

## **STATEMENT**

### **of the High-Level Working Group on the Environmental Consequences of the War**

Today, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2023, we gathered in Kyiv, Ukraine, in person or via video-teleconference to launch the high-level International Working Group that will address the environmental and ecological consequences of the war of Russia against Ukraine (the '**Group**').

We strongly condemn Russia's unprovoked, illegal and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. It has inflicted incredible death, suffering, economic and social loss on the people of Ukraine. We reaffirm our continued support for the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters.

We gathered on this opportunity to unite our efforts because one of the most far-reaching and hard-to-count consequences of this horrible war is harm to environment and biodiversity. This includes damage to lands and soils, air, forests, lakes and seas, animals and plants. Meanwhile, we acknowledge that the Prosecutor General's Office leads national investigations in hundreds of incidents of environmental war crimes. Among them are 15 incidents of 'ecocide' committed as part of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

We condemn in the strongest terms the deliberate destruction of the dam at the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant, which is one of the biggest water reservoirs in Europe. It led to loss of 14.755 cubic km of freshwater loss, which is over 70% of the reservoir's volume. According to Ukrainian official data 150 tons of oil leaked into the Dnipro River, thousands of hectares of lands and forests were flooded, thousands of people lost their homes, thousands of birds and animals died or are under threat.

Our Group aims to support the Ukrainian authorities in their assessment of the environmental and ecological damage from the war, holding Russia accountable, and planning for the environmental and societal recovery of the country.

The Group will concentrate on three main areas:

1. Assessing the environmental damage from the war, and the immediate as well as medium- and long-term threats to human health and the broader environment, in Ukraine, the region and globally.
2. Pursuing the accountability of Russia for environmental crimes, including elaborating on 'ecocide' charges as mass harm to the environment, and compensation for losses.
3. Planning for a green recovery of the environment and rebuilding Ukraine society through transition to a green economy.

We will do this by providing our Ukrainian partners with high-level strategic advice, policy recommendations, and enhanced access to expertise.

President Zelenskyy of Ukraine presented Ukraine's 10-Point Peace Formula as a basis for reaching just and long-lasting peace for Ukraine. One of the focuses of the Peace Formula is protection of the environment. We strongly agree that this will help to strengthen the efforts of Ukrainian authorities and the international community to help Ukraine to recover.

Russia is destroying the Ukrainian environment every single day by continuing its brutal war. The real scale of the damage to the ecology and people of Ukraine is yet to be discovered.

The environmental damage caused by the Russian war in Ukraine must be accurately registered, every crime be determined and documented, and Russia held accountable for environmental crimes and social loss. We call on all environmental organizations as well as environmental activists to unite their efforts in combating environmental crimes that are committed in Ukraine every single day for our better future.