



**Sixth Session of the United Nations Environmental Assembly (UNEA-6)  
Opening Remarks by  
H.E. Ambassador Paula Narváez, President of the Economic and Social Council  
29 February 2024**

Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join you today at the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

As we meet, the world faces unprecedented challenges that demand urgent and collective action. The theme of UNEA-6, 'effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution,' underscores the magnitude of the crises we confront and the imperative for decisive measures to address them.

The triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution threatens the very foundation of our existence. The numbers speak volumes: 1.3 billion people are at risk from the impacts of climate change, and 1 million species face extinction due to human activities. Pollution, in its various forms, claims the lives of 9 million people annually.

At the midpoint of the 2030 Agenda, we find ourselves at a critical juncture. The goals we set out to achieve are ambitious, yet attainable. But the pace of progress is insufficient, and the challenges before us are daunting. To put it in numbers: 50% of SDG targets lack sufficient progress, 30 % have stalled or reversed and 15% are off track. The 2023 SDG Summit outcome made it clear that while strides have been made, much remains to be done to achieve the SDGs.

To do so, we must recognize the interconnectedness of the Goals and the imperative for synergistic action. We cannot afford to address these challenges in isolation; they must be tackled holistically, with a comprehensive understanding of their interlinkages.

There are many examples that underscore the urgent need for coordinated and integrated approaches as demonstrated by the recent report "Synergy Solutions for a World in Crisis: Tackling Climate and SDG Action Together" issued by UNDESA and UNFCCC. The report highlights some notable data points which make the case for such synergies. For example:

Evidence links climate action to 80 per cent of 2030 Agenda targets, providing opportunities for impactful, integrated policies.

Health and agricultural co-benefits can offset climate policy costs and boost global GDP.

Effective climate policies can lower the cost of achieving universal electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa.

And aligning climate and SDG efforts could boost economic output by a staggering USD 43 trillion by 2070.

The benefits of such integrated approaches are undeniable, and yet they will require deliberate efforts to tailor our policies and our actions. I believe that this is possible.

Distinguished delegates,

I have begun preparations to convene the 2024 HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC in July. It comes on the heels of the 2023 SDG Summit and UNEA-6. The outcomes of this Assembly will feed into the HLPF deliberations, and, undoubtedly make an important contribution to the work of the Council, particularly its review of SDG13 on climate action.

As we embark on our deliberations at this UNEA-6, let us reaffirm our commitment to effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions. Let us seize this opportunity to raise our ambitions for an impactful outcome, forge new partnerships, mobilize resources, and catalyse transformative change.

I look forward to engaging in these discussions in the coming days, toward integrated, impactful and effective policies and making sustainable development our reality.

Thank you.

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