



**United Nations Environment  
Assembly of the United Nations  
Environment Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the  
United Nations Environment Programme  
138th meeting**  
Nairobi, 10 March 2017

**Draft minutes of the 137th meeting of the Committee of  
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment  
Programme, held on 16 January 2017**

**Agenda item 1**

**Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 10.10 a.m. on Monday, 16 January 2017, by Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.
2. The meeting was attended by 84 participants representing 58 members, 5 participants representing 2 observers, 1 other entity and 13 non-governmental organizations. The representative of Montenegro participated via videolink.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Antoine Sivan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Ms. Angela Loi, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy; Mr. Toshitsugu Uesawa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan; Mr. Nakari Mwanamvekha, Deputy High Commissioner and Permanent Representative and Charge d'Affaires of Malawi; Mr. El Mokhtar Ghambou, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco; Ms. Ana Maria Fanny Ruiz Aranbar, Honorary Consul of Peru and Special Liaison to UNEP; Mr. Chulpathmendra Dahanayake, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; and Ms. Lori Peterson Dando, Permanent Representative of the United States of America.
4. She bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Rémi Maréchaux, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Mr. Andrea Marino, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy; Mr. Tatsushi Terada, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan; Mr. Perks M. Ligoya, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Malawi; Mr. Abdelilah Benryane, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Morocco; Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Al Abdulla, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar; Mr. Vadivel Krishnamoorthy, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka; and Ms. Kemilembe Salome Mutasa, UNEP Focal Point of the United Republic of Tanzania.

**Agenda item 2**

**Adoption of the agenda**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/137/1).

### **Agenda item 3**

#### **Adoption of the draft minutes of the previous meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 136th meeting, held on 29 September 2016, on the basis of the draft minutes (UNEP/CPR/137/2).

### **Agenda item 4**

#### **Report of the Executive Director**

7. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Erik Solheim, drew attention to a number of activities undertaken by UNEP, as well as developments of significance to the Programme, since the previous meeting of the Committee. He subsequently drew attention to his written report, entitled “Executive Director’s update to the Committee of Permanent Representatives”, noting that it would be made available on the dedicated portal of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

8. With regard to recent developments, he welcomed the appointment of Mr. Antonio Guterres as Secretary-General of the United Nations, saying that UNEP would do its utmost to assist him, with a particular emphasis on supporting his management reforms and his efforts to protect the environment through preventive diplomacy and post-conflict clean-up and reconstruction. With regard to the latter, he said that the President of Colombia had asked the secretariat to play a role in the reconstruction of the country following the adoption of the peace accord between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

9. Another significant event had been the adoption of agreements with various United Nations entities establishing joint initiatives, including with the Director-General of the World Health Organization to implement a support system for Governments to adopt policies to combat pollution, which, he said, was a pressing environmental and health concern and a leading cause of mortality worldwide; and with the Executive Secretary of the United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change to support Governments in implementing the Paris Agreement on climate change. Calling on Member States to support such initiatives, he said that UNEP had recently signed a memorandum of understanding in Jakarta with the Centre for International Forestry Research, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Project Services, to support the establishment of the Tropical Landscapes Finance Facility, aimed at facilitating the access of small-scale farmers in Indonesia to financing so that they could pursue more sustainable livelihoods and thus move away from activities that contributed to the destruction of forest ecosystems.

10. With regard to other global developments, he said that major environmental policy changes had been introduced in China to address the high levels of pollution in the country’s cities and to ban the ivory trade by the end of 2017, both of which were expected to have a significant global impact. During his visit to China, he had attended the 2016 annual general meeting of the China Council for International Cooperation on Environment and Development, held in Beijing from 7 to 9 December 2016, and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Ministry of Environmental Protection aimed at enhancing international cooperation in the context of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road initiative.

11. Regarding the recent elections that had been held in the United States of America, he said that UNEP would engage fully with the new Government.

12. Since the previous meeting, he said that he had attended several international conferences, including the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, held in Kigali from 10 to 15 October 2016, during which parties had signed a historic legally binding agreement to reduce emissions of hydrofluorocarbons – powerful greenhouse gases; the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016, during which mayors and city administrations worldwide had been called on to establish best practices to tackle common environmental issues, such as waste and water management, traffic regulation and sustainable public transport systems and air pollution; the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Marrakech, Morocco, from 7 to 18 November 2016, prior to which UNEP had launched the *Emissions Gap Report 2016*; and the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancun, Mexico, from 2 to 17 December 2016.

