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Sustainable development: Harmony with Nature

South Africa:** 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 Development⁴ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),⁵

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”,⁶

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, recognizing that it builds on the Millennium Development Goals and seeks to complete their unfinished business, and stressing the importance of the implementation of this new ambitious Agenda, which has poverty eradication at its core and aims at promoting the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development,

* Reissued for technical reasons on 3 December 2015.

** On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China.

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 66/288, annex.



Recalling the determination of Member States in the preamble to the 2030 Agenda to ensure that all human beings can enjoy prosperous and fulfilling lives and that economic, social and technological progress occurs in harmony with nature,

Stressing that the 2030 Agenda envisions a world in which: consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources — from air to land, from rivers, lakes and aquifers to oceans and seas — are sustainable; democracy, good governance and the rule of law, as well as an enabling environment at national and international levels, are essential for sustainable development, including sustained and inclusive economic growth, social development, environmental protection and the eradication of poverty and hunger; development and the application of technology are climate-sensitive, respect biodiversity and are resilient; and humanity lives in harmony with nature and other living species are protected,

Reaffirming the integrated and indivisible set of Sustainable Development Goals, including Goal 12, which aims at, inter alia, ensuring sustainable production and consumption patterns, and that, by 2030, people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature,

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 and 69/224 of 19 December 2014 on Harmony with Nature and its resolution 63/278 of 22 April 2009, by which it designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day,

Recalling also the 1982 World Charter for Nature,⁷

Noting with appreciation the interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, held on 27 April 2015 to commemorate International Mother Earth Day, on the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through 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 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,

Noting 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, potentially 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 the Earth systems, with the aim of promoting and ensuring an equitable, balanced and sustainable relationship with the Earth,

Taking note of 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 2010,⁸

⁷ Resolution 37/7, annex.

⁸ See A/64/777, annexes I and II.

Taking note also of the initiatives by Member States to create forums for dialogue that aim to find equitable and alternative development models in harmony with Mother Earth and in the defence of all forms of life,

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 an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings,

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

Taking note of the conceptual framework of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services,⁹

Recognizing that gross domestic product was not designed as an indicator for measuring environmental degradation resulting from human activity and the need to overcome this limitation 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 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 the work undertaken by civil society, academia and scientists in 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,

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

Stressing the importance of inclusivity within the United Nations development system, and that observer States should be taken into account in the implementation of the present resolution,

Reaffirming that, in order to overcome the immense challenges facing the world today, as stated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with particular reference to the current global environmental crisis, it is important to reconsider the way in which societies interact with the natural world,

1. *Takes note* of the sixth report of the Secretary-General;¹⁰

⁹ IPBES/2/17.

¹⁰ A/70/268.

2. *Recognizes* the importance of giving due consideration to the vision of the outcome document entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” adopted at the United Nations summit for the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda, held in New York from 25 to 27 September 2015,¹¹ by initiating, in 2016, a virtual dialogue on Harmony with Nature among, inter alia, experts on Earth jurisprudence worldwide, including those who have been active in the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly, in order to inspire citizens and societies to reconsider how they interact with the natural world in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in harmony with nature, noting that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development, and requests that an interim report on the virtual dialogue be submitted to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session;

3. *Requests* that the virtual dialogue be hosted at the website on Harmony with Nature and that its results be made available to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session;

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

5. *Invites* Member States to consider existing studies and reports on Harmony with Nature, including the follow-up to the discussions at the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly, such as the dialogue held on 27 April 2015 on the promotion of the balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through Harmony with Nature;

6. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to hold an inclusive and interactive dialogue at the seventy-second session of the Assembly, to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2017, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other stakeholders, to examine the results of the virtual dialogue and to advance discussions on Harmony with Nature;

7. *Recalls* its resolutions requesting that the Secretary-General establish a trust fund for the participation of independent experts in the interactive dialogue to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day, and in this regard invites Member States and other relevant stakeholders to consider contributing to this trust fund once it is established;

8. *Also recalls* the launching of the Harmony with Nature website on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by the secretariat of the Conference and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to use the website maintained by the Division 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;

¹¹ Resolution 70/1.

9. *Calls for* holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development in its three dimensions, as appropriate, 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;

10. *Invites* States:

(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 economic approaches that reflect the drivers and values of living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information to achieve sustainable development, and to facilitate the support and recognition of the fundamental interconnections between humanity and Mother Earth;

(b) To promote harmony with the Earth, as found in indigenous cultures, to learn from those cultures and to provide support for and promote efforts being made from the national level down to the local community level to reflect the protection of nature;

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 assist the efforts of developing countries by providing capacity-building and technical support;

12. *Recognizes* the need for broader measures of progress 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;¹²

13. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to include observer States in the implementation of the present resolution;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

15. *Decides* to continue the consideration of the sub-item entitled "Harmony with Nature" at its seventy-first session under the item entitled "Sustainable development".

¹² *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 4 (E/2013/24), chap. I, sect. C, decision 44/114.*