Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-3)
4-6 December 2017, Nairobi, Kenya

The UN Environment Assembly, the world's highest-level decision-making body on environment, gathered in Nairobi, at the headquarters of UN Environment from 4-6 December 2017, under the overarching theme of “Towards a Pollution Free Planet”.

ICC was an active participant throughout UNEA-3 and its related events, which were attended by over 4,300 delegates, including nearly 1,200 delegates from more than 170 member states, 711 representatives of Major Groups and other stakeholders, and 94 intergovernmental organizations.

HISTORY OF UN ENVIRONMENT
The UN General Assembly (UNGA) established UN Environment in 1972, following the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment with the aim of creating a central UN body for global environmental cooperation and treaty making. UN Environment’s governing body, the Governing Council, was later renamed the UN Environment Assembly and held its first sessions (UNEA-1 and UNEA-2) in 2014 and 2016, respectively, also in Nairobi.

UN Environment is today the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda and promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development Goals.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT
The Executive Director's Report: Towards a Pollution-Free Planet, presented to the UN Environment Assembly by Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, lays out the framework for defining challenges and possible solutions to tackle global pollution. The report states that environmental degradation and pollution causes nearly one in four of all deaths worldwide and has also a high economic cost. According to the Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health report welfare losses due to pollution are estimated at over USD$4.6 trillion each year.

UNEA-3 OUTCOMES
In the run-up to UNEA-3, member states, businesses and civil society stakeholders signed the Beat Pollution Pledge committing to tackle global pollution. 2.4 million individuals and companies have joined the Beat Pollution campaign so far.

During the closing plenary on 6 December 2017, UNEA-3 adopted 11 non-binding resolutions urging accelerated action and reinforced partnerships; submitted 3 decisions related to organizational matters, as well as, for the first time, signed a Ministerial Declaration. UNEA-3 President Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, called this a clear signal of the global importance of pollution.

Each resolution addressed a specific dimension of pollution, including: combating the
spread of marine plastic litter and microplastics; eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting sound management of used lead-acid batteries; improving air quality globally; addressing water pollution; managing soil pollution; and controlling pollution in areas affected by terrorist operations and armed conflict.

Of particular importance to business is the resolution with respect to environment and health, which acknowledges pollution as a key risk factor contributing to premature deaths from non-communicable diseases and encourages governments and relevant actors to find effective solutions to minimize risks posed by chemicals. The final resolution also requests the Executive Director to prepare reports on the impact of pesticides and fertilizers on environment and health and the role of environmental pollution and antimicrobial resistance by UNEA-5.

Also of importance is the resolution on marine litter and microplastics, which acknowledges marine litter and microplastics as a serious form of marine pollution that must be addressed as a priority in countries' environmental actions plans. This resolution also establishes an Open-Ended Expert Group that will convene before UNEA-4 to discuss challenges and solutions for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics by taking into account national, regional, and innovative approaches but also voluntary and legally binding strategies.

Delegates also broadly welcomed the adoption of the resolution on UNEA's contribution to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. The resolution reaffirms the role of the UN Environment as “the leading global environment authority” and states that the key outcomes of the Assembly will directly feed into the High-Level Political Forum and will provide an environmental dimension to sustainable development. They will also help to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its interlinkages with the social and economic dimensions.

A decision related to the extension of the publication of the 6th edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) was also adopted confirming the importance of delivering a high-quality report for policymakers as a key tool to reinforce the science-policy interface and assist member States in implementing the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**LEADERSHIP DIALOGUES**

For the first time, UNEA held four Leadership Dialogues during the High Level Segment bringing together high-level stakeholders from government, business and finance, and the science and technology community to discuss practical policy strategies towards a pollution-free planet. Two of these dialogues were of particular importance to business:

The Leadership Dialogue on Regulatory Frameworks, Institutions and the Rule of Law to Address Pollution, where Laurent Fabius, UN Environment Patron on Environmental Governance and President of the Group of Experts for the Pact, presented an update on the developments of the Global Pact for the Environment and affirmed the need for international governance and an “international comprehensive treaty” as a basis for strong political decisions. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment explained how pollution interferes with human rights and affirmed that “preventing pollution is a legal and moral obligation”. More details on the Pact initiative is contained in the annex and you may
also wish to refer to the summary of the call that was held on this topic and circulated to members of the ICC Commission on Environment and Energy and to National Committees on 27 November 2018.

The Dialogue on Financing and Innovation discussed initiatives taken by governments and institutions. The European Commission referred to the EU External Investment Plan, which is expected to leverage more than EUR€44 billion of investments by 2020, and other green finance instrument such as green bonds. BNP Paribas drew attention to the Tropical Landscapes Finance Facility, a collaborative initiative with UN Environment, the World Agroforestry Centre, and ADM Capital, affirming that the private sector can play a central role in solving environmental issues and that governments need to support the private sector in promoting behavioral change.

