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International environmental policy and governance issues

Progress in the implementation of resolution 5/1 on the animal welfare–environment–sustainable development nexus

Report of the Executive Director

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides an update on progress made in the implementation of resolution 5/1 of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the animal welfare–environment–sustainable development nexus. In the resolution, the Environment Assembly requested the Executive Director of UNEP, subject to the availability of financial and human resources, to (a) produce a report in close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), as well as with the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP), on the nexus between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development, by analysing the nexus between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development, identifying key partners and stakeholders to consult, where relevant, in the preparation of the report, and preparing a summary of the findings for consideration by Member States; (b) submit the aforementioned report for peer review by Member States; (c) work in partnership with members of the Tripartite Alliance,¹ through the strengthened relationship of UNEP with the Alliance, including on matters related to animal welfare and its nexus with human health and the environment, through a One Health approach; and (d) submit the findings of the report to the Environment Assembly at its sixth session.

II. Progress in the implementation of resolution 5/1

2. To compensate for the lack of outside resources, UNEP allocated resources to support implementation of the resolution from the Environment Fund (\$100,000) and the Thematic Fund for Living in Harmony with Nature (\$58,000) during the third quarter of 2023. Actions taken in support of the resolutions are highlighted below.

3. UNEP established the animal welfare–environment–sustainable development nexus steering group, comprised of representatives of UNEP, FAO, WHO, WOAH and OHHLEP. The steering group took on responsibility for oversight and guidance of the implementation of resolution 5/1. UNEP

* UNEP/EA.6/1.

¹ On 17 March 2022, UNEP signed a memorandum of understanding with FAO, WHO and WOAH to form the Quadripartite Alliance on One Health.

convened four meetings of the steering group. The primary output of the group during the reporting period was a scoping report with recommendations for full implementation of the resolution.

4. A report was prepared on the nexus between animal welfare, the environment and sustainable development. The report was commissioned to determine a detailed methodology, a process, a timeline and budgetary needs for implementing the resolution and producing a comprehensive and consultative nexus report based on best practices. In addition, a survey and a literature review of relevant existing documentation were conducted to inform a full-nexus methodological approach. It is important to note that only a limited amount of published and peer-reviewed literature that includes all three elements of the nexus is currently available. The report provides a recommended methodological approach with a range of possible formats with different resource requirements, as well as a proposed annotated outline for the areas of inquiry to be included in the final report. The report is undergoing review by the animal welfare–environment–sustainable development nexus steering group, and an information session with Member States is planned in early 2024.

5. In accordance with the requests in paragraphs 1 and 3 of resolution 5/1 for stakeholder consultation and engagement, UNEP engaged with Member States and other stakeholders to capture input and feedback to produce the report. To inform the report, a call for information was launched on 13 July 2023 to gather views and evidence from the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the members of the steering group.

6. UNEP also participated in relevant meetings and workshops, including, when requested by Member States, to provide updates and gather input for the analysis. These events included the third meeting of the friends of the resolution working group, held in Diani, Kenya in April 2023; the Major Groups and Stakeholders meeting, held in Rabat in July 2023 in preparation for the joint retreat of the bureaux of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the sixth session of the Environment Assembly; the seventh Africa Animal Welfare Conference, held in Kigali in September 2023; and the fourth One Welfare World Conference, held in Burgos, Spain in October 2023.

III. Lessons learned

7. UNEP continues to derive value from the long and well-established collaboration with FAO, WHO and WOAH for the implementation of the resolution. FAO and WOAH have clear mandates to work on animal welfare in the context of their organizational missions and are also keen to work on the animal welfare–environment–sustainable development nexus, contingent on the availability of resources.

IV. Recommendations and suggested actions

8. Member States may wish to:

(a) Take note of the report supporting the implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 5/1 and the recommended scope, process, timelines and budget required to implement the resolution;

(b) Invite Governments, the private sector, foundations, and other organizations to support the implementation of the recommendation in the report through voluntary financial contributions.