

# Joint Closing Statement of the Major Groups & Stakeholders (MGS) at the Fourth Meeting of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen on 28 & 29 September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya

*This statement/intervention is presented by Rabeb Aloui on behalf of delegates from Major Groups and Stakeholders to UNEP who participated at the Fourth meeting of the UNEP Working Group on Nitrogen on 28 and 29 September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya.*

We register our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat and the co-chairs for the excellent coordination of the working group, congratulate them for the achievements already made, and wish them the very best in their forthcoming engagements. Specifically, we acknowledge Tessa for her outstanding leadership and wish her success in her new role. We warmly welcome Heidi to the working group and anticipate collaborating with her as she takes on her leadership role.

Today, we convene to underscore the paramount importance of national action plans concerning sustainable nitrogen management. These plans play a critical role in addressing the pressing challenges arising from nitrogen waste and emissions, while simultaneously securing a sustainable future for present and future generations. Despite their voluntary nature, it is imperative that these plans align with the unique context and priorities of each nation. They must exhibit ambition and delineate both short-term and long-term commitments that are realistically achievable.

We implore member states to prioritize comprehensive research and data collection regarding nitrogen sources, pathways, and impacts within their respective regions. Additionally, we request the active involvement of the Secretariat in motivating and aiding member states in their national nitrogen assessments, with a specific emphasis on enhancing the design and execution of national plans. Furthermore, we stress the importance of recognizing the value of multi-stakeholder cooperation as a pivotal action point to ensure integrated, inclusive, and sustainable management approaches.

While we emphasize the significance of national action plans tailored to individual countries, we cannot underestimate the necessity of breaking down barriers across sectors and government agencies to cultivate collaborative and holistic solutions. We urge member states to maintain an open stance towards learning and sharing knowledge, research, training and capacity building and data with all stakeholders, emphasising on women, youth and children for future sustainability, with particular attention to engaging with the UNEP Major Groups and Stakeholders. This engagement is vital for advancing international responses to the often-overlooked problem of nitrogen pollution. To avoid redundancy, we call for alignment between all national action plans on sustainable nitrogen management and existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements national action plans.

Esteemed Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen, we call upon focal points in this gathering to ensure the development of national action plans for sustainable nitrogen management follows a process characterized by openness, inclusivity, and transparency, with mechanisms for meaningful engagement of major groups, stakeholders, and local communities and indigenous people. A wide spectrum of stakeholders, including government agencies, farmers, industry representatives, environmental organizations, and local communities, must be deliberately and effectively engaged in the action plan development process. The establishment of clear, measurable, and time-bound goals and targets for reducing nitrogen pollution and enhancing nitrogen use efficiency is of utmost importance.

Esteemed Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen, we commend the 78 member states that have already designated their national focal points to the working group. However, we express deep concern that this represents only 40.4 percent of the 193 UNEP member states. We urge the remaining 115 member states to expedite the nomination of their focal points. Recognizing that collective endeavours are pivotal to the sustainable management of nitrogen, we call upon the 78 member states that have already appointed their focal points to actively disseminate information about the work and significance of the UNEP Nitrogen Working Group among their peers, thereby fostering support for this vital cause in a cascading manner.

Regarding potential strategies for improved coordination of policies across the global nitrogen cycle, we propose the expansion and extension of the nitrogen working group's mandate through UNEA-6 within a specified timeframe in the short term. This entails a comprehensive evaluation of the ten identified options, consolidating elements from various options to formulate a robust approach for coordination among governments for global policies, initiatives and commitments. This strategic approach promises a systematic and effective phase-out of fragmentation in addressing the global nitrogen challenge.

In conclusion, we stand united in our unwavering commitment to addressing the critical issue of sustainable nitrogen management. Through collective effort, transparency, and shared knowledge, we can forge a path towards a more sustainable and resilient future for all. We extend our gratitude for your attention and eagerly anticipate our continued collaboration.

Thank you!