlighted its NBSAP and plan on waste management, before emphasizing that implementation of these strategies requires resources that the country cannot meet. Stating that the climate financing discussions are “going nowhere,” he noted they are hamstrung by national and international geopolitical



Ali Salajegheh, Vice President, Iran

conditions. Wickremesinghe called for the Asia-Pacific countries to unite to address these issues, including through the Climate Justice Forum, to ensure the most vulnerable are protected. He emphasized the need for a stronger Global South voice on environmental issues and warned that countries unwilling to act on climate are “guilty of committing genocide.”

Lim Sang-jun, Vice Minister of Environment, Republic of Korea, stated that this region is facing more adverse impacts of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss than other regions. He noted that since the 1960s, mankind has been searching the galaxy far and wide for an inhabitable planet and concluded that Earth is still the only planet safe for humans. He urged the region and global community to take appropriate action to leave behind a “strong shadow for our children and their children who will inherit this beautiful planet.”

Election of Officers and Adoption of the Agenda: Delegates elected Ahamed, Sri Lanka, as Chair of the Fifth Forum. Steven Victor, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Environment, Palau, and Birendra Prasad Mahato, Minister of Forests and Environment, Nepal, were elected Vice-Chairs.

Thanking delegates for the trust placed in the meeting bureau, Chair Ahamed recalled the geographical coverage of UNEP ROAP, which consists of 41 Member States. Delegates then adopted the agenda (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/L.1).

Ministerial Dialogue on Sustainable Multilateral Actions to Tackle Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss and Pollution in Asia Pacific: Chair Ahamed opened the dialogue (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/2), underscoring the threats posed by the triple planetary crisis. He highlighted the need to strengthen regional and global cooperation, as well as roll out and implement science-based approaches, technological innovations, financial support, and capacity building.

Delegates watched a short video on the need for urgent action to turn the tide on biodiversity loss and climate change, narrated by actor Jason Momoa and produced by the UNEP Secretariat.

In country statements, AUSTRALIA said they have signed the new High Seas Treaty, and welcomed delegates to the [Global Nature Positive Summit](#) to be held in Sydney, Australia, in October 2024.

BANGLADESH called for developed countries to meet their climate financing pledges, and underscored that threats posed by chemical pollution and biodiversity loss must be addressed.

Several countries discussed national efforts to address the triple planetary crisis. The PHILIPPINES highlighted adopting traditional practices alongside technological and innovations. She noted implementation of the NBSAP and the waste management act, and the signing of the High Seas Treaty. FIJI stressed the need to conserve biodiversity, adopt better waste management practices, and embrace inclusive, sustainable, multilateral action to address climate change. CAMBODIA described the country’s effective, sustainable, and inclusive economic development plan to transform the country into a high-income country by 2050, which he noted aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted ongoing national programmes and strategies, including on SDG progress and waste management. He

emphasized the responsibility all nations have towards future generations, urging cooperation in undertaking concrete action on the triple planetary crisis.

INDIA noted that while this is the most populated region of the world, it is also home to the most biodiversity hotspots, and called on the region to join hands for environmental justice. She outlined national priorities, including a campaign to encourage sustainable lifestyles both nationally and on the UN stage.

Pointing to his country as the birthplace of the Buddha and the home of Mount Everest, NEPAL highlighted threats facing the Hindu Kush Himalayan Region arising from the melting of snow caps. He called for support for his country's draft resolution on the issue at UNEA-6.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA drew attention to their pledge of USD 300 million in climate financing and highlighted the country's intention to host INC-5 on plastic pollution in 2024 and World Environment Day in 2025.

SAMOA said the interconnectedness of the region's responsibility should, among others, be reflected in the collective stewardship of our Ocean, and urged countries to sign the High Seas Treaty.

SINGAPORE noted the need to consider different national circumstances while seeking effective and pragmatic solutions to the triple planetary crisis.

SRI LANKA reiterated plans to launch the Climate Justice Forum at the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference.

The LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC reported plans to increase areas under conservation, update NBSAPs in line with the GBF, and develop national plastics action plans to reduce plastic wastes.

JAPAN said synergies in tackling the triple planetary crisis can be achieved by sharing best practices, particularly NbS, which have co-benefits for climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Multistakeholder Dialogue: Multilateral Environmental Cooperations to Tackle Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss and Pollution (Challenges and Opportunities): UNEP Deputy Executive Director Mrema introduced this agenda item (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/INF/1), underlining the importance of MEAs in institutionalizing governmental cooperation to achieve global environmental commitments. Pointing to the draft resolutions for UNEA proposed by the Asia-Pacific and Africa regions, she called for interregional support and strengthened cooperation.

Vice-Chair Victor noted that MEAs provide an enabling framework for countries to take responsibility of the triple planetary crisis. He called on regional leaders to "show up" at UNEA-6 and be bold by bringing action to the ground beyond making ambitious commitments.