13. Other activities included the participation in the continuing clean-up of Versova Beach in Mumbai, India, and the World Sustainable Development Summit 2016 in New Delhi with a view to stepping up UNEP engagement in South Asia; and his official visit to Brussels for a series of high-level events with the Environment Council and the European Commission, during which high-level representatives from the development, humanitarian, environment and external service directorates had met to discuss a variety of environmental issues.
14. With respect to the consultations that had been held in Nairobi on 27 and 28 October 2016 for representatives of the UNEP regional and subregional offices to determine how stronger links could be forged globally between UNEP and the private sector, he said that information on agreements in that regard would be made available on the UNEP website.
15. Turning to the preparations for the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, he said that, by making pollution one of the themes of the session, Member States had expressed their commitment to putting the issue at the centre of the global agenda. In that regard, with a view to increasing global awareness and mobilizing private sector entities, the Sixth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health would be held in Ostrava, Czechia, while a meeting of African health and environment ministers would be hosted by Côte d'Ivoire in Abidjan from 19 to 22 June 2017. With regard to ocean pollution, a campaign on marine litter would be launched in Bali, Indonesia, in February 2017, with the aim of assisting Governments in regulating markets to avoid plastic reaching the oceans; working with the private sector to establish a new plastics economy based on recycling, regeneration and reuse; and encouraging citizens to collect plastic from beaches.
16. Noting that 40 States had ratified the Minamata Convention on Mercury, he said that the Convention was expected to enter into force in early 2017 once it had been ratified by 50 States.
17. Turning to administrative matters, he reiterated the need to simplify the language used by the UN Environment Programme, avoiding the use of acronyms and referring to the Programme as "UN Environment" without prejudice to the official designation of the Programme which is not expected to change. He indicated that in the future "UN Environment" will be used instead of the acronym UNEP and the Secretariat will continue to use the complete designation of the Programme in its formal communications followed by the use of "UN Environment" for the avoidance of doubt. He introduced his new Chief of Staff, Ms. Anne Le More, and four special assistants whose work would be devoted to issues concerning East Asia and the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America, Europe and North America, and Africa, respectively.
18. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the Executive Director for his oral briefing and written update.
19. The representative of China commended the Executive Director's efforts to strengthen cooperation between UNEP and China. He expressed the hope that Mr. Solheim's leadership would help to deepen cooperation between China and UNEP and drive the sustainable development process globally.
20. One representative welcomed the work undertaken by UNEP towards the adoption of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, which was aimed at reducing the emissions of hydrofluorocarbons and preventing up to 0.5°C of global warming by the end of the twenty-first century. He also commended the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint, jointly led by UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO), thanks to which 1.2 million people had learned about the dangers of lead in paint, and he encouraged UNEP to continue its work in that regard.
21. With respect to the draft programme of work and budget, several representatives expressed the hope that regular updates would be provided to the Committee. Another expressed concern about the status of the funding for the third session of the Environment Assembly and opposed the use in that regard of reserve funding or of funds that would otherwise be deployed programmatically. Encouraging the Executive Director to seek funding and cost controls to close the funding gap, he noted that holding two sessions of the Environment Assembly in one financial cycle was a burden that Member States had placed on UNEP; it was therefore the responsibility of Member States to provide extra budgetary resources and establish cost controls. Another representative noted that the figures for 2016 indicated that less revenue had been received than had been projected given that only a fraction of Member States had pledged and contributed to the Environment Fund, which did not correspond to the expected broadening of the donor base.
22. Expressing appreciation for the continued dedication of UNEP to private sector outreach and to increasing the visibility of the organization, making it more relevant and accessible to all, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that they were looking forward to the expansion of such efforts and asked that the results thereof be shared with the

Committee. Expressing the hope that greater efforts would be made to make the third session of the Environment Assembly more visible, one representative said that he looked forward to the strengthening of collaboration between UNEP and WHO and to receiving information on the progress being made on the sixth edition of the UNEP flagship *Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6)* assessment.

