

11 June 2017

**Summary of the 2017 Environment Assembly
Second Preparatory Retreat**

**Joint meeting of the bureaux of the UN
Environment Assembly and the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the
UN Environment Programme**

9 -10 June, 2017, Puntarenas, Costa Rica

On 9 and 10 June 2017, members of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme came together in Puntarenas, Costa Rica, for their second joint preparatory retreat.

The meeting allowed participants to take stock on the status of the preparations for the Environment Assembly and to take decisions and recommendations aimed towards its successful organization.

The meeting was co-chaired by the President of the UN Environment Assembly, Dr. Edgar Gutierrez-Espeleta of Costa Rica, and the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador Julia Pataki of Romania. In attendance were also representatives from Permanent Missions based in Nairobi as set out in the participants list.

Participants expressed appreciation to the Government of Costa Rica as host of the joint preparatory retreat and commended the leadership of the Government of Costa Rica for the organization of the Global Dialogue Oceans which was attended by H.E. Luis Guillermo Solís. Participants underscored that the Global Dialogue Oceans provided contributions to help address the pollution of the Oceans in line with the theme of the Assembly and the outcomes of the UN Conference on Oceans.

The Preparatory Retreat allowed participants to address six broad

topics critical to the success of the 2017 Environment Assembly:

1. Stocktaking on the 2017 UN Environment Assembly preparations;
2. Preparations for the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives;
3. Private Sector Engagement in the UN Environment Assembly;
4. Main recommendations from the Background Document on Pollution;
5. Consultations on the outline for the ministerial declaration
6. Visibility of the UN Environment Assembly

This document summarizes the main joint decisions, recommendations and discussions of the meeting.

Summary of main conclusions:

1. The meeting agreed to recommend that the Assembly holds four leadership dialogues under the following themes: (1) Science, evidence and citizens awareness for change; (2) Regulatory frameworks, institutions and the rule of law to address pollution; (3) practical solutions for a pollution-free planet; (4) Financing and innovation to combat pollution.
2. The bureaux agreed to recommend to Member States to endorse these proposed themes at the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to be held on June 19th on a non-objection basis.
3. The meeting agreed to reaffirm the timelines set out in the outcome of the fourth annual subcommittee of the CPR for the submission of draft resolutions, and emphasized that draft resolutions should be limited in number, linked to the theme of the Assembly (Towards a pollution-free planet) and drafted in succinct and simple language while addressing issues of global concern.
4. The Secretariat was requested to refine the selection criteria and launch as soon as possible the call for proposals for side events.
5. Participants agreed to request the Secretariat to send a letter to all regional groups encouraging them to undertake early consultations on the possible chair or co-chair of the Committee

of the Whole and to consider the matter at their next joint meeting.

6. The meeting requested the Executive Director to submit to Member States by June 26, an advanced version of the Report for the 2017 Environment Assembly for information purpose. It was expected that the conclusions contained in the advanced report should not be changed substantially.
7. The meeting agreed that the structure of the outline for the ministerial declaration represents a good basis of the zero draft to be released on the 30 of June and welcomed the transparency and inclusive approach taken by the President of the Assembly in developing a declaration as the main outcome of the Assembly.
8. Participants expressed commitment towards raising the profile of the Assembly in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development building on the standing invitation by the General Assembly for the President of the Assembly to address in such capacity the Forum.
9. Participants appreciated Secretariat's efforts to collect commitments from Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and Private Sector Organizations and requested to be briefed at its next meeting and to update the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Stocktaking on the 2017 UN Environment Assembly preparations

(a) Organization of the Leadership Dialogues

- The participants appreciated the process of consultations on the themes and organization of the Leadership Dialogues to be held during the high-level segment of the 2017 Environment Assembly.
- The meeting agreed to recommend that the Assembly holds four leadership dialogues under the following themes: (1) Science, evidence and citizens awareness for change; (2) Regulatory frameworks, institutions and the rule of law to address pollution; (3) practical solutions for a pollution-free planet; (4) Financing and innovation to combat pollution.
- The bureaux agreed to recommend to Member States to endorse these proposed themes at the 139th meeting of the Committee of

Permanent Representatives to be held on June 19th on a non-objection basis as set out in the Annex to this Summary.

