



San José, 20 December 2016
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REPÚBLICA DE COSTA RICA
Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía
Despacho del Ministro

Permanent Missions in Nairobi, Geneva and New York

Excellency,

I would like to inform your Excellency that in my capacity of President of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and after considering previous discussions, including those held at the Bureau joint retreat on October 27, 2016, I would like to promote the creation of the "Friends of UNEA" in relevant venues within the UN framework.

I trust that your Excellency shares the view on the need to improve UNEA's visibility and engagement with key actors and organizations working in the social and economic dimensions. Current sustainable development challenges force us to work in ensuring the adequate implementation of UNEA's outcomes, including its resolutions and political declarations. In this regard, the follow-up process of those outcomes needs to be reinforced in order to guarantee the fulfillment of its mandates and provide the environmental and political impact that an Assembly of this nature is determined to have. We need to establish an efficient way to share its findings and develop strategic relationships and partnerships with key actors and organizations at the regional and global level.

The "Friends of UNEA" would be composed by Member States that would gather informally in relevant multilateral duty stations including Nairobi, Geneva and New York. Its main objective would be to support the efforts undertaken by the President, the Bureau and the Committee of Permanent Representatives aimed at implementing UNEA's outcomes, exchanging information on the work of the UN Environment Assembly, engaging with stakeholders, securing funds for the Environmental Fund and promoting the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. A "Friends of UNEA" group has already been established in Geneva, where the relationship with the promotion and development of human rights and the work of relevant organizations based there will be critical for the future work of UNEA.

Among its key target audiences are those countries that do not have a permanent representation in Nairobi. The opportunity to reach out these missions, will allow for more countries to engage actively and hopefully, take an interest in improving their level of representation in Kenya.

I strongly believe that the crucial role of the UN Environment Assembly in the achievement of sustainable development, its universal membership, as well as the

involvement of major groups and other relevant stakeholders, have the capacity to positively influence global outcomes for the benefit of us all.

As a platform for leadership on global environmental policies, UNEA will continue highlighting global environmental issues closely related to peace, poverty, health, security, finance, hunger, biodiversity and trade; and only our joint efforts will ensure a successful Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi from 4 to 6 December 2017 under the theme of "pollution".

I am convinced that this initiative serves as the means to reach out on these elements, helps to increase UNEA's visibility and engagement globally, facilitates the interaction between key actors and promotes stakeholders' participation consistent with the intergovernmental character of the Assembly.

I therefore kindly thank you for your support to this endeavor and look forward to be in contact with you as soon as possible in order to advance in our common objectives.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration,



H.E. Dr. Edgar Gutierrez Espeleta
Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica
President of the United Nations Environment Assembly



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