

**Summary of the second Joint Meeting of the bureaux of the UN Environment
Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme**

22 March 2017

On 22 March 2017, bureaux members of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme held a meeting via video.

The joint meeting allowed participants to address the following topics:

- (1) Outcome of the fourth Annual Sub-Committee meeting held in Nairobi from 6 to 9 March, 2017;
- (2) Structure of the Third Session of the UN Environment Assembly;
- (3) Process for developing an outcome for the ministerial segment of Assembly;
- (4) Update on the Global Dialogue on Oceans, and the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat to take place in Costa Rica from the 8 -10 June, 2017.

In its report, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, also informed the meeting of the address by Mr. António Guterres, United Nations Secretary General, on Wednesday 8 March 2017, to the Fourth Annual Sub-Committee, which further raised the visibility of the 2017 Environment Assembly and UN Environment.

This summary highlights the main joint decisions, discussions and action points, during the second meeting of the joint bureaux of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and of the UN Environment Assembly.

Main Joint Decisions:

- 1) Both bureaux will continue working together in preparation for the 2017 Environment Assembly and will hold a Second Preparatory Retreat 9-10 June 2017, in Costa Rica.
- 2) The negotiated wording of the theme of the Assembly: ***“Towards a Pollution Free Planet”*** was endorsed and adopted as the official theme of the 2017 Environment Assembly.
- 3) The proposal on the timeline for submissions of draft resolutions as contained in the Chair’s Summary of the Fourth Annual Subcommittee’s meeting was endorsed and adopted without prejudice to the Rules of Procedure (Annex 1 – Timelines for Submissions of Resolutions).
- 4) The table of required documentation for the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the 2017 Environment Assembly as amended through the Chair’s Summary of the Fourth Annual Subcommittee was endorsed (Annex 2 – List of DRAFT Official Working/ Information Documents).
- 5) It was agreed that the Committee of Permanent Representatives will continue to engage Member States in further deliberations on the structure of the 2017 Environment Assembly taking into account the views already expressed by Member States.
- 6) The President of the Assembly was encouraged to continue to lead early consultations aimed at developing in a timely manner a Ministerial Outcome Document linked to the theme of the Assembly. The Ministerial Outcome Document should be succinct, actionable, appealing and drafted in a language that is easy to understand.

Summary of discussions, including recommendations, following the agenda of the meeting:

Structure of the 2017 Environment Assembly

1. Participants requested the Secretariat to revise the proposed structure of the Environment Assembly taking into account a limit in the number of parallel sessions to two (2);
2. The Secretariat was requested to provide further clarifications on how the leadership dialogues will be carried out. Furthermore, the Secretariat was invited to share advance versions of the background report for the Assembly on the theme of pollution by June 2017;
3. Participants also welcomed the proposal to allocate sessions for ministers' to deliver their National Statements;
4. To create a positive momentum, a call was made for resolutions as concluded during the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to be submitted for adoption during the first day of the Assembly.
5. The meeting requested the Secretariat to prepare scenarios for the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and for work during the inter-sessional period. They emphasised the need for good coordination and continuity between chairs of inter-sessional and sessional bodies.

Agenda 4: Update on the outcomes of the Third Session of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

Ministerial Outcome of the Third Session of Environment Assembly

6. The President highlighted in his remarks to the bureaux that a majority of Member States were supportive of the idea that the 2017 Environment Assembly concludes with a Ministerial Outcome in addition to a President's Summary in line with the recommendations of the Environment Assembly Preparatory Retreat held in October 2016.
7. The President expressed his hope that the Ministerial Outcome will reflect, in a balanced manner, the need to take action to address the challenges posed by the most pervasive forms of pollution.
8. The President called on the joint bureaux to engage, guide, and support Member States and regional and political groups, to provide inputs. He shared his vision by articulating his preferred timeline, which highlighted the following initial milestones:
 - (a) *April 2017*: Issue letter confirming the details of the Ministerial Outcome Document consultation process to all Member States for their consideration, comments and inputs;
 - (b) *By early June 2017*: Share the outline of the Ministerial Outcome Document for review and comments, in readiness for further discussions during the second Preparatory Retreat of the joint bureaux in Costa Rica (9-10 June, 2017);
 - (c) *By late June 2017*: Circulate the Zero Draft of the Ministerial Outcome for comments and further inputs by regional conferences, member states, and all other stakeholders;
 - (d) The President reiterated his intention to conclude consultations before the opening of the 2017 Environment Assembly.
9. While most members welcomed the process outlined by the President and gave some specific suggestions, two bureau members expressed their continued reservations on the negotiation aspects of this process. One participant requested the President to meet with the Group of 77 and China, while in New York during the High Level Political Forum in July, so as to increase the visibility of the Third UN Environment Assembly.

Resolutions of the 2017 Environment Assembly

10. Due to the limited time for the Third Session of the Environment Assembly, the meeting called for a limited number of impactful resolutions, cautioning that though there should be fewer resolutions in number, their lengths should also not be too long to avoid 'omnibus endorsements'.
11. Advance submission of resolutions was strongly encouraged by all participants, though according to the Rules of Procedure, a Member State retains its right to submit a proposal for consideration. Participants noted that last minute submissions may deny Member States the opportunity to undertake fruitful negotiations in light of the limited duration of the Environment Assembly.
12. In keeping with the agreement reached out during the first preparatory retreat held in October 2016 in Nairobi, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives will send out a letter to the Member States outlining the timelines for submissions of Resolutions.
13. Further, the Secretariat was invited to engage non-Nairobi based member states in meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and to set up an electronic platform to support negotiations and allow non-Nairobi based Members to follow up the negotiations of resolutions.

Agenda 5: Update on the Dialogue on Oceans and the UN Environment Assembly preparatory retreat to be held from 8-10 June 2017 in Costa Rica

14. The President informed the meeting of his commitment to make the UN Environment Assembly more visible in the international agenda.
15. In this context he informed participants that the Government of Costa Rica will host between the 7th and the 10th of June, 2017, a number of activities, engaging stakeholders at different levels, in support of the 2017 Environment Assembly. The planned events include:
 - a) Celebration of the World Oceans Day (8 June 2017);
 - b) Global Dialogue for engaging the private sector on protecting oceans and tackling land-based pollution (8-9 June 2017) - which shall bring together senior policy-makers from different ministries and leaders of the private sector to discuss how global and regional communities can partner to create policies and practices that ensure sustainability thrives;
 - c) Regional consultative Civil Society Meeting (7-8 June 2017) - this consultation shall bring together regional and local civil society organizations engaged in work relevant to UN Environment Assembly's theme of pollution with a special focus on oceans to provide inputs and feedback to the final draft of the Third UN Environment Assembly's background document on pollution;
 - d) Second Environment Assembly preparatory retreat (9-10 June 2017), which will bring together the members of the bureaux of the Assembly, of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and representatives from the regional and political groups to finalize preparations of the Assembly.

Agenda 6: Other Matters

16. A participant requested the Secretariat to ensure sufficient attention devoted to the production of the yet to be released Global Environmental Outlook report (GEO6)

17. The following meetings were brought to the attention of participants:

- a) Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West, Central and Southern Africa Region (Abidjan Convention) will be held 27-31 March 2017, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire;
- b) Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health will be held 13-15 June 2017, Ostrava, Czech Republic. It was noted that an informal consultation on the Third Session of the Environment Assembly shall be held during this meeting;
- c) African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) is scheduled for 12 - 16 June 2017 in Libreville, Gabon.

18. Members of the bureaux were requested to attend the above mentioned meetings so as to further raise the profile and visibility of the Third Session of Environment Assembly.