- The Secretariat was also requested to provide more information on the organizational arrangements of the Leadership Dialogues underscoring the critical importance of maximizing the number of interventions and of connect the dialogues with other outcomes of the Assembly.

(b) Timelines for Resolutions for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

- The meeting agreed to reaffirm the timelines set out in the outcome of the fourth annual subcommittee of the CPR for the submission of draft resolutions, and emphasized that draft resolutions should be limited in number, linked to the theme of the Assembly (Towards a pollution-free planet) and the five most pervasive forms of pollution, and drafted in succinct and simple language while addressing issues of global concern.
- The participants also recommended that the Committee of Permanent Representatives should take the process forward for organizing the draft resolutions, taking into account option to cluster draft resolutions.
- The meeting agreed that the third meeting of the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives will be the main platform to finalize the resolutions towards the Assembly as well as the Declaration, taking into account the interests of all Member States.
- The Secretariat was requested activate a virtual platform for consultation of draft resolutions and to compile a list of possible procedural resolutions and submit for information of the next joint bureaux meeting. The platform should include the information on the zero draft of the Declaration and promote continuous information of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

(c) Update on Side Events

- The Secretariat was requested to launch as soon as possible the

call for proposals for side events. The Secretariat was requested to refine the selection criteria and to conduct a transparent selection process given the limited number of side events. The meeting also requested the Secretariat to refine the suggested cross cutting themes as a helpful non-prescriptive guide to the election process.

- Regarding the Media Events, the Secretariat was requested to draft a note on these events of the Assembly for the information of Member States.

(d) Funding Status on the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

- Participants recognized efforts made by many countries, developed and developing alike, to contribute to funding the shortfall of the 2017 Environment Assembly and encouraged all countries to help close the funding gap. Also, the Secretariat was urged to give due priority to supporting least-developed countries.

(e) Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum

- Participants took note of the Note provided by the Secretariat and enquired further on the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and on the possible organization of a Science Policy-Forum.

(f) Preparations for the Third meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Committee of the Whole of the Environment Assembly

- Participants appreciated the advanced information provided by the Secretariat concerning the draft provisional agendas and organization of work for the third meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Committee of the Whole of the Environment Assembly, and requested the Secretariat to amend these as set out in the Annex to this summary.
- Participants agreed that the amended draft provisional agenda of the third meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives should be further considered by the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives before its endorsement no later than the 140th meeting of the Committee.

- On the organization of the Committee of the Whole, the meeting requested the Secretariat to amend the draft proposed Agenda and Structure as set out in the Annex to this summary for further consideration. It was highlighted that the organization of the Committee of the Whole, including the need of its establishment, shall be dependent on the outcomes of the third meeting of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- Participants reaffirmed their conclusions regarding the early selection and appointment of chairs of the Committee of the Whole, sessional working groups, if needed, and their early involvement in the preparatory work in the inter-sessional period by the bureau of the Assembly and the Committee in order to promote greater transparency and inclusiveness as set out in the summary of their first joint preparatory retreat held on the 27 – 28 October, 2016, in Nairobi, Kenya.
- Participants agreed to request the Secretariat to send a letter to all regional groups encouraging them to undertake early consultations on the possible chair or co-chair of the Committee of the Whole and to consider the matter at their next joint meeting in September.

Private Sector Engagement in the UN Environment Assembly

- Participants recognized the importance of scaling-up the engagement of the private sector in the UN Environment Assembly including in the implementation of its outcomes. While progress had been achieved with the organization of the Sustainable Innovation Expo, organized in May 2016 in the margins of the Assembly, several participants encouraged the meeting to go beyond in terms of engagement.
- Participants noted the ongoing activities to engage the private sector in the lead up to the Assembly and encouraged the Secretariat to be more proactive towards including business from representing all regions of the world and stages of development. To achieve meaningful change in terms of a global agenda to address pollution the engagement and partnership of specific companies and business organizations which are not accredited to the UN Environment Assembly will be required.