Yutaka Matsuzawa, Vice-Minister for Global Environmental Affairs, Japan, referred to the past INC process that established the Minamata Convention. He encouraged Asia-Pacific countries to use the UNEA process and engage in ongoing discussions to establish a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.



L-R: **Izabella Koziell**, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD, and **Elenita "Neth" Daño**, Asia Director, ETC Group

Izabella Koziell, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD, noted the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region's vulnerability to the triple planetary crisis, underlining the far-ranging downstream implications of any further environmental degradation on the two billion people dependent on it. Koziell shared ongoing efforts to establish a regional institutional mechanism.

Daño, ETC Group, called on delegates to combat the shrinking democratic space for civil society. She shared the constructive contributions of civil society organizations to MEAs, including setting the agenda for environmental crises based on accurate, lived experiences of those at the frontlines. Daño called for better coherence in multilateralism, lamenting that the MGOS and science-policy-business forums were held simultaneously, preventing necessary dialogue from taking place.

In country statements, CHINA prioritized mutual political trust to enhance global cooperation, and called on states to set national targets to implement the GBF. She urged countries to adopt a science-policy platform on chemicals, waste, and pollution.

TUVALU underlined that despite poor knowledge of the geographic location of SIDS, these countries are on the frontline of the climate crisis, facing the worst impacts. He stressed that his country "is literally drowning," and condemned the Forum for its ignorance on the plight of countries within the region. Noting that the UN now prioritizes climate change as a security threat, he called on delegates to give greater urgency to the fight against climate change, which affects Asia-Pacific nations more severely.

SPREP welcomed the partnership with UNEP, supporting the call for "1.5°C to stay alive," and urged Asia Pacific partners for more ambitious climate actions to achieve this. He welcomed the High Seas Treaty and underlined the importance of regional cooperation to enhance ocean protection.

ESCAP called for greater regional ambition to curb climate impacts. He highlighted the need for regional partnerships to address the threat of air pollution, which affects 90% of the region.

Workers and Trade Unions Major Group urged governments to focus on the drivers of poverty, inequality, and patriarchy;



Chair **Naseer Ahamed**, Minister of Environment, Sri Lanka, gavelled the meeting to a close at 6:24 PM

underlined the need for good governance to protect natural resources; and reiterated the need for people's meaningful participation in just transition processes.

CYMG underlined the need for governments to, among others, implement environmental curricula to spur innovative environmental action.

Closing the session, Chair Ahamed called on states to work hand-in-hand to address the triple planetary crisis and turn words into action to leave a better legacy to future generations.

Adoption of the Forum Outcome and Closing: Vice-Chair of the Senior Official's Meeting Faletutulu, Samoa, presented the Chair's summary of the Senior Official's Meeting (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/6). Chair Ahamed presented the Chair's summary of the Fifth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (UNEP/APEnvForum(5)/7). Delegates took note of the summaries.

In closing remarks, UNEP Deputy Executive Director Mrema lauded the productive deliberations over the duration of the Forum, underlining that global multilateral action is the only hope to address the triple planetary crisis. She noted the region's importance in ensuring a thriving planet and highlighted that UNEP had taken note of the inputs towards UNEA-6. She expressed hope that the region would continue to play a leading role on the global environmental stage and called for inputs towards the [Fourth International Conference on SIDS in 2024](#).

FIJI presented its offer to host the Sixth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific.

Chair Ahamed reminded delegates that the UNEA-7 President would be nominated from the Asia-Pacific region, and called on states to consult on a potential nominee. The meeting closed at 6:24 pm.

Upcoming Meetings

Final Intergovernmental Consultations on NbS: This UNEP-hosted event will feature both regional and global consultations on NbS. These final consultations follow five Regional Consultations (Africa, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe,

Latin America and the Caribbean, and Western Europe and Other States) and the First Global Consultation. **dates:** 9-13 October 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/events/working-group/final-intergovernmental-consultations-nature-based-solutions

Twenty-fifth Meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical, and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity: This meeting will address implementation of the GBF, as well as issues, such as invasive alien species, sustainable wildlife management, biodiversity, and climate change. **dates:** 15-19 October 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** cbd.int/meetings/SBSTTA-25

2023 Marine Regions Forum: The 2023 Marine Regions Forum will bring together representatives from governments, non-governmental organizations, industry, and the scientific community to strengthen regional ocean governance. The Forum aims to support regional action and international governance processes to achieve SDG 14 (life below water). **dates:** 7-9 November 2023 **location:** Dar es Salaam, Tanzania **www:** prog-ocean.org/marine-regions-forum/conference-2022-3/

