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Sustainable development: Harmony with Nature

State of Palestine:* draft resolution

Harmony with Nature

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] Agenda 21,[2] the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[4] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),[5]

Recalling its resolutions 64/196 of 21 December 2009, 65/164 of 20 December 2010, 66/204 of 22 December 2011, 67/214 of 21 December 2012, 68/216 of 20 December 2013, 69/224 of 19 December 2014, 70/208 of 22 December 2015, 71/232 of 21 December 2016, 72/223 of 20 December 2017 and 73/235 of 20 December 2018 on Harmony with Nature,

Reaffirming its resolution 63/278 of 22 April 2009, by which it designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day, commemorating 10 years since its adoption and recognizing its importance,

Recalling the 1982 World Charter for Nature,[6]

* On behalf of the States that are members of the Group of 77 and China, taking into account also the provisions of General Assembly resolution 73/5 of 16 October 2018.

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[6] Resolution 37/7, annex.

Please recycle

Noting the Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Cochabamba from 20 to 22 April 2010,[7] as an important contribution to the discussions on Harmony with Nature,

Recognizing that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that "Mother Earth" is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature or Mother Earth in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and expressing the conviction that, in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[8]

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Reaffirming further the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito, Ecuador, from 17 to 20 October 2016,[9] and reaffirming that promoting and taking concrete actions for its full, effective and timely implementation at all levels will contribute to achieving environmental sustainability by protecting ecosystems and biodiversity, including by adopting healthy lifestyles in harmony with nature,

Welcoming the Paris Agreement,[10] and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement, and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[11] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Noting with appreciation the interactive dialogue on Harmony with Nature convened by the President of the General Assembly under the overall theme "Mother Earth approach" in the implementation of education and climate action in harmony with nature, held on 22 April 2019, in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the

[7] See A/64/777, annexes I and II.
[8] Resolution 66/288, annex.
[9] Resolution 71/256, annex.
[10] Adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.
[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

natural world in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in harmony with nature, and noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development,

Recognizing that a number of countries consider Mother Earth the source of all life and nourishment and that these countries consider Mother Earth and humankind to be a living community of interrelated and interdependent beings,

Recalling the interactive dialogue on living in harmony with nature held on the occasion of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancún, Mexico, from 4 to 17 December 2016,

Noting the importance of ensuring the integrity of all ecosystems, including oceans, and the protection of biodiversity, recognized by some cultures as Mother Earth, and noting also the importance for some of the concept of "climate justice", when taking action to address climate change,

Noting also that, in promoting a holistic approach to achieving sustainable development in harmony with nature, Earth system science plays a significant role,

Expressing concern about documented environmental degradation, more frequent and intense natural disasters and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity, and recognizing the need to strengthen scientific knowledge on the effects of human activities on ecosystems, with the aim of promoting and ensuring an equitable, balanced and sustainable relationship with the Earth,

Recognizing that gross domestic product was not designed as an indicator for measuring environmental degradation resulting from human activity, nor is it an indicator of development, and the need to overcome these limitations with regard to sustainable development and the work carried out in this regard,

Recognizing also the uneven availability of basic statistical data under the three dimensions of sustainable development and the need to improve their quality and quantity,

Reaffirming that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development and that all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio principles,

Recognizing that sustainable production and consumption patterns can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions everywhere and creating full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women, youth and people in vulnerable situations, while promoting local culture, protecting the environment, improving the quality of life and promoting rural development and better living conditions for rural populations,

Noting that in recent years there have been many initiatives on sustainable development governance, including policy documents on living well in harmony with nature,

Noting also the adoption and the opening for signature, at United Nations Headquarters, of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Escazú Agreement, the first binding agreement of its kind, and encouraging its early entry into force as a contribution to sustainable development,

Recognizing that many ancient civilizations, indigenous peoples and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

Recognizing also that the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities can support social well-being and sustainable livelihoods and therefore contribute to global efforts and initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals,

Noting that some countries are discussing the possibility of considering a declaration on the protection of nature, based on their legislation, policy and educational perspectives,

Noting also that, in a number of countries, both formal and informal educational activities on the rights of nature or Mother Earth have arisen in the professional and public spheres in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and encouraging a holistic approach to education and public awareness for sustainable development in its three dimensions,

