

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Sub-Committee Meeting  
Tuesday 7 February 2017  
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.,  
United Nations Office at Nairobi Gigiri,  
Conference Room 4

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

#### **Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

1. The Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania, welcomed members to the meeting. The Chair proposed that the agenda be amended by switching items two; Update by the Environment Management Group with three: Update on Environment under Review, taking into account the time difference between New York and Nairobi. The meeting thereafter adopted the provisional agenda as amended.

#### **Agenda Item 2: Update by the Environment Management Group**

2. At the invitation of the Chair, Mr. Harris, Assistant Secretary General, Head of the New York Office and Head of Secretariat of UN Environment Management Group, updated the meeting on the Environment Management Group. His presentation focused on the United Nations System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment and on maximizing the effectiveness of the Environment Management Group in the context of the 2030 Agenda, including the Environment Management Group Nexus Dialogues.
3. In the discussion that followed, Member States looked forward to the synthesis report on the system wide strategies and the Terms of Reference for the Environment Management Group. They raised other issues such as: concerns about the amount of time the process was taking and need for a sense of urgency; caution about creating an additional reporting mechanism; importance of being cognizant of the lessons learnt; planned nexus policy dialogues and questions on the lead institution.
4. In response, Mr. Elliott Harris explained that the Nexus dialogues were organized by the Environment Management Group to better understand issues that straddle sector outcomes and the way governments and the United Nations System are organized. He added that environmental issues were cross cutting and the Group was finding a way to collaborate across institutions, so as to better understand how work and policy affected different sectors

and how to improve collaboration, strengthen policies and better mitigate or take advantage of spill overs from policies from different sectors.

5. Mr. Harris further explained that the three Nexus policy dialogues were expected take place on the margins of the High Level Political Forum, the World Health Assembly and the General Assembly. A final dialogue would be held in Nairobi on the margins of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Nexus Dialogues would attempt to showcase the intersections between the environmental and non-environmental aspects. Regarding concerns over replication of reporting mechanisms, Mr. Harris said at this platform, bodies would provide input and share already compiled reports. He assured the meeting that there was no intention to create a super entity since the idea was to enhance understanding on how what is done in one sector could affect another. Lead institutions varied from issue to issue.
6. A representative of the Major Groups and Stakeholders sought clarification on the role of Major Groups in the Environment Management Group. In response, Mr. Harris said that currently membership to the Environment Management Group was limited to United Nations entities and other international organizations in the environmental sphere. The Group currently used the relationships that agencies have through partnerships with stakeholders to better understand matters on the ground.
7. The Chair requested that the Secretariat to schedule another briefing on the status of the Nexus Dialogues for the Committee of Permanent Representatives. She looked forward to continuing the dialogue immediately after 3<sup>rd</sup> Nexus Dialogue or at the Open Ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

### **Agenda Item 3: Update on Environment under Review**

8. At the invitation of the chair, Ms. Jacqueline McGlade, Director Science Divisions and Ms. Tessa Goverse, Subprogramme coordinator, Environment under Review made a presentation. Ms. Tessa Goverse, informed the meeting that an updated report on the Global Environment Outlook – 6 would be presented at the third session of the United Nations Assembly. The complete report would be presented at the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly.
9. Ms. McGlade, updated the meeting on the Frontier series, which would be a robust way to focus on emerging environment issues in line with the Committee of Permanent Representative's request. She informed the meeting about the establishment of the UN Environment Statistics group, which would play an active role in monitoring and reporting within the inter agency experts group. Her presentation also highlighted the fact that UN Environment was currently the custodian agency of 26 Sustainable Development Goal indicators, which included the intellectual property rights and went beyond GDP.

10. Ms. McGlade informed the meeting about the development of a user friendly open platform application on Environment Live, which would be available in the next two weeks. The application hosted more than 900 indicators and 900 live active maps and social media mapping. It would engage with citizens in science, show how synergies from one area affect those in other areas and make it possible to connect information from the Global Environmental Outlook-6 to the data and the maps in the application.
11. In the discussion that followed, issues raised by Member States included: UN Environment's strategy for taking the Environment Live application to the countries and what capacity building efforts had been undertaken; the difference between early warning and emerging issues and how they were approached; the relationship between UN Environment statistics and statistics from the UN Secretariat in New York; marketing and tracking of usage of Frontiers as well as its relationship to the UN Environment document for the Ministers and; the interaction between UN Environment live and GEO-6.
12. The meeting requested for a briefing by the Secretariat on the status of the Global Environmental Outlook-6 in March 2017.
13. In response, Ms. McGlade informed the meeting that the Environment Live application was a repository but an also interactive platform. A number of countries had provided funding for the application. Currently, there were active programs in 40 to 50 countries. There was a Global Environment Fund project that supported capacity development on data. Developing countries could connect to UN Environment live even without a live internet connection.
14. On data gathering UN Environment had a duty of care and authenticated what was provided. She clarified that early warnings related to issues such as be tornados or sand storms, whereas emerging issues could be issues like nanotechnology that have been around but had not previously received political attention. UN Environment and the UN Secretariat in New York worked together on statistics. The private sector was fully engaged on the issue of pollution in areas such as chemical processes in industry and substitution and management of contaminants. A considerable amount of data used was from the private sector. On the budget for GEO-6, she noted that there had been notable improvement. She added that the progress report on GEO-6 would include pollution. In her additional remarks, the Director Economic Division informed the meeting that the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management would address pollution.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Preparations for the 2017 Environment Assembly**

15. The Chair reminded the meeting that at the 137th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, members agreed on pollution as a generic theme, and agreed to further discuss the wording of the title and priority areas.

16. H.E. Ms. Marta E. Juarez Ruiz, Ambassador on Special Mission, Costa Rica, delivered a message from the President of the Bureau of UN Environment Assembly, which covered four elements; transparency, stakeholder engagement; effective follow up of resolutions and; good efficient communication. A Friend's of the Chair's Group had been established in Geneva and served as a hub for information exchange. On the funding gap, the President called on Member States to contribute to the budget for the third session of the Environment Assembly and to the Environment Fund. In his message the President also informed the Committee that a Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Committee would take place on 15 March 2017 to discuss the results of the fourth Annual Subcommittee meeting and a Retreat of the two Bureaux would be held in Costa Rica in early June 2017.
17. The meeting discussed at length the wording, priority areas and process for the proposed theme for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. Members were of the view that the wording of the theme should lead to concrete and clear actionable items and should be: short, catchy, simple and easy to understand; broad enough to accommodate different development levels and experiences of countries as well as; positive, inspiring and easy to translate into different languages.
18. On priority areas, Member States were of the view that they should have global relevance; be linked to main theme and to Sustainable Development Goals; result in meaningful outcomes; add value to the UN Environment Assembly and; be feasible and actionable. Issues highlighted included; air pollution; socio-economic impact; water pollution both waste water and nutrients; transboundary pollution, and sand and dust storms; pollution conflict areas; land pollution; marine pollution; chemicals and waste; e-waste and sustainable consumption and production. A few delegations expressed concern in addressing in the Assembly transboundary issues.
19. A representative of Civil Society pointed out that human health was a critical area and noted that the health sector typically received more attention and resources.
20. On the Global Action Plan, one member was of the view that since it received limited support, the Secretariat should not be burdened with its conceptualization.
21. On process, the meeting agreed that the Secretariat should review the list of proposed theme wordings and present options out of which the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives will make a proposal for further consideration by the meeting, on a no objection basis.
22. The meeting closed at 12.43pm.