Fourth Nature for Life Hub 2023: This event will showcase opportunities to accelerate action on the GBF and place nature at the heart of development. The Hub aims to bring together governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to exchange knowledge and solutions, promote collaboration and partnerships, and raise awareness and countries' ambitions to deliver NBSAPs. **dates:** 7-9 November 2023 **location:** virtual **www:** learningfornature.org/en/nature-for-life-hub-2023/

Asia-Pacific Climate Week (APCW 2023): APCW 2023 is one of four Regional Climate Weeks convened to build momentum ahead of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference. APCW 2023 will provide a platform for policymakers, practitioners, businesses, and civil society to exchange ideas on climate solutions, barriers to overcome, and opportunities realized in the Asia-Pacific region. **dates:** 13-17 November 2023 **location:** Johor Bahru, Malaysia **www:** unfccc.int/APCW2023

Third Meeting of the INC to Develop an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution, Including in the Marine Environment (Plastic INC-3): This meeting will begin negotiations on a "zero-draft" of the instrument. **dates:** 13-19 November 2023 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-3

UN Climate Change Conference: The 28th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 28) to the UNFCCC, the 18th meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 18), and the fifth meeting of the COP serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 5) will continue working on climate change-related issues. **dates:** 30 November - 12 December 2023 **location:** Dubai, United Arab Emirates **www:** unfccc.int/cop28

Second Session of the Open-ended Working Group on a Science-Policy Panel to Contribute Further to the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste and to Prevent



5th Forum participants on a field trip to the Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage, Sri Lanka

Pollution (OEWG 2): OEWG 2 will continue its work to prepare proposals for the science-policy panel. **dates:** 11-15 December 2023 **location:** Dead Sea, Jordan **www:** [unep.org/events/conference/oewg-2-science-policy-panel-contribute-further-sound-management-chemicals-and](https://www.unep.org/events/conference/oewg-2-science-policy-panel-contribute-further-sound-management-chemicals-and)

14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals: This meeting will, among others, discuss the proposed inclusion of species, including the Peruvian Pelican and the Sand Tiger Shark, in the Convention’s appendices. **dates:** 12-17 February 2024 **location:** Samarkand, Uzbekistan **www:** [cms.int/en/meeting/fourteenth-meeting-conference-parties-cms](https://www.cms.int/en/meeting/fourteenth-meeting-conference-parties-cms)

UNEA-6: UNEA-6 will convene under the theme “Effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.” It will be preceded by the sixth meeting of the OECPR, which will take place from 19-23 February 2024. **dates:** 26 February - 1 March 2024 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **www:** [unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6](https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/unea6)

10th World Water Forum: The Forum is organized every three years and provides a unique platform where the water community and key decision makers can collaborate and make long-term progress on global water challenges. **dates:** 18-24 May 2024 **location:** Bali, Indonesia **www:** [worldwaterforum.org/wwf](https://www.worldwaterforum.org/wwf)

Fourth International Conference on SIDS (SIDS 4): SIDS 4 will bring together leaders to assess the ability of SIDS to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs and discuss a new programme of action for SIDS. The Conference will convene under the theme ‘Charting the Course Toward Resilient Prosperity.’ **dates:** 27-30 May 2024 **location:** Saint John’s, Antigua and Barbuda **www:** sdgs.un.org/smallislands

Summit of the Future: The Summit aims to accelerate progress towards international commitments and take concrete action to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities, with an action-oriented outcome document called ‘The Pact for the Future.’ **dates:** 22-23 September 2024 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **www:** un.org/en/summit-of-the-future

2024 Global Nature Positive Summit: The first Global Nature Positive Summit will bring together delegates from around the world, including ministers, environment groups, First Nations Peoples, business, scientists, and community leaders, to consider how to supercharge investment in projects that repair nature. **dates:** October 2024 **location:** Sydney, Australia **www:** dceew.gov.au/environment/international/nature-positive-summit

Sixth Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific: The Forum will review the progress of UNEA resolutions’ implementation in the Asia-Pacific region and identify opportunities to strengthen the regional environmental agenda. It will also provide an opportunity for the region to contribute to the outcome of UNEA-7. **dates:** September 2025 **location:** Fiji **www:** TBC

For additional meetings, see sdg.iisd.org/

Glossary

BDR	Common but differentiated responsibilities
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
CYMG	Children and Youth Major Group
EbA	Ecosystem-based Adaptation
EIA	Environmental impact assessment
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ETC	Group Action Group on Erosion, Technology and Concentration
GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
GC26	General Comment No. 26
GYBN	Global Youth Biodiversity Network
ICIMOD	International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
INC	Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
MEA	Multilateral environmental agreement
MGOS	Major Groups and Stakeholders
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
OECPR	Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDS	Small island developing states
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
UNEA	UN Environment Assembly
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNICEF	UN Children’s Fund
UN-SPBF	UN Science-Policy-Business Forum