23. The representative of Indonesia thanked the Executive Director for his official visit to his country and for showing the support of UNEP to the Tropical Landscapes Finance Facility, which he said had the potential to transform the lives and livelihoods of millions of Indonesians in rural areas and drive renewable energy production and reforestation. Commending the selection of pollution as the theme of the third session of the Environment Assembly, he noted that his Government had taken important steps towards reducing air and ocean pollution, recently issuing a moratorium on the conversion of peatlands, which would significantly contribute to fire prevention and to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions while restoring two million hectares of degraded and burned peatlands.

24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed the hope that in 2017 the Committee would build on the successes of and lessons learned from the second session of the Environment Assembly, saying that he was looking forward to an even more successful third session. Commending the high level of cooperation between Member States, the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly and the secretariat of UNEP, he expressed the hope that such constructive cooperation would continue.

25. With regard to the changes that had recently been made to the organizational chart of UNEP, several representatives expressed regret that Member States had not been informed before such changes came into effect. One representative requested that the secretariat of UNEP provide a note verbale to Member States on such changes and on the proposal to simplify the language used by UNEP, including by avoiding the use of acronyms, while another expressed concern regarding the replacement of the term “major groups and stakeholders” with “civil society”, which, he suggested, might exclude certain major groups.

26. The representative of France said that his Government would continue to provide a good level of funding to UNEP in accordance with the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, including for the inclusive implementation of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

27. The representative of Norway said that his country held the presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers for the Environment, which was aimed at strengthening the Nordic region’s ability to embrace opportunities and to meet challenges in a climate- and environmentally friendly manner, and that UNEP was a key partner in that endeavour. He commended the progress that had been made with regard to issues that were of particular concern to the region, such as initiatives related to environmental crime, including illegal trade in wildlife and hazardous chemicals and waste. Noting that marine litter and microplastics were another issue of concern, he commended the upcoming launch by UNEP of the global campaign on marine litter in February 2017 and of the air quality monitoring and assessment initiative by UNEP, WHO and the World Meteorological Organization.

28. The representative of Iraq said that the conflict in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic had led to severe environmental degradation, which had greatly affected the lives of civilians in those countries. He said that his Government would appreciate assistance from UNEP to help civilians in areas liberated from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to return to their cities.

29. The Executive Director thanked members for their comments. With regard to private sector engagement efforts, he said that the secretariat was looking into forging platform-based partnerships with companies and determining how their technological and environmental knowledge, capacity and resources could be utilized efficiently.

30. Turning to financial matters, he strongly encouraged Member States to provide contributions for the third session of the Environment Assembly and to the Environment Fund, emphasizing that efforts to reach out to the private sector and foundations would continue, as would work with the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility to determine ways in which funds could be mobilized for UNEP programmes.

31. Regarding coral reefs, he agreed that their conservation was of the utmost importance and would be a priority for UNEP. On peatlands, he commended the decision of the President of Indonesia to extend the moratorium on new palm oil plantations and said that it was critical to protect peatlands given the devastating consequences of their destruction on the environment, biodiversity and health.

32. In response to the concerns expressed on conflict situations, the Executive Director said that, although UNEP would not be the main actor in a post-conflict situation, it could provide environmental clean-up and restoration support in collaboration with other actors.
33. With regard to the changes that had been made to the UNEP organizational chart, he said that changes were limited to minor restructuring of the Executive Office to make it more effective and that staff members had been recruited in line with geographical distribution requirements.
34. Concerning the visibility of UNEP, he encouraged Member States to inform the secretariat of their environmental successes, such as the law that had recently been adopted in the United Arab Emirates that banned dealing in and private ownership of wild animals, and the decision by several airline companies to prohibit shark fin cargo. He also noted that work was under way to increase the presence of UNEP on social media, as well as in the traditional media.