Recognizing the work undertaken by civil society, academia, scientists, local communities and indigenous peoples with regard to signalling the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts, along with those of Governments and private sector organizations, to devise more sustainable models and methods for production and consumption,

Noting the work of the experts of the Harmony with Nature Knowledge Network, who are collaborating on important activities in order to support the United Nations with the goal of ensuring that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature, as set out in target 12.8 of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Considering that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

Reiterating the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

Recommitting to ensuring that no country or person is left behind and to focusing our effort where the challenges are greatest, including by ensuring the inclusion and participation of those who are furthest behind,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature;[12]

2. *Invites* Member States to consider existing studies and, as appropriate, the findings and recommendations of the reports of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature,[13] of the experts' summary report of the first virtual dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, addressing Earth jurisprudence,[14] and of the interactive dialogues of the Assembly on Harmony with Nature in the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through harmony with nature;

3. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to convene, at the seventy-fourth session of the Assembly, an interactive dialogue, to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth

[12] A/74/236.

[13] A/65/314, A/66/302, A/67/317, A/68/325, A/68/325/Corr.1, A/69/322, A/70/268, A/72/175 and A/73/221.

[14] See A/71/266.

Day on 22 April 2020, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other relevant stakeholders, to discuss and compare regional, national and local initiatives over the past decade, including actions and transformations in law, policy and education on Earth jurisprudence, where applicable, as well as to discuss the relationship between harmony with nature and the protection of biological diversity, and to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in the context of sustainable development;

4. *Encourages* the experts of the Harmony with Nature Knowledge Network to carry out a study of the evolution over the past decade of regional, local and national initiatives on the protection of Mother Earth, as applicable, to be considered by the Secretary-General in his report on the implementation of the present resolution;

5. *Decides* to continue observing International Mother Earth Day annually on 22 April, requests the Secretary-General to provide continuing support, and encourages Member States to observe the International Day at the national level;

6. *Takes note with appreciation* of the agreement between the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat,[15] invites Member States to contribute to the earmarked activities related to Harmony with Nature under the trust fund of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, aiming, inter alia, at the participation of independent experts in the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, and invites relevant stakeholders to contribute to the earmarked activities related to Harmony with Nature;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to use the website on Harmony with Nature, managed by the Division for Sustainable Development Goals of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to gather information and contributions on ideas and activities to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature and to advance the integration of interdisciplinary scientific work, including success stories on the use of traditional knowledge and on existing national legislation;

8. *Calls for* holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development, in its three dimensions, that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystems and of all life on Earth;

9. *Invites* States, as appropriate:

(a) To further build up a knowledge network in order to advance a holistic conceptualization of sustainable development in its three dimensions to identify different approaches that reflect the drivers and values of and actions aimed at living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information to achieve sustainable development, and to facilitate support for and recognition of the fundamental interconnections between humankind and nature;

(b) To promote harmony with nature, in particular as found among indigenous peoples, to learn from their cultures the protection of nature and to support and promote efforts being made at the local, national, regional and global levels, taking into account advances in the establishment of the local communities and indigenous peoples platform;

10. *Recognizes* that protecting and conserving ecosystems, and avoiding harmful practices against animal welfare, plants, microorganisms and non-living

[15] Available from www.harmonywithnatureun.org/trustFund.html.

environments, contributes to the coexistence of humankind in harmony with nature, and requests the Secretary-General to address these issues in his report on the implementation of the present resolution;

11. *Encourages* all countries to develop and strengthen the quality and quantity of basic national statistical data on the three dimensions of sustainable development, and invites the international community and the pertinent bodies of the United Nations system to support the efforts of developing countries by providing capacity-building and technical assistance;

12. *Recognizes* the need for broader and multidimensional measures of sustainable development, to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard notes the ongoing work of the Statistical Commission on a work programme to develop broader measures of progress and to conduct a technical review of existing efforts in this area;[16]

13. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no one is left behind and no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fifth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fifth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Harmony with Nature".

[16] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 4* (E/2013/24), chap. I, sect. C, decision 44/114.