

**STATEMENT**  
**by the Delegation of Ukraine**  
at the Joint opening plenary of the SBSTTA, SBI and WG2020  
(14 March 2022, Geneva)

**Madame Chair,**

First, let me express our appreciation to the Presidency for the leadership in guiding us through our deliberations and assure of Ukraine's full support and cooperation. Likewise, Ukraine is grateful for the hard work of the Secretariat enabling our meeting in Geneva. We also appreciate the possibility to speak before this esteemed audience.

**Madame Chair, Madame Executive Secretary,  
Distinguished delegates,**

Today is the 19th day of a full-scale unprovoked and unjustified war launched by Russia against Ukraine, against Europe and the whole world. It is the most horrible and large-scale invasion since the Second World War.

Russia launches horrific missile attacks on residential areas, attacks with aviation, tanks and artillery, sends subversion and reconnaissance groups.

Russia destroys Ukrainian cities – Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Mariupol, Ohtyrka, Hostomel, Irpin, Bucha and many other smaller towns and villages.

Russia keeps attacking kindergartens and orphanages. Last week Russian bombs have destroyed a children's and maternity hospital in Mariupol. The overall death toll in just this Ukrainian city alone is 2187 civilian citizens.

Yesterday when our Bureau met to discuss logistical arrangements of the meeting the Russian forces bombed and destroyed the International Peacekeeping Center in the city of Yavoriv, just 20 km from the border with Poland. As a result of this attack 35 staff members of the facility have lost their lives.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Russia's ongoing attack on Ukraine is also an attack on the environment. As a result of the foreign invasion, our natural heritage is being progressively damaged.

In recent days, several fuel depots and gas lines were bombed by the Russian military causing environmental emergencies and placing the health of nearby communities and ecosystems at danger. Russian attacks on munitions depots have already led to the dispersal of military-origin heavy metals and toxic hazardous materials posing additional human health and environmental risks.

Russian barbaric invaders are destroying the natural habitats – the source of biodiversity. It will take many years to restore them, including for rare and endangered species.

As of today, more than half of the Ramsar sites in Ukraine have been affected by the hostilities committed by the Russian armed forces. That includes the sites located at the coasts of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov as well as lower part of the Dnipro and Danube rivers. The Russian armed forces do not show any respect for the wild nature. Besides, the Ramsar sites "Kryva Zatoka and Kryva Kosa" in Donbas and the "Water-coastal complex of Cape Opuk" in Crimea, occupied by Russia since 2014,

have been extensively used for military exercises. More than 20 nature and biosphere reserves and national parks have suffered losses due to the Russian aggression.

According to preliminary calculations, as of 1st March 2022, the aggressor was conducting military operations on the territory of 900 objects of the nature reserve fund with an area of 12406.6 sq. km (1.24 million hectares), which is about a third of the area of the nature reserve fund of Ukraine. About 200 territories of the Emerald Network with an area of 2.9 million hectares are under threat of destruction.

Moreover, Russia is trying to cease control over Ukrainian nuclear power plants, including the largest in Europe – Zaporizhzhia NPP, and threatens the world with the nuclear weapons.

Since the Russian troops captured the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, there has been no more international control over the shelter and destroyed NPP unit. In the hands of the aggressor, significant amount of nuclear waste could turn into a nuclear bomb which will turn thousands of hectares into a dead lifeless desert.

### **Distinguished delegates,**

A full-scale invasion in Ukraine by the Russian Federation is a fragrant violation of the UN Charter, international law, human rights, environmental and nuclear safety and security, and the global peace.

Actions of the Russian Federation pose existential threat to the world and bring unprecedented and long-lasting challenges to the environment and human habitat.

Russia's barbaric actions and nuclear terrorism in Ukraine puts the whole world at risk of an environmental catastrophe.

International community must act now to address the environmental consequences of Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine.

The adoption by the UN GA of the Resolution "Aggression against Ukraine" with the overwhelming support of the UN member-states, which clearly demands that the Russian Federation immediately cease its use of force against Ukraine and refrain from any further unlawful threat or use of force against any UN member state, is a clear proof that we can be united in the face of this unprecedented challenge.

We should continue our joint fight on all fronts – diplomatic, military, economic, legal ones, as well as at the environmental fora, with a view to putting an end to this aggression so that the whole world could feel safer.

**I thank you**, Madame Chair, and I request that this statement be treated as an official document of the meeting.