



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

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme**
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**Draft resolution on addressing water pollution to protect and
restore water-related ecosystems**

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recognizing that water from terrestrial, coastal and marine sources is essential for human health, well-being and livelihoods, ecosystem functioning and services, and the survival of all living species,

Highly concerned about threats to water quantity and quality, in particular from pollution on both land and sea across the globe, and that water-related ecosystems sustain the impacts of climate change, among other factors, and of human activities such as urbanization, increased industrial and agricultural activity and poor sanitation, and also severe pathogen pollution, conscious of the fact that women and children are impacted disproportionately from water pollution, water scarcity and degradation of water-related ecosystems,

Noting that water is both a recipient and a carrier of pollution, affecting ecosystems and human health, with impacts which are exacerbated by the effects of extreme events, including disasters, and stressing that sustainable solutions require integrated and intersectoral approaches from source-to-sea at all levels in order to reduce emissions and the transport of hazardous substances, and concerned that many water-related ecosystems face increased uncertainty and risks due to climate change and other factors,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012 entitled “The Future We Want”, which stresses the need to adopt measures to significantly reduce water pollution and improve wastewater treatment and the need for Governments to commit to increasing access to safe and affordable drinking water and basic sanitation,

Recalling also the adoption of the General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and recognizing the important role water plays in attaining all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),

Recalling further United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/5, entitled “Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Welcoming the outcome of the High Level United Nations Oceans Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,

Recalling Governing Council (GC) decision 27/3 in 2013, which called for the creation of International Water Quality Guidelines for Ecosystems, that can be voluntarily used to help countries develop their national standards, policies, and frameworks for their own water quality in order to protect and restore their significant water-related ecosystems,

Recognizing the contributions of the Global Environment Monitoring System/ Water Programme (GEMS/Water) and recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 1/9 of 2014, which reaffirms the mandate of GEMS/Water in its capacity-building and data management work, and resolution 2/23 of 2016, which extends the General Trust Fund established to promote its activities,

Stressing that monitoring water quality and quantity and sharing data are important for effective management of water pollution and recalling the contributions of the GEMS/Water programme, which works with countries to build capacities to collect and share data on a voluntary basis,

Recognizing the contributions of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities (GPA) and recalling its three partnerships, the Global Wastewater Initiative (GW2I), the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) and the Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML),

Concerned about the limited legal, policy, financial, technical, technological and institutional capacities required to monitor, enforce and address water pollution in an integrated manner in many developing countries,

Recalling the Fifth Global Environment Outlook and the Snapshot of the World's Water Quality and the analytical brief "Towards a Worldwide Assessment of Freshwater Quality", which highlights, inter alia, the gaps in our knowledge of the state of water quality resulting from a lack of data and regular monitoring, and the opportunities for shortcutting pollution and restoring polluted water bodies in developing countries,

Taking into account the contribution, which the United Nations Environment Programme can make upon request by concerned states, to assist them in the protection and preservation of the terrestrial water resources, and the marine and coastal environment,

Recalling United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/8 on sustainable consumption and production and noting the links to water quality and quantity,

Highlighting the need to enhance cooperation on water pollution as appropriate, including transboundary cooperation,

1. *Emphasizes* the need for member States, in collaboration with UNEP and other UN agencies, to address water pollution in inland, coastal and marine ecosystems and improve water quality by, inter alia, increasing efforts in pollution prevention at all levels, water governance at the national level, integrated water resources management, sustainable use of water, as appropriate, and improved water quality data collection, and improved data sharing on a voluntary basis, which should support implementation of the water-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their interrelated targets, and as applicable, the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and its Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and the fourth strategic plan 2016-2024 of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and the UN Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030;

2. *Welcomes* the convening of the 8th session of the World Water Forum, to be held in Brasilia from 19 to 23 March 2018, and encourages member States to participate in the event.

3. *Encourages* member states to draw upon the work carried out by the United Nations Environment Programme in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on International Water Quality Guidelines for Ecosystems (now updated as "A Framework for Freshwater Ecosystem Management") in order to provide inputs for countries on how to protect and restore water-related ecosystems to create effective governance structures at national level, develop their own national standards for water quality, and to set up water quality monitoring of their significant water- bodies and associated ecosystems;

4. *Invites* member States to establish and improve water quality monitoring networks in voluntary collaboration with relevant organizations and monitoring systems, such as GEMS/Water, to promote streamlined national standardized monitoring and reporting mechanisms in order to fill relevant data and information gaps and share data, as appropriate, to help identify and address sources and causes of water pollution in water bodies;

5. *Also invites* member States to enhance public access to relevant information on water quality status and requirements for different water uses to promote safe and efficient water use;

