

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Bureau Meeting  
Friday 3 March 2017, 8:30 am – 10:00 am  
Delegates Lounge  
United Nations Office in Nairobi

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

1. H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania, chaired the meeting, in which the following participated:

#### ***Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau members***

- H.E. Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana, Vice Chair, Africa Group;
- H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tara, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Vice Chair, Asia-Pacific Group
- H.E. Ms. Marcela M. Nicodemos, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Vice Chair, Group of Latin America and Caribbean States;
- Mr. Toni Sandell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland, Rapporteur, Western European and Other States Group

2. The UNEP Secretariat was represented by:

- Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme;
- Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, Director, Governance Affairs Office;
- Ms. Rosemary Mukasa, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies;

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting.

### **2. Agenda Item 2: Preparations for the Fourth Annual Sub-Committee Meeting**

#### ***2.1. Provisional Agenda for the Fourth Annual Sub-Committee Meeting***

3. The meeting endorsed the agenda for the Fourth Annual Subcommittee

#### ***2.2. Proposed organization of work and division of work***

4. The Chair emphasized that the Secretariat should share challenges, opportunities and experiences in the different sub programme and in the organization as requested by Member States. She asked if there would be representatives from different conventions whose work complimented that of UN Environment to enrich the dialogue.
5. The Deputy Executive Director confirmed that challenges and opportunities would be addressed in the Secretariat's presentation. He informed the meeting that staff members of UN Environment who worked on conventions would provide the necessary information and noted that the conventions had their own governing bodies.
6. It was agreed that during the meetings as a general practice, after each presentation, the Chair of the session would first give the floor to Regional and Political Groups. For the first intervention, they would be allowed a maximum of 5 minutes and all other representatives would be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes. On Secretariat presentations, the Deputy Executive Director said the floor should be given to the Secretariat, which would organize the presentations appropriately with the Division Director taking the lead on their respective topic areas.
7. A member of the meeting proposed that to enhance transparency and cooperation, the representative of the President of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly should participate as an ex-officio member in meetings of the Bureau Committee. The meeting supported the proposal and agreed that the Chair of the Committee Bureau should also participate as an ex-officio member meetings of the UN Environment Assembly. The Chair was to write a letter to the President of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau on this matter.
8. On the presentation on 'Resource Mobilization' a member suggested the addition of the word 'strategy.' The Deputy Executive Director clarified that word 'strategy' had been omitted because the resource mobilization strategy was yet to be finalized. The Secretariat would brief the meeting on elements of the strategy to allow Member States to provide insights on the matter.
9. The meeting requested an update on the status of funds raised for the third session of the UN Environment Assembly. The Deputy Executive Director responded that funds had been raised to cover the cost of servicing meetings but a gap remained in funding for the travel costs of participants from developing countries.
10. The Chair requested for information on level of participation of members from capitals and other duty stations. She also requested the Secretariat to provide the Chairs of each session with information on Go-To meeting participants attending the meeting virtually. On the number of participants from capitals expected to attend the 4th Annual Subcommittee, the Deputy Secretary informed the meeting that as of that morning, 29 representatives from 18 countries and the European Union had confirmed participation.

The Secretary assured the meeting that information on virtual participation would be provided to each Chair at the beginning of each session.

11. A member emphasized the need to engage the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly closely and proposed that he participate in the discussions on the High Level Political Forum by video conference if possible. The Secretary informed the meeting that the Chair of the Bureau had extended an invitation to the President of the Bureau, but unfortunately he was unable to personally attend the meeting. A statement would be delivered on his behalf by his representative, Amb. Marta Juarez.
12. The meeting agreed that in order not to confuse the meeting on the intent of the sub-item under agenda item 5, titled “Dialogue of the outline on the theme” the segment be renamed as “Consideration of the outline of the Executive Directors Report on the theme of the Assembly.”
13. The Secretary informed the meeting that the Secretariat would make available a week long ‘Suggested Chair’s Script’ for the 4th Annual Subcommittee meeting to all the Vice-Chair’s since they would each Chair at least one session during the week. A Chair’s summary would be prepared by the Secretariat at the end of each day. A summary on the comments from the High Level Political Forum would also be prepared by the Secretariat for endorsement by the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and then sent in form of a letter to the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly.
14. The Deputy Executive Director cautioned that on Wednesday 8 March 2017, the meeting could be disrupted if the Secretary-General of the United Nations visited the United Nations Office in Nairobi complex and held a town hall meeting with the staff. The visit was subject to confirmation. To help accommodate the unexpected development, the Chair would propose flexibility on timing at the opening of the meeting. The meeting requested the Secretariat to propose a short bilateral meeting between the Bureau and the Secretary General. A member proposed that the Town Hall meeting be held during lunch hour so as not to disrupt the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee meeting.