- With regards to the proposal to organize an Innovation and Technology Hub (or Sustainable Innovation Hub), as set out in the note by the Secretariat, participants acknowledged the costs associated and cautioned against using resources allocated to the Assembly. Furthermore, participants debated on the value-added to the proposed hub and underscored that its organization should not affect the meetings of the Assembly.
- The joint bureaux took note of the submission by the Major Group of Business and Industry on “Engaging the Business and Industry Major Group: a Business Coalition Update” and agreed to consider the matter further at its next meeting and request the Secretariat to extend an invitation a representative of the Group to make a presentation.

Main recommendations from the Background Document on Pollution

- The meeting requested the Executive Director to submit to Member States by June 26, an advanced version of the Report for the 2017 Environment Assembly for information purpose. It was expected that the conclusions contained in the advanced report should not be changed substantially.
- The participants considered that the report should be relevant while avoid being prescriptive. It should also draw from recommendations made in other relevant international assessments. The Secretariat was also encouraged to circulate in timely manner an Information Document on the sixth Global Environment Outlook as prepared by its High-Level Group.
- Participants encouraged the Secretariat to include robust set of transformative actions by all actors to support the preparation of the outcomes of the Assembly such as the Declaration, resolution and voluntary commitments.
- With regards to the definition of a “pollution-free planet”, the Secretariat was requested to reconsider in favor of a definition that is more realistic and focused on the changes required to address pollution. Furthermore, principles identified in the Report must be relevant, integrative and universal and could be used as a basis to define further actions.

Consultations on the outline for the ministerial declaration

- Participants welcomed the transparency and inclusive approach taken by the President of the Assembly in developing a ministerial declaration as the main outcome of the Assembly. The meeting also agreed that the structure of the outline for the declaration represents a good basis of the zero draft to be released on the 30 of June.
- Participants agreed that the declaration must be a short, global document connected to the other outputs of the Assembly and should include actions that make a difference in everyday people's lives.
- The meeting encouraged the President of the Assembly to strike a balance between a global, action-oriented document owned by all, with respect for national processes and non-binding commitments.
- The Secretariat was asked to actively raise awareness of the Declaration with non-resident member states and was requested to draft a one page document on principles of working towards adoption of a Declaration for Bureau members in order to explain the process for adoption.
- Some participants suggested that thought be given to a Chairs summary as contingent and to consider calling the document 'Negotiated Outcome' instead of Ministerial Declaration.

Visibility of the UN Environment Assembly

- Participants expressed commitment towards raising the profile of the Assembly in the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development building on the standing invitation by the General Assembly for the President of the Assembly to address in such capacity the Forum.
- The forthcoming session of the High-Level Political Forum will provide an opportunity to continue to raise the profile of the Assembly, and noted the importance of the role of the President, as the face of the Environment Assembly, the only other

universal body representing all member states.

- The idea of a long-term programme of action to address pollution was introduced by participants as a potential partnership that could result of the Assembly with the potential to impact the broader UN system and other international processes. To this end, the Secretariat was requested to assist in a note for consideration of the next joint meeting.
- Participants appreciated the Communications Strategy for the 2017 Environment Assembly as presented by the Director of the Communications Division.
- Participants appreciated Secretariat's efforts to collect commitments from Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations and Private Sector Organizations and requested to be briefed at its next meeting and to update the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Specific interest was expressed on the revised template as well as the process for collecting, validating, analyzing, aggregating and publishing voluntary commitments. Participants also expressed interest on the process to follow-up on such voluntary commitments.
- In addition, a citizen-led social media campaign (Clean Planet Charter/Peoples' Pledge) was welcomed by participants as a revolutionary tool to make the Assembly relevant for everyday people's lives. Participants provided useful guidance to the Secretariat on how to improve this campaign.

Closing and date for the next meeting

- The meeting agreed to convene the next joint bureaux meeting in September via video-conference and requested the Secretariat to identify a suitable date.