

Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to the
United Nations Environment Programme
Informal Open-ended Working Group meeting
Thursday 10 November 2016
09:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.,
UNON Gigiri, Conference Room 4

Strengthening the procedures and governance of the Assembly and the Committee of the Permanent Representatives: communication guidelines for the Secretariat of Governing Bodies pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the UN Environment Assembly¹ (Revised)

In line with its duties under Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure² and in an effort to make the work of the governing bodies of the UN Environment Programme more visible and accessible to a wider public the Secretariat of Governing Bodies³ (Secretariat) has introduced a number of measures to enhance the transparency of its functions and the support provided to Governments and Stakeholders. The changes include setting up a user-friendly website, <http://web.unep.org/about/cpr/> enabled with the capacity to simplify access and searches for documentation relevant to the work of the governing bodies of the UN Environment Programme.

This Guidance Note spells out the basic criteria that the Secretariat will follow with regard to the management of information related to the work of the Governing Bodies of the UN Environment Programme shared by electronic means (email) and through the portals associated with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the UN Environment Assembly, in a manner consistent with the UN Environment's Access to Information Policy (hereafter 'Policy') (<http://www.unep.org/delc/Portals/119/documents/REVISED-access-to-information-policy-Jan-2016.pdf>) and the Standard Operating Procedures which guide the organization's implementation of the Policy. The policy was established by the Executive Director on 3 February 2016.

Documentation

Examples of documentation relevant to the work of the Governing Bodies of the UN Environment generally consist of three categories: pre-session documents, in-session documents and post-session documents.

¹ <http://www.unep.org/about/sgb/RulesofProcedure/tabid/129498/Default.aspx>

² Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure of the UN Environment Assembly states out the duties of the Secretariat: "The secretariat shall interpret speeches made at meetings; shall receive, translate and circulate the documents of the United Nations Environment Assembly and its subsidiary organs; and shall publish and circulate the resolutions, reports and relevant documentation of the United Nations Environment Assembly. It shall have the custody of the documents in the archives of the United Nations Environment Assembly and generally perform all other work which the United Nations Environment Assembly may require".

³ To be renamed Governance Affairs Office

Pre-session documents are intended to assist participants to prepare for consideration of each agenda item. They are made available in advance of a session to all participants including non – governmental organisations formally accredited to the UN Environment Assembly. Pre-session documents consist of: official working documents labelled (UNEP/EA.2/x) and information documents (UNEP/EA.2/INF/x). Some documents are denoted with ../Add.x or ../Rev.x symbols, where ../Add.x refers to "addendum" to a main document and ../Rev.x refers to "revision" to the original document.

In-session documents are working documents that are presented and considered “in-session”. Due to the temporary and sometimes politically sensitive nature of these documents, in many cases especially during the sessions of the Assembly or during informal consultations conducted during the inter-sessional period, they are available only to the participating delegates on an “in-session documentation portal”. In-session documents consist of the following: Limited documents (UNEP/EA.2/L.x), Conference room papers (UNEP/EA.2/CRP.x) and non-papers.

Post-session documents refer to final documents issued after the conclusion of the session or meeting, including meeting proceedings, summaries as well as resolutions and decisions that have been adopted. These documents are of public nature.

Written reactions, inputs or contributions from Member States or accredited organizations related to a specific meeting which are transmitted to the Secretariat after a meeting will be considered post-session documents. Some comments and inputs will be of public nature while others (such as during negotiation processes and inputs to working documents) are restricted to Member-States only.

In line with Rule 70 of the Rules of Procedure, international non-governmental organizations formally accredited to the UN Environment Assembly, may submit written statements related to items on the agenda of the United Nations Environment Assembly or of its subsidiary organs. Such statements and comments are circulated by the Secretariat to members of the United Nations Environment Assembly or of the subsidiary organ concerned. The Secretariat will share electronic links instead of attached files in cases where the information is also made available in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

Communications

Communications include, but are not limited to, emails to Permanent Missions sent to and from the official email account of the Secretariat (unep.sgb@unep.org) by the Secretary, Notes Verbales and letters from the Secretariat.

Public portals and Restricted portals

The Secretariat will maintain and regularly update the following public portals and restricted access portals (limited only to Members for specific purposes).

<https://web.unep.org/unea>

<https://web.unep.org/about/cpr>

<https://myunea.org>

An example of a restricted access portal is <https://papersmart.unon.org/>

The Secretariat will strive in 2017 to fulfill recommendations as received with regard to centralizing relevant information into one restricted portal and one public portal.

Public meetings

Public and private meetings are governed by rule 67 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly. In accordance with this Rule, the meetings of the UN Environment Assembly, its sessional committees, such as the Committee of the Whole and working parties, as well as the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Subcommittee meetings and Working Groups are held in public unless the body concerned decides otherwise.

Public meetings also include informal briefings organized by the Secretariat, and consultations and meetings organized by the Secretariat with organizations representing the Major Groups and Stakeholders, unless the Secretariat as organizer of the meeting, decides otherwise.

In the case of public meetings, the Secretariat will make public the provisional agenda, working documents, informational materials, statements, presentations and any other relevant document presented prior to or during the meeting, unless they are deemed sensitive by the presiding officer or the Secretariat. In such cases, they will be made available only to the participating delegates and representatives of international non-governmental organizations formally accredited to the UN Environment Assembly on an “in-session documentation portal” or transmitted directly through electronic means (email).

In line with Rule 67, the Secretariat will endeavor to broadcast proceedings of public meetings to the wider public through electronic means.