**ROLE OF BUSINESS AT UNEA-3**

Representatives of the Business and Industry Major Group, one of the nine Major Groups of UN Environment, established the Business Coalition for UN Environment/UNEA of which the ICC is a member. Under the banner of the Global Business Alliance for the Environment (GBA4E), the Group aims to reinforce and augment business engagement in the UN Environment/UNEA processes and reflect the key role of business in tackling environmental issues.

GBA4E coordinated the Business and Industry Major Group at UNEA-3, participated in numerous side events and delivered statements on behalf of the Business and Industry Major Group at the Opening Plenary, Closing Plenary and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue.

In addition, the GBA4E was engaged in a number of events related to UNEA-3, including:

- **On 27 – 28 of November 2017**, in preparation for the Assembly, **the Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum** was held to facilitate the preparation of Major Groups and Stakeholders towards the 2017 Environment Assembly, allowing them to discuss the main UNEA themes and prepare their input to UNEA-3. The GBA4E attended the session, representing the Business and Industry Major Group.

- **The Committee of Permanent Representatives** held its third Open-Ended Meeting from 29 November to 1 December. Business delegates observed negotiations on various resolutions before they were proposed and approved by the Committee on the Whole and the General Assembly.

- **The UN Global Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment** was held from 2 to 3 December to promote opportunities for green investment. In addition, a **Sustainable Innovation Expo** was held from 3 to 6 December in the lead up to and during UNEA-3. Several Business and Industry delegates from the GBA4E spoke at the Forum.
The GBA4E held its inaugural Business Symposium on 3 December, featuring over 10 case-study presentations by business representatives as well as many high-level speakers including H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, President of the General Assembly; H.E. Dr. Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta, President of the UN Environment Assembly; Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment; and Dr. Jian Liu, UN Environment Chief Scientist.

**UNEA-4**
The next session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) will take place from 11-15 March 2019, in Nairobi, Kenya under the Estonian Presidency. Further information about provisional agenda, date, and venue can be found [here](#).

**Social media**
A live [@GBA4E](#) twitter wall was run throughout the event using the hashtag #beatpollution.
Annex – GLOBAL PACT FOR ENVIRONMENT SIDE-EVENT WITH CIVIL SOCIETY: SUMMARY NOTE

Opening remarks
Nicolas HULOT, Minister of Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France

Speakers
Laurent Fabius, UN Environment Patron on Environmental Governance; President of the Constitutional Council of France; President of the Paris Climate Change Conference (COP21) and President of the Group of Experts for the Pact (GEP)
Edgar GUTIERREZ-ESPELETA, Minister for the Environment, Costa Rica; President of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly
Maria IVANOVA, Professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston; Director of the Center for Governance and Sustainability; Member of the group of legal experts who participated in the initial drafting of the Pact
Marco LAMBERTINI, Director General, WWF International
Ligia NORONHA, Director, Economy Division, UN Environment
Donald KANIARU, Kenya; International Council on Environmental Law; Member of the group of legal experts who participated in the initial drafting of the Pact

Moderator
Ibrahim THIAW, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment

On 5 December 2017, the second day of the UN Environment Assembly, ICC attended the Global Pact for Environment Side-Event with Civil Society. Legal and environmental experts as well as representatives from civil society came together for this unique meeting in order to discuss the future of the project of the Global Pact for the Environment (Pact) to express their views and expectations and discussed options for support and engagement of civil society stakeholders in the process going forward.

After the presentation of the Pact by French President Emmanuel Macron at the UN General Assembly on 19 September 2017, the political and diplomatic phase has started. A “Group of Friends of the Pact”, which is limited to around 20 countries, has been established with the task to develop a draft resolution to be adopted by the UN General Assembly in New York, which will then formally launch the negotiations on a Global Pact for the Environment in the coming months.

In this important phase of negotiations, Laurent Fabius, who presided over the launch of the Pact project in Paris in June 2017, sees also a decisive role of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, as an appropriate forum that brings together international environmental specialists in a strategic environment. According to Mr. Fabius, the Pact project should be a joint work, a “co-production” between New York and Nairobi.

According to the experts, the adoption of such a Pact will also require wide-reaching, open and inclusive dialogue with civil society, economic actors, cities and regions. Maria Ivanova, member of the group of legal experts who participated in the initial drafting of the Pact, called for expression of interest from non-party stakeholders, especially private sector leaders.
Nicolas Hulot, French Minister of Ecological and Inclusive Transition, concluded the session stating that citizens can take a decisive step and create a third generation of fundamental rights – after the UN Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, ratified in 1966 – and a momentum for protecting the planet.

For more information about the Pact please refer to the email circulated to members of the ICC Commission on Environment and Energy Commission and to National Committees on 27 November 2018.