### ***2.3. Consideration of the wording of the theme for the Third Session of the UN Environment Assembly***

15. The Chair reminded the meeting that the Bureau needed to agree on the wording of the title of the theme for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly so that a proposal could be presented to the 4th Annual Subcommittee and thereafter considered by the Joint Bureau Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Environment Assembly to be held on 15 March 2017.

16. In its discussion on the wording, the meeting noted that :
- Member States did not support the wording ‘pollution free’ in an unqualified form;
  - Discussions on pollution at UN Environment Assembly would be a milestone that would build momentum in addressing pollution and not a destination;
  - Leadership by the Assembly on pollution will help strengthen its role as the leading global environmental authority;
  - Private sector concerns and sensitivities on how we frame the theme of pollution and;
  - An impression of utopian promises or commitments had to be avoided.
17. The Bureau unanimously agreed to recommend “Towards a Pollution Free Planet” as the title of the theme to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee Meeting and thereafter for submission to the joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly. The Deputy Executive Director informed the meeting that the Secretariat would circulate a note to Member States that day, on the Bureau’s recommendation on the title of the theme. He suggested that the Chair send a letter to the President of the Environment Assembly Bureau on the title of the theme of the third session of the Environment Assembly after the 4th Annual Subcommittee.

#### ***2.4. Consideration of priority areas of the Third Session of the UN Environment Assembly***

18. The Bureau agreed to recommend five general priority areas of the Third Session of the UN Environment Assembly below, deferring discussion on the sub-areas to a later date:
1. Water
  2. Air
  3. Marine Pollution
  4. Land
  5. Chemicals and Waste
19. A member pointed out to the meeting that transboundary issues as a sub-area might not be welcomed by a few Member States. The Deputy Executive Director, pointed out that from a scientific point of view, transboundary issues relating to areas like rivers, chemicals, sand and dust storms were important issues supported by assessments. They were discussed in the sub-programme presentation. Member States could have the political discussion on the matter.
20. Based on his experience, a member of the Bureau, cautioned that sensitive political issues could arise when issues of disasters and conflict were raised. The meeting briefly discussed the issue and agreed that the Chair in charge of the session and the Secretariat would need to proceed carefully and anticipate how to best handle them.

**3. Agenda Item 3: Date of the next meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives meeting.**

21. The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on Friday 10 March 2017 at 8:30.

**4. Agenda Item 4: Other Matters**

22. A member expressed concern on the issue of the change of name from United Nations Environment Programme to UN Environment, as well as the change of letterheads and the logo. He said more explanation to Member States was needed on how the Secretariat intended to take forward the process legally. The Bureau discussed the issue at length recalling the compromise on strengthening the Programme at Rio and the experience of other organizations like UN Women and UN-HABITAT. It requested the Secretariat to prepare an information note on the matter, including plans and legal options for further discussion during a future subcommittee meeting, at which the Executive Director should be present. The Deputy Executive Director noted the request from the Bureau and informed the meeting that the Secretariat would discuss the matter internally and revert to the Bureau on the way forward.

23. A member proposed that while no one was indispensable, consideration should be given to extending the term of the current Bureau members until after the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Chair informed the meeting that a letter would go out to all regional group Chairs after the 4th Annual Sub-Committee, inviting them to nominate candidates for the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives by May 2017 and each of the Regional Groups would respond as they saw fit.

24. The Chair requested the Secretariat to arrange a briefing on joint programs and between UN-Habitat and UN Environment.

25. The meeting ended at 10:10 am.