## **Agenda item 5**

### **Report of the subcommittee**

35. Introducing the item, the Chair noted that since the 136th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 29 September 2016, eight subcommittee meetings had been held as well as three meetings of the informal open-ended working group established by the Committee on 29 September 2016 and one briefing by the secretariat to the Committee. Referring to the document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/137/5), she said that the Committee of Permanent Representatives, at its extraordinary meeting held on 5 December 2016, had endorsed the consensus reached by the subcommittee at its meeting on 29 November 2016 on the theme of pollution for the third session of the Environment Assembly, demonstrating the determination of Member States to ensure the success of the third session of the Environment Assembly. At the subcommittee meeting on 29 November 2016, Member States had been requested to submit additional inputs on framing the theme, the types of outcomes to be expected and the wording of the title by 12 January 2017. The first outline of the draft report on the theme would be prepared by the Executive Director and discussed during the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
36. During the subcommittee meeting on the implementation of the programme of work and budget, held on 13 October 2016, Member States who had not yet done so had been encouraged to contribute to the Environment Fund and to help to offset the current deficit through financial contribution for the third session of the Environment Assembly. In the discussions on marine and coastal ecosystems at its meeting held on 8 December 2016, the subcommittee had agreed on the need to establish a “friends of oceans group” to monitor ocean and marine-related programmes and to look at possible outcomes related to oceans at the third session.
37. The three meetings of the informal open-ended working group had been held on 25 October, 10 November and 6 December 2016 with discussions focusing on: modalities for the operation of the group; preparations for the meeting of the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly, held on 27 and 28 October 2016; documentation, translation and interpretation; and the structure and agenda of the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to be held from 6 to 9 March 2017. She thanked all the members of the Committee for their hard work and active contributions during the period.

## **Agenda item 6**

### **Preparations for the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

38. The Chair said that the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee would be held in Nairobi from 6 to 9 March 2017, and would be followed by the 138th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 10 March 2017. The agenda of the meeting would focus on programme performance, including resource management and updates concerning the enterprise resource planning system, Umoja, and the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its second session; contributions of the Environment Assembly to the 2017 annual meeting of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development; and preparations for the third session of the Environment Assembly. A note would be issued by the secretariat summarizing the discussions relating to the High-level Political Forum, which would be transmitted to the President of the Environment Assembly for inclusion in his presentation to the 2017 annual meeting of the Forum. The outcomes of the meeting would be endorsed by the Committee at its 138th session on 10 March.

39. The theme of the third session of the Environment Assembly would be discussed during the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee and a first draft outline of the report of the Executive Director on the theme of the third session and possible key recommendations would be available by mid-February.
40. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to propose actions to close identified gaps between planned and actual programme performance, and to provide feedback on political guidance for improved implementation of the resolutions to be adopted at the third session of the Environment Assembly. Concerning the budget, he asked the secretariat to present its ongoing work on resource mobilization and the progress made in the development of the resource mobilization strategy, and to provide background information on programme and project activities and financial figures for reference purposes.
41. With regard to discussions on the Environment Assembly's input to the 2017 annual meeting of the High-level Political Forum, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that such input should demonstrate the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in an integrated manner, as well as the role of the Environment Assembly in advancing the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to provide an assessment of the progress made in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including on the status of United Nations system-wide environmental strategies, and requested the inclusion of a discussion on the role of ministers in the Environment Assembly session as well as preparations for the session in the agenda of the third session. He said that it was important to clarify, well in advance of the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee, matters to be decided upon and the status of discussions in the lead up to the third session of the Environment Assembly.
42. One representative said that the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee should focus on oversight, programme performance and the implementation of resolutions, rather than becoming a negotiation session, noting that the annual subcommittee meeting afforded members of the Committee an opportunity to gain greater insight into the UNEP programme of work.
43. Responding to the comments, the Chair said that the secretariat was preparing a note on ways in which Member States and regional groupings could contribute to the 2017 annual meeting of the High-level Political Forum.
44. The Committee approved the structure of the fourth annual meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

## **Agenda item 7**

### **Other matters**

45. The Chair noted that the Group of Friends of the United Nations Environment Assembly was targeting non-resident Member States to assist in enhancing the visibility of the Environment Assembly.
46. Responding to a request from the Chair for further information on the mandate of the UNEP Legal Adviser within the secretariat, the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP said that the aim was for the Legal Adviser to deal with governance issues, including overseeing the proceedings of sessions of the Environment Assembly and providing legal advice to the conferences of the parties to multilateral environmental agreements and other institutions supported by UNEP. The UNEP Legal Adviser, who normally worked at the New York office, would be in Nairobi for a one-year period beginning in April 2017.
47. The representative of the Holy See welcomed the Executive Director to Nairobi and commended his plans to speak more directly to citizens globally in support of the environment.

## **Agenda item 8**

### **Closure of the meeting**

48. The meeting was declared closed at noon on Monday, 16 January 2017.
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