6. *Further invites* member States and other stakeholders, including government labs, the private sector, academia, and civil society, to collaborate and share best practices with one another on

data collection, monitoring, and exchange that will be useful for reporting on water quality and quantity and addressing water pollution;

7. *Invites* member States, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, private sector, industry, academia, civil society, and the GPA, including through encouraging platforms for wastewater and management of nutrients, to help prevent and mitigate water pollution and to protect and restore water-related ecosystems in order to minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment;

8. *Encourages* member States to facilitate the implementation of the target to halve by 2030 the amount of untreated wastewater reaching waterbodies, by continuing to work through the Global Wastewater Initiative and other UN-Water Members and the private sector;

9. *Also encourages* member States, in collaboration with United Nations Environment Programme and other UN-Water Members and its Partners to develop and implement policies that relate to integrated water resources management and invest in the protection and restoration of water-related ecosystems, so as to prevent and reduce pollution and maintain or improve ecosystem health;

10. *Further encourages* member States to work collaboratively with the United Nations Environment Programme, other relevant international organizations including the Global Environment Facility and multilateral banks, to mobilize the necessary resources to find solutions to land-based and water pollution;

11. *Encourages* member States, with the support of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, to implement UNEA resolution 2/8 on sustainable consumption and production patterns including by integrating Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) into education and training to promote a shift to SCP;

12. *Calls upon* member States to:

(a) Increase transboundary water cooperation where appropriate, to reduce water pollution,

(b) Improve their capacities to tackle accidental pollution risk at all levels,

(c) Strengthen their preparedness to address waterborne disease issues, especially after disasters and during communicable disease outbreaks by encouraging subnational, national and international initiatives dedicated to activities of surveillance, detection, notification and response to water-related public health emergencies.

13. *Reiterates* that availability and accessibility of adequate, predictable and sustainable resource mobilization from all sources, technology development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer, on mutually agreed terms, and capacity building, are important to the effective prevention, reduction and management of water pollution;

14. *Encourages* member States to address water pollution, including through cooperation at all levels and partnerships with relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to find solutions and strengthen cooperation, to exchange knowledge, know-how and best practices;

15. *Stresses the need* to continue the dialogue at UN level to discuss improving the integration and coordination of the work of the United Nations on the water-related goals and targets under its Sustainable Development pillar and further invites interested member States to consider to use the work of relevant conventions, networks and other institutions to this aim;

16. *Requests* the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, within available resources, to:

(a) Build upon, as needed, the GEMS/Water Trust Fund to assist developing countries, at their request and within available resources in water quality monitoring, including by setting up monitoring stations, capacity-building and data management;

(b) Assist developing countries, upon their request, by strengthening their capacity, to reach the target of halving by 2030 the amount of untreated wastewater reaching water bodies, taking into account gender perspectives, and including the development of wastewater treatment options in collaboration with national governments, local authorities and, as appropriate, the private sector;

(c) Continue to develop tools to support countries, upon their request, in their efforts to address water pollution and ecosystem health; implement integrated water resources management approaches; and address water-related impacts of disasters;

- (d) Work with relevant international organisations, including through UN-Water, to address issues related to water pollution and build upon the 2016 Snapshot of the World's Water Quality and taking into account, where appropriate, the recommendations made by the Analytical Brief "Towards a Worldwide Assessment of Freshwater Quality", including assessments of invasive species, pharmaceutical contaminants, emerging pollutants and severe levels of pathogens in water bodies, and proposed solutions, policies and technologies;
- (e) Cooperate with other relevant organizations, including through UN-Water, to develop a World Water Quality Assessment for consideration at UNEA-5;
- (f) Compile and share information on the analytical and technical requirements for water quality testing for contaminants (including new and emerging pollutants) that may impact human and environmental health;
- (g) Support countries in data collection, analysis and sharing, at their request, which would support implementation of the water-related SDGs, potentially drawing upon Earth Observations and global data;
- (h) Provide the necessary technical support to facilitate monitoring and reporting on SDG 6;
- (i) Support member States, as appropriate, in developing programmes that invest in the management of land and ecosystems to prevent pollution of water sources, in order to ensure the availability of quality water in a sustainable manner for all uses;
- (j) Work with governments and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector in creating an enabling environment for addressing water pollution including sustainable wastewater management, which encompasses supportive policies, laws and regulations, tailored technologies and innovative financial mechanisms;
- (k) Assist developing countries, upon their request, within the mandate of UNEP to clean and recover polluted water bodies;

17. *Also requests* the Executive Director to report to the United Nations Environment Assembly on the implementation of this resolution at its next session.
