Thank you Chair for giving the opportunity

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegations, and Ladies and Gentlemen

I am Prem Singh Tharu from Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact representing Indigenous Peoples Major Group.

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) would like to congratulate the UNEP on the auspicious occasion of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UN Environment Programme (UNEP@50). We also highly appreciate the progress made by the OECPR on the Resolutions. However, we also regret that very few of us representing the Indigenous community which has more than 80% stewardship of the nature and biodiversity, are able to participate in-person in the UNEA.

We welcome the Draft Declaration on the UNEP@5.0, but we call upon the governments to strengthen the rule of law provisions and inclusion of the IPs in environmental governance in the Declaration.

We are concerned that NbS Resolution still does not have strong social and environmental safeguards, and in the lack of these standards Indigenous Peoples stand very substantial danger of being displaced from their land and territories and criminalized because most of the actions relating to nature-based solutions will be undertaken in the lands and territories of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, NbS resolution must adopt a human rights-based approach and actively seek to recognize and enforce tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples as key strategies for advancing the outcomes of nature-based solutions. Similarly, the Resolution on the chemicals fails to address the concerns related to highly hazardous pesticides and chemicals, which continue to poison on our land, water, contaminate our food, biodiversity, and harm our livestock. We are also disappointed that none of the Resolutions lay emphasis on the right to land and healthy environment, role of, and threats faced by environmental defenders majority of whom belong to our communities.

We also welcome setting up a science policy panel on pollution, chemicals, and waste, but urge the member states to include Indigenous Peoples in the composition of panel from all the seven regions so that it can be informed of the sustainable and nature positive actions that forms the basis of indigenous lifestyles and also keeps their concern in center of the panels work.

We recognize that partnerships are the key, and we therefore call on governments to partner with Indigenous Peoples including Indigenous Women with full and mutual respect and on the principles of Free Prior and Informed Consent.

We appreciate keeping Indigenous Peoples separate from local communities in some of the resolutions but hope that Ministerial Declaration and other resolutions being adopted also follow this well recognized language. We also hope that Stockholm+ 50 process will also ensure Indigenous Peoples’ full and meaningful participation.

Thank you very much for your attention