Declaration on World Environment Day – 22nd AKEL Congress

On the occasion of World Environment Day, the 22nd Congress of AKEL notes the following:

* Despite numerous global Forums, which are organized and the decisions taken to protect the environment, very little has been done in this direction. The environment is still targeted as a huge reservoir for the thoughtless extraction of natural resources, as a waste dump and as the main profitable investment sector, resulting in the planet’s huge problems deteriorating.
* For AKEL it is clear that individual prosperity within the framework of modern social development cannot take precedence over collective prosperity, nor can it be the result of the selfish exploitation of nature and of the rest of the people. For us, the issue of environmental and ecological crisis is primarily a political issue, associated with serious effects in the economic and social spheres. It is a matter, which increasingly tends to be associated with the struggle of the peoples for peace and security, since the limited natural resources within the framework of the capitalist system are becoming an arena of competition and conflicts field aiming at their control.
* AKEL considers that environmental policy should primarily include the adoption of new economic and social development policies, which will aim at maintaining the capabilities of the ecosystem and of the natural resources in an overall sustainable development strategy. Growth is necessary, but should be for the benefit of society and not the circumstantial exploitation of the environmental for enrichment and political considerations. A component part of environmental policy is the intensification of the struggle for international peace and disarmament, an end to wars and conflicts that are destroying the natural environment.
* We join our voices with the whole people of Cyprus, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, but also with the peoples of the region, against the construction and operation of Turkey’s nuclear power plant in Akkuyu, a highly seismic area, located just 60 kilometers from Cyprus.
* The developmental model followed in Cyprus following independence was in line with international trends. Cyprus’ environmental problems further worsened over the last 40 years due to the Turkish invasion and continuing occupation, the abnormal division of the Cyprus ecosystem, the uncontrolled development and the lack of a correct and comprehensive state environmental policy. The destruction and environmental pollution in Cyprus, has assumed great dimensions, both in urban and rural areas. The popular strata and working people suffer disproportionately from environmental degradation compared to more affluent groups of the population, who possess means of personal and family protection. Consequently, the struggle to solve the problem of the environment is directly linked with the political struggle for a fair and human society.
* The implementation of a sustainable development model, based on economic, social and environmental stability, is one of our main goals. The proposal of AKEL, aims at fair and sustainable productive processes and relationships, which extend to the level of socio-economic change, based on the peculiarities of our country. Towards this end, the state should revise the policies of unbalanced economic development that rapidly and with increasing pace affect our country and our lives in general. Of course, the resolution of our political problem, the termination of the occupation and the reunification of our country will unify the natural environment of our country and create the opportunity for pursuing an effective environmental policy.