Private meetings

Private meetings include, but are not limited to, the meetings of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly; the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives; consultations of the Executive Director with the Regional and Political Groups; and any other informal consultations organized by the Secretariat of bilateral, regional or multilateral nature that is deemed to be private.

In the case of the meetings of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Secretariat will make public, upon approval by the presiding officer, the timing, venue and annotated provisional agenda for the meeting while indicating its private nature.

Following the meeting and upon the clearance of the rapporteur, the presiding officer and other members of the respective Bureau, the Secretariat will make available in the relevant electronic

portal, summaries of the meetings without attribution.

Communications from the Secretariat to all Permanent Missions

The Secretariat will continue to transmit regularly to Member States in a timely manner communications and documents generated by Member States, the Secretariat, or Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations in connection with Public Meetings, where appropriate, related to Private Meetings and to other matters relevant to the work of UN Environment.

To enhance efficiency, and reduce the load of such communications, the Secretariat will share electronic links and/or updates (instead of attached files) in cases where the information is also made available in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

In addition, when several documents are made available in connection with a specific meeting (generated by Member States, the Secretariat, or Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations), the Secretariat will try to consolidate the documents to reduce the number of communications sent out to Member States.

Where the communication being distributed is not made available on a public portal, the Secretariat will continue to attach the document files.

The Secretariat will maintain an annual registry of dispatched communications to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Ministers of the Environment and Members of the UN Environment Assembly and to the Bureau of the Environment Assembly and the Bureau of Committee of Permanent Representatives. The Secretariat will retransmit to Member States any communication not received.

Simplification of Language and avoidance of the use of acronyms

In an effort to make the work of the governing bodies of the UN Environment Programme more accessible to a wider audience, the Secretariat shall endeavor to avoid the use of acronyms in a bid to simplify language. Correspondence and communications shall initiate referring to The UN Environment Programme and thereafter be referred to as UN Environment. The same shall apply to the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

The following change does not affect the status of the UN Environment Programme.

Statements

Statements and comments delivered during public meetings that are made available to the Secretariat will be posted as part of the in-session documentation as soon as possible in the relevant public portal. They will not be circulated to Member States, unless the Member State or accredited representative so requests. This will also apply to comments and inputs made by Member States to presentations by the Secretariat.

The Secretariat strongly encourages Member States to deposit with the Secretariat their

statements through email (unep.sgb@unep.org).

Communications with Regional Groups

The Secretariat shall communicate and liaise with the designated Chair of a Regional Group for matters pertaining to said regional group. The Chair of the given group might request that the Secretariat distribute to other members of the group those communications addressed to the Chair. Any communications from the group to the Secretariat shall be received only through the Chair of the Regional Group. Communications may include those of substantive nature, invitations to Regional Group Consultations with the Executive Director, and related communications to Regional Groups on vacancies to intergovernmental organs.

Communications with Political Groups

The Secretariat shall communicate and liaise with the designated Chair of a Political Group for matters pertaining to said regional group. The Chair of the given group might request that the Secretariat distribute to other members of the group those communications addressed to the Chair. Any communications from the group to the Secretariat shall be received only through the Chair of the Political Group. Communications may include those of substantive nature and invitations to Political Group Consultations with the Executive Director.

Communications with Member States that have not accredited a Permanent Representative to UN Environment Programme

In order to enhance the participation of Member States of the UN Environment Assembly during the inter-sessional period, particularly in the activities of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Secretariat will develop a list of contacts composed of the National Focal Points and Permanent Missions in New York and Geneva. The Secretariat will distribute to Member States that have not accredited a Permanent Representative to UN Environment Programme the same information that is made available to the Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

In addition, the Secretariat shall regularly contact non-resident representatives of Member States inviting them to nominate a focal point to be based in a relevant ministry or in a permanent mission to the UN to participate in online debates and other interactive sessions as relevant. The Secretariat shall notify non-resident representatives of video-link sessions of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its Subcommittee, and inform members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the remote participation of non-resident members by video-link or audio during the beginning of the meeting.

The Secretariat will ensure that inputs from non-resident representatives of Members States are distributed to the membership to be taken into account during deliberations.

Communications with accredited Non-Governmental Organisations:

The Secretariat through its Civil Society Unit will continue to distribute all relevant documents

electronically to accredited Non-Governmental Organizations in line with Rule 70 of the Rules of Procedure.

Notes Verbales

The Secretariat will circulate Note Verbales and accompanying attachments to all Member States if so requested by the sending Permanent Mission. When the Note Verbale in question is produced in connection with a public meeting, the Secretariat will post the Note Verbale and its annexes (if any) on the relevant meeting page in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat. In such cases, and to reduce the load of such communications, the Secretariat will share electronic links (instead of attached files) as the Note Verbale is also made available in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

Maintenance of directories and mailing lists

The Secretariat will strive to maintain updated directories of Ministers responsible for the Environment, National Focal Points and Permanent Missions, Accredited Non-governmental Organisations to ensure that communications promptly reach their intended recipient. Permanent Missions are expected to promptly formally notify the Secretariat when changes occur with respect to the following:

- Ministers responsible for the Environment
- Permanent Representative to the UN Environment Programme
- National Focal Point in charge of matters related to the UN Environment Programme
- Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Environment Programme

In the case of Member States that have not accredited a Permanent Representative, the Secretariat will act upon updates submitted through appropriate diplomatic channels.

Review of the Communication Guidelines

The Secretariat shall regularly review these guidelines. Member States may suggest amendments and improvements at any time.