

The Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

# Private Sector Engagement at the 2019 UN Environment Assembly

**#SolveDifferent** 

THINK BEYOND LIVE WITHIN

## Acknowledgement

All Divisions and Regional Offices of the UN Environment Programme have contributed to the successful engagement of the private sector during the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly through a number of dynamic forums and panel discussions.

The 2019 Sustainable Innovation Expo was organized by the Private Sector Unit of the Governance Affairs Office. The team was led by Jorge Laguna-Celis, Director of the Governance Affairs Office, with overall coordination by Kamar Yousuf, Head of Private Sector Unit, and Mia Turner. We would like to recognize the following colleagues who substantially contributed to the organization of the Expo: Mohammed Mabrouk, Maryanne Masini, Charlotte Ndakorerwa, Victor Oburu, Abarta Pandey, Marina Porto, Salma Yusuf Serrano and Stephanie van der Poel.

The Leadership Dialogues were organized by the Governing Bodies Unit of the Governance Affairs Office and coordinated by Alberto Pacheco, Amanda Cabrejo, and Ulf Bjornholm.

The Multi-stakeholder Dialogue was organized by Alexandre Juras, Laetitia Zobel, Alfred Muge, Tabea Anna Zwimpfer and Isaiah Otieno of the Civil Society Unit of the Governance Affairs Office.

This Report was written by Soraya Soemadiredja, Penelope Kalungi and Alix Dehayem-Massop. It was reviewed and edited by Henry Ndede, Special Advisor of the Governance Affairs Office, and colleagues in the Private Sector Unit.

Credits for photography: Natalia Mroz, Yaroslav Nikitin (Y.Nikitin), Cyril Villemain, Soraya Soemadiredja, Penelope Kalungi, Alix Dehayem-Massop, Mohammed Mabrouk and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).

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This Report is dedicated to the victims of the Ethiopian Airlines, Flight ET-302, which fatally crashed on 10 March 2019. Many of the victims - which included UN colleagues and partners - were planning to attend the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019.



Dear Participants,

Thank you for participating in the 2019 UN Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya. The largest-ever Assembly brought us together to address how we can move beyond our take-make-dispose model of consumption and production, and live within the limits of our planet.

Your active engagement contributed to the tremendous success of the Assembly where member States laid the foundation for bold and ambitious environmental action to protect people and the planet.

We heard the urgency for transformative action that will shift our global sustainable consumption and production patterns. And we heard from the best – leaders in government, private sector and civil society – on the innovations that can help us to live and work sustainably.

The message was clear. Charting a new course for this planet requires human creativity, commitment and innovation and this was so evident in your contribution to this important event.

We thank you again for joining us on this critically important journey to live sustainably. Together, we can implement the resolutions; together we can be part of the solution and together we can ensure a healthy planet for generations to come.

Joyce Msuya Deputy Executive Director **UN Environment Programme** 



Dear Participants,

As we move into the next steps to implement the 23 resolutions adopted at the conclusion of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, I would like to thank you for your participation and contribution to our overall purpose to find the innovative solutions that will ensure the sustainable consumption and production processes of today, tomorrow and the future.

Thank you for the support and the inspiration you shared during the Assembly and its numerous activities and events. It is through your interactive participation that we have created the critical multi-stakeholder engagement in the Assembly that will allow its outcomes to have resonance beyond the halls of the negotiations.

With nearly 5,000 participants, of which over 500 came from the private sector, this Assembly and its outcomes have brought the world one step closer to Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

At the Assembly and through its many events and activities, we have come together as a global community to work towards circular economies in our lifestyles, in our industries and in our countries.

We share that common bond of protecting the environment and only through working together in partnerships can we achieve our goals to protect our planet for future generations.

I look forward to seeing you again and reporting on our progress at the next UN Environment Assembly to be held on 22-26 February 2021 in Nairobi, Kenya!

Jorge Laguna Celis Director – Governance Affairs Office **UN Environment Programme** 

### I. Introduction

The UN Environment Assembly is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment. Created in June 2012 at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), the Assembly convenes all 193 UN member States to tackle our most critical global environmental challenges. Through its resolutions and calls to action, it provides the global leadership and inter-governmental action so critical to the health of our planet.

But action needs broad-based public-private partnerships. It is these partnerships which have the capacity to promote and leverage new technology, innovation and financing for sustainable development. And it is through these partnerships that we can track the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals that put us more firmly on the path to a sustainable future.

The Assembly and its events are the ideal platform to host the stakeholders who can build these critical partnerships. Events at the Assembly include the Sustainable Innovation Expo and its exhibits and dynamic panel discussions; the High-Level Breakfast Meeting; the Leadership Dialogues; the Multistakeholder Dialogue and numerous side events.

The Sustainable Innovation Expo is the premier public-private cooperation arm of the UN Environment Assembly. With a focus on eco-innovation and sustainable finance, the 2019 Expo brought together leaders from governments, private sector, international organizations and civil society to support the UN Environment Assembly's overall theme of Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production.

During the high-level segment of the Assembly, there were also three Leadership Dialogues that brought together Ministers of Environment and leaders of business and civil society for interactive discussions and an exchange of views on priorities, best practices, challenges and transformative solutions relating to the overall theme of the Assembly.

The Multi-stakeholder Dialogue complemented the discussions in the Leadership Dialogues and included the social and societal angles necessary for achieving more sustainable consumption patterns that contribute to sustainable lifestyles.

#### II. The Sustainable Innovation Expo

Launched at the second UN Environment Assembly in 2016, the Sustainable Innovation Expo has become the premier platform for engaging with the private sector and has become the preferred platform for connecting new science to policy; and policy to solutions.

The Expo's purpose is to (i) showcase the latest cutting-edge technology from the private and public sectors to tackle environmental challenges (ii) engage key stakeholders through interactive dialogue on solutions in line with the theme of the UN Environment Assembly through panel discussions and roundtables (iii) provide a networking space for innovators and financiers to establish partnerships.

With a focus on eco-innovation and sustainable finance, the 2019 Expo, which was held from 11 to 15 March, brought together leaders from government, private sector, international organizations and civil society to support the UN Environment Assembly's overall theme of Innovative Solutions to Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production.

Innovative sustainable business represents a trillion-dollar opportunity to be seized by organizations and companies that can bring value to people and the environment. Since consumption and production patterns must change radically to avert climate change and biodiversity loss, organizations, companies and citizens alike must invent and seize the opportunities to drive the necessary change.

With activities mapped to support the resolutions and political outcomes of the Assembly, the Expo was designed to complement these efforts by hosting nine interactive panel discussions, three Pop-up Chats and an exhibit space for 46 businesses (see Annex 1 for list of exhibitors) with cutting-edge solutions. The Expo also hosted two media launches of the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion and the 2019 Global Resource Outlook report.

Over 500 participants from the private sector participated in the activities in and around the Assembly covering a wealth of topics ranging from big data; law and legal empowerment; plastic pollution management; sport and electronic gaming; sustainable financing; food systems; fashion and tourism; and faithbased initiatives. Ultimately, the Expo provided participants with the chance to form impactful partnerships based on shared environmental goals, including the potential funding that would allow projects to move forward and to be scaled up.

With hundreds of submissions, the UN Environment Programme carefully selected 46 exhibitors from over 20 countries. The selection process took into account the practicality of the solution, the geographic representation of the company, as well as its contribution to the life-cycle approach. Those selected provided technology and innovative solutions relevant to the Assembly's overall theme of innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production.

As part of the preparations for the Expo, there were a series of Leaders Roundtables to build momentum towards the Assembly and raise awareness of its theme and proposed resolutions.

- In November 2018, UN Environment Programme organized a Leaders' Breakfast in Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt, on the margins of the UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP-14). The Breakfast focused on innovative solutions for mainstreaming biodiversity into key economic sectors.
- In January 2019, a Leaders' Luncheon took place during the third Ministerial Conference of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) in Cape Town, South Africa. The Luncheon addressed the issue of social and financial innovation for inclusive and sustainable economic transformation.

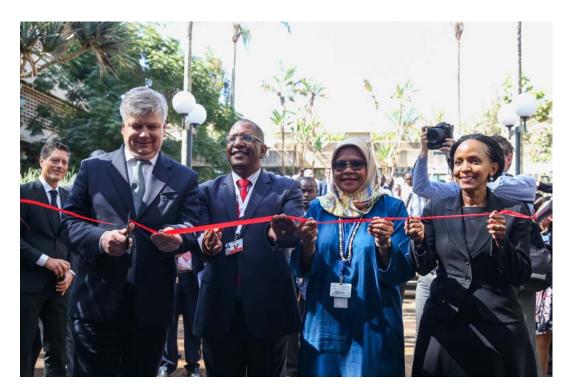
#### **Opening Ceremony of the Expo**

The ribbon cutting ceremony to launch the 2019 Sustainable Innovation Expo took place on 11 March 2019. Speakers at the event included the following:

- H.E. Keriako Tobiko Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya;
- H.E. Siim Kiisler President of the UN Environment Assembly, Minister of Environment of Estonia;
- Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif Acting Director-General, UN Office at Nairobi, and UN-Habitat Executive Director;
- Ms Joyce Msuya Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme;
- Mr Jorge Laguna-Celis Director of the Governance Affairs Office, UN Environment Programme.

#### "There is no limit to the creativity of all our people."

– H.E. Keriako Tobiko



Opening of the Expo by H.E. Siim Kiisler - President of the fourth UN Environment Assembly, Minister of Environment of Estonia; H.E. Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya; Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif - Acting Director General, UN Office at Nairobi, and UN-Habitat Executive Director; and Ms Joyce Msuya – Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme

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