Your Excellency Paula Narváez, President of the Economic and Social Council, 
Honorable Ministers, 
Excellencies, 
Distinguished delegates, 
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor to address the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in my capacity as President of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Let me start by thanking Her Excellency. Paula Narvaez, President of ECOSOC, for inviting me to this important event.

I also thank her for her valuable participation in the sixth session of the UN Environment Assembly.

We gather at this Forum not only as Member States but as stewards of our planet, united by a common purpose: to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda with the aim of eradicating poverty and deliver sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions for a sustainable future in a healthy planet.
Excellencies,

Healthy ecosystems are essential for the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat.

Managing natural resources sustainably is crucial for eradicating poverty and hunger, as well as reducing inequalities.

However, our unsustainable patterns consumption and production are increasing the pressures on the planet’s natural resources, seriously impacting its ecosystems, and compromising sustainable development.

SDGs including SDG 1, 2, 13, 16 and 17, -the focus of this HLPF- are badly impacted by the multiple crises we are facing today.

Environmental degradation aggravates poverty and inequality by affecting the health of people, especially through air and water pollution. It has impact on people’s ability to work and earn a living.

The degradation of the natural resource base is also another way through which the SDG 1 is affected.

SDG 2 seeks to end hunger, achieve food security, and promote sustainable agriculture. Yet, climate change and biodiversity loss threaten food production and efforts to end hunger.

SDG 13 calls for urgent climate action. With current trends, we
are far from meeting the targets agreed in Paris. We are already seeing the impacts of climate change on our lives and livelihoods.

SDG 16 aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. Environmental stressors often lead to conflict and instability, undermining peace, and justice.

Lastly, SDG 17 focuses on partnerships for the goals. The transnational nature of environmental challenges needs robust international cooperation.

In the face of these global challenges, there are areas where sustainable, resilient, and innovative solutions are being effectively delivered, including by UNEA. These efforts are essential to achieving the SDGs.

Improving air quality is crucial. Addressing air pollution benefits human health and enhances ecosystems and the climate. However, as a multifaceted issue, it requires cross-sectoral efforts for to achieve co-benefits.

UNEA has consistently encouraged governments to formulate action plans, implement national air quality standards, and establish emissions standards.

Enhancing sustainable consumption, and production is imperative. UNEA has called on Member States to adopt policies that decouple economic growth from environmental harm.

Circular economy approaches can significantly contribute to addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.
The sixth session of UNEA adopted a resolution which highlights how sustainable development in agriculture can improve food security, biodiversity, livelihoods, and human health.

The sound management of chemicals and waste is vital. Pollution in air, water, and soil has severe consequences for the environment and human health, especially for communities in vulnerable situations.

The Global Framework on Chemicals aims to create a planet free of harm from chemicals and waste. UNEP is providing support to strengthen national institutions for its implementation.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to share some examples of areas where UNEA has taken specific actions:

1. Addressing Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, and Pollution in a comprehensive and integrated manner:

UNEA is committed to integrated actions that align with international obligations and national circumstances. This includes supporting the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration and integrating climate, biodiversity, and pollution considerations into health, disaster risk management, among others.

2. Foster national action to address global environmental challenges through increased cooperation between the UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements.
3. Taking swift action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, in line with the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

Among other holistic approaches, consideration of the One Health approach, is crucial to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet.

4. Sustainable water management is critical for development and eradicating poverty and hunger.

UNEA calls for integrated water resources management, transboundary cooperation, and the protection of aquatic ecosystems.

5. Global environmental challenges require robust international cooperation.

UNEA promotes cooperation through regional forums on environment and sustainable development and encourages collaboration between UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements.

Excellencies,

The urgency of our situation cannot be overstated, and the United Nations Environment Assembly remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing solutions.

UNEA has called on Member States for the enhancement of synergies, cooperation or collaboration when implementing their
respective obligations and commitments under Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

In this context, UNEA has also called for Member States to identify in their Voluntary National Reviews to the HLPF, the contributions of multilateral environmental agreements to the achievement of the SDGs.

UNEA acknowledged the urgent need to reinforce action, global inclusiveness and solidarity and scale up means of implementation to support developing countries.

UNEA has also stressed the importance of a strengthened multilateral cooperation for environmental protection and to address the interconnected environmental challenges.

One example is the call to support the global efforts to end plastic pollution, and the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, in line with UNEA resolution 5/14, with the ambition to conclude this task by 2024.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The reality is that the gap in SDG implementation is ever-expanding, people continue to suffer from the impact of climate change leading to millions of deaths and displacement. Conflicts around the world are destroying the ecosystems and nullifies the concept of sustainable development.
UNEP recently released the Preliminary Assessment of the Environmental Impact of the war on Gaza and it shows the critical environmental impact on the Strip.

So, the question arises is, how good is working on sustainable development if children, women, and elders are killed every day.

I call on you all to join hands in this critical endeavor.

There is strength in diversity.
It allows us to bring together ideas and perspectives and deliver solutions that work with nature.
We must use every piece of knowledge and engage scientists, indigenous peoples, and the youth who are not afraid to try something new.
We need solutions that work, solutions that ensure a future where sustainable development is a reality for all, leaving no one behind.
Let us commit to taking bold and transformative actions today to build peace for a more secure and prosperous tomorrow.

Thank you.
Shukran Jazilan.