

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Sub-Committee Meeting
Thursday 6 July 2017
9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.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. Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana, welcomed members to the meeting. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries requested the inclusion of an agenda item on the use of “UN Environment.”
2. The meeting adopted the agenda as amended.

Agenda Item 2: Preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

(a) Preparation of draft resolutions

3. The Chair invited the delegation of the United States to present its draft resolution on “Eliminating Exposure to Lead Paint”, thanking the delegation for its flexibility in terms of rescheduling their presentation.
4. The representative of the United States drew attention to huge impacts caused by lead paint, particularly on brain development and the loss of children’s Intelligence Quotient (IQ). He noted that 70% of the world is still yet to have lead paint laws. He provided the following highlights of the proposed draft resolution:
 - 1) Need to focus on impacts of lead paint on children, in particular IQ loss, brain damage, learning disabilities and other negative health impacts associated with lead;
 - 2) Underscored the fact that alternatives to lead paint do exist and efforts from both developed and developing countries to eliminate lead paint by establishing lead paint laws are realistic.
 - 3) Efforts and momentum towards elimination of lead paint include: a) the World Bank report on the dangers of lead; b) proposed laws on lead paints by the American Bar Association; c) the global alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (Lead Paint Alliance) with model laws and guidance notes; d) proposal for UN Environment Programme and the World Health Organization to support developing countries to develop lead paint laws.

- 4) This proposed draft resolution could be considered as part of the initial actions to eliminate lead paint.

Following the presentation by the United States delegation, the Chair acknowledged comments received from Cuba on the draft resolution. Further to the presentation, the U.S. delegation expressed its intention to submit a concise resolution on water quality. It informed the meeting that the proposed draft resolution had already been shared with interested members, who were considering the possibility of co-sponsoring it.

5. In noting this intention to submit draft resolution, the Chair reminded members about the timelines agreed to for timely processing of draft resolutions in good time for the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.
6. In the discussion that followed, a member stressed the need for the adoption of legislation by 2020, considering best ways to address lead paint and required actions at national level. The member further suggested recommendations on the draft resolution to include: i) focus on joint responsibilities of industries; ii) focus on links to sound management of chemicals and waste as a cross-cutting issue and other dimensions such as climate change and biodiversity loss; iii) established links to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) on lead paint; and iv) developed relations to long-term chemicals and waste policy as well as Resolution 1/5 Chemicals and Waste.
7. The meeting requested that specific reference to the World Bank Report, indicated in the draft resolution should be provided. It was also suggested that the draft reflect regulations, rules, laws and policy in the proposed resolution because not all countries would immediately adopt the laws to ban lead paint. Additional information on which countries would need assistance from the Lead Paint Alliance was also necessary.
8. A member highlighted current efforts to eliminate lead paint as part of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (Lead Paint Alliance). Comments by Cuba on ways and means for resource mobilization and technology transfer were supported.
9. A representative of Major Groups and Stakeholders shared comments on the draft resolution. He highlighted findings of the report by Centre for Environment Justice and Development (CEJAD) and the International Positive Education Network (IPEN) on the negative impact of high lead level, including the insidious effects of other heavy metals. He encouraged Member States to support the proposed draft resolution in terms of protecting human health and promoting urgent actions on banning lead paint.
10. In conclusion, the Chair encouraged interested member States to continue working for the submission of draft resolutions and reminded members to send written comments on this resolution to the Secretariat.

11. Speaking on behalf of the African Group, a member expressed its intention to submit draft resolutions on the following areas: i) water quality; ii) innovative environmental solutions; iii) soil and land pollution; and iv) air pollution with a special focus on indoor pollution. Another member, speaking on behalf of the European Union, expressed interest in proposing a draft resolution on health and environment by the deadline of 15 July 2017. The member also expressed interest in other areas such as soil pollution, air pollution and marine pollution, indicating the possibility of working with other interested members.
12. In response to the questions on the consultation process for resolutions, the Secretariat informed the meeting that the process was likely to begin September and it would come back to member States with a detailed roadmap. On when the draft resolution on marine litter and micro-plastics would be presented, the Secretariat said it would be after an actual draft was received. On the resolutions platform, the meeting was informed that it would be ready in testing mode on 10 July 2017 and more information would be provided under other matters. The Chair confirmed that more information would be made available on the organization of work after the Committee Bureau meeting met the same day.

(b) Agenda and Structure of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

13. Speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, one member proposed the following: i) limit the number of working groups operating in parallel with the Plenary; ii) consider formation of specific contact groups for negotiations of the Ministerial Declaration; iii) provide for continued discussions on Agenda item 7 (Ministerial Declaration) in the evening session followed by discussions on Agenda item 8; and iv) schedule working groups in the evening of the first day to maximize use of the time available. The member was of the view that the Committee Bureau should be able to make a decision on the structure. The delegation was to submit a proposed revised structure.
14. A member supported the proposed structure. Nonetheless, he was of the view that only one working group should be recommended. Another drew attention to the need for discussions on principles of time management, including cut-off time for negotiations. He expressed concern over the adverse effect on quality of rolling over work into late nights.
15. The meeting emphasized that Chairs of working groups should be identified as early as possible to avoid last minute decisions on the organization of work. In addition, the Secretariat was requested to provide feedback on when and how the negotiations for the Ministerial Declarations would be handled.
16. In summarizing the discussion, the Chair proposed that the Committee Bureau would come back with specific recommendations to the Sub-Committee meeting of September, noting that the proposed two working groups would be one of best options to deliver high-quality outcomes.

17. The Secretariat informed the meeting that as follow up to the Joint Bureaux Retreat held in Costa Rica, the Executive Director had sent a letter to all Chairs of regional groups to encourage early consideration of Chairs or co-Chairs of the Committee of the Whole and other officers of the Assembly. The meeting was also informed that the agenda and structure of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives would reflect the change in dates for the 140th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, from 10 October 2017 to 12 October 2017.

(c) Progress on the Ministerial Declaration

18. The Chair informed the meeting that a zero draft of the Ministerial Outcome Document (Declaration) has been circulated on 4 July 2017, and invited H.E. Ms. Marta E. Juarez Ruiz, Ambassador and Special Mission to UN Environment Programme of Costa Rica to provide a verbal update on the progress on the Ministerial Declaration process in her capacity as representative of the President of the UN Environment Assembly.

19. The verbal update on this item included the following:

- i. The zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration has been released on 4 July 2017;
- ii. Deadline for comments on the zero draft is 30 September 2017 to allow finalization in October, translations and circulation before the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives;
- iii. The draft urges actions from the governments and other relevant stakeholders towards a pollution-free planet;
- iv. The President of the UN Environment Assembly reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring that the zero draft would be prepared in an inclusive and transparent manner.
- v. The draft would respect the principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on “Leave no one behind”.
- vi. The President requested regional groups to take the lead in gathering inputs that will enrich the draft;
- vii. The President believed that the 2017 UN Environment Assembly has the capacity to speak to the world on actions towards a pollution-free planet.

20. Following Ambassador Ruiz’s update, the Chair requested for specific indications on the zero draft and expectations from the President on the draft. The Chair highlighted the need for frameworks to negotiate the Ministerial Declaration, recalling suggestions from Bureau members during the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat in Costa Rica in June 2017. He also requested that the verbal update by Ambassador Ruiz to be shared in written format.

21. A member suggested that the zero draft should consider pollution impacts not only on humans but also on living organisms and eco systems. Another suggested a reduction in the preamble parts of the Ministerial Declaration which should be written in achievable and objective language in a style more suited to high-level documents. The essence of the Ministerial Declaration was to be a political document that captured different impacts of pollution, and

included a structured way forward. On need to have realistic language on pollution-free world, reference was made to the link between Nano- technology and pollution, following up on an earlier briefing by the Secretariat on Nano-technology.

22. The meeting reaffirmed the critical need for the President to keep member States updated on the progress on the Ministerial Declaration. A member, speaking on behalf of a Group of countries, reiterated that the draft outcome document should be negotiated in a transparent inclusive manner. Furthermore, negotiations should be initiated before the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to allow enough time for consensus building on the declaration. The Group committed to provide comments on the zero draft. Another member pointed out that his county still preferred a President's Summary to a Ministerial Declaration.
23. In response, H.E. Ms. Ruiz informed the meeting that the President of UN Assembly would continue to encourage regional groups to collect inputs, stressing that the Declaration aimed at inspiring people to change their behaviors to address pollution. She called for cooperation from member States as well as contributions to enrich the Ministerial Declaration.
24. The Chair concluded the discussion on this sub-item, noting that the Presidency would provide further guidance on some of the questions and that next joint meeting of the Bureaux, scheduled for September would address the issue.

(d) Draft template for commitments

25. Ms. Ligia Norohna, Director, Economy Division, was invited to provide a verbal update on the draft template for voluntary commitments and pledges towards a pollution-free planet. Before providing the update, Ms. Norohna requested members to share feedback on the Background Report, which had been released on 26 June 2017 and added that a shorter version for policy makers would be made available in September.
26. The Director informed members that the template for voluntary commitments and pledges would be non-prescriptive but linked to the Background Report. Modalities for communications would be made available online through the UN Environment Assembly platform as a downloadable word document and also, that direct commitments could be possible. Analysis on the commitments has been planned to link to several parameters. The analyses would be made on the following dates: 15 July, 30 September and 30 November and announced at the 2017 UN Environment Assembly.
27. In the discussions that followed, a member requested the Secretariat to share the draft template. Another sought clarification between the Clean Planet Pledges and the Clean Planet Charter, stressing that separate tracks should be avoided. The meeting suggested that the voluntary commitments should take into consideration international environmental agreements. It was also suggested that voluntary commitments be considered not only for the Sustainable Development Goals but also for other international frameworks. A member requested for clarification on technical support available and sources of resources.

28. In response to these questions, the Director clarified that a separate section for pledges would not be created. She welcomed the idea of reflecting multilateral environmental agreements on the commitments, adding that consideration would be given to the creation of another section for them. In terms of technical support, it would be identified based on which technologies member States would be looking for.
29. With regard to sources of resources, the Deputy Executive Director informed the meeting that the section on resource mobilization would be to identify required and additional efforts that member States would like to contribute. With regards to technology transfer, it would consider a 10-Year-Programme of Action to deal with different levels of pollution. In line with the programme of action, UN Environment Programme would approach other organizations including financial organizations and non-governmental organizations. Regarding the differentiation between the Clean Planet Charter and the Clean Planet Pledges, he clarified that this would be revised from Charter to Pledges as Charter could have legal implications.

Agenda Item 3: Other matters

(a) Use of “UN Environment”

30. A member, speaking on behalf of a Group of countries expressed concern over the use of “UN Environment” in official documents and communication, highlighting the need for a comprehensive and conclusive consultation on this matter. She added that any formal change should follow the appropriate procedure since the UN Environment Programme was established under the UN General Assembly decision following its rules and regulation. The member further requested for a formal meeting with the participation of the Executive Director to address this issue, possibly in September 2017, reiterating that this matter should be resolved before the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to avoid making it a distraction during the Assembly.
31. Supporting the intervention, another member informed that the meeting that the 16th Session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) held in Libreville had raised this issue with great concern. The meeting also recalled that the Latin American and Caribbean Region Group raised the same issue at the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 19 June 2017 and had circulated a Note Verbale earlier. It was emphasized that any such changes would attract financial and legal implications.
32. One member noted with concern that Member States had continuously requested for a note and meeting on this matter with no response from the Secretariat. The meeting agreed that in addition to the note, a formal meeting should be convened in September with the presence of the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director, to address this matter.

(b) Sustainable Innovation Expo

33. The Secretariat was requested to clarify on the private sector participation in the proposed 2017 Sustainable Innovation Expo. