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## **Statement by Ukraine**

**Dear Chair,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

- Thank you for giving me the floor now, as what I would like to highlight is related to each of the agenda items of this meeting and many other international fora in the field of environmental protection.
- For an enduring span of 2 years and nearly 2 months, Russia has relentlessly unleashed an unprovoked large-scale war of aggression, which largely hits the civilian population of Ukraine, civilian infrastructure, the environment of the region and well-being of the people.
- Throughout more than 10 years of Russian aggression our country has been faced with the toxic legacy of war, among which there are war-related water, air, land pollution and degradation of ecosystems.
- One of the most terrible cases is the breach of the Kakhovka dam, a far-reaching environmental disaster that goes beyond Ukraine's borders; according to the UNEP report, the magnitude of which might not be clear for years or even decades to come.
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted, among other things, in almost 3,600 cases of environmental damage that have already been recorded, with the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine investigating nearly 280 cases of war crimes that have damaged the environment.
- The war damaged almost a third of Ukrainian forests, we became the most mined country in the world, ahead of Afghanistan and Syria, the destruction of water bodies led to a significant reduction in water reserves. The contamination of water sources due to war-related activities poses a grave threat to public health, exacerbating the risk of waterborne diseases and compromising access to safe drinking water for affected populations.
- Across the European region and beyond, the increased level of water pollution caused by aggression must be properly considered and addressed by

the international community, that should provide an adequate response to this threat. We call on all distinguished delegations present at this assembly to unite in actions toward restoring a safe environment for all. As a step toward this goal, your engagement in implementing our Peace Formula, ensuring environmental security and addressing the consequences of Russia's war is crucial. We appreciate the support and cooperation shown by many of the parties in facing these challenges.

**Dear Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues,**

- We should remember. Russian aggression challenges the entire system of international law and global security. Different dictatorships can be inspired by the current Russian dictatorship - its cynicism, its malice.

The best we can do now is to prove that we are not just declaring our values, including the environmental rule of law, but also ready to defend them. Together.

Reaffirming our commitment to working for a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace, not only in Ukraine but in the UNECE region, we reiterate our demand for the Russian Federation to cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

*We kindly request the inclusion of this statement in the meeting report.*

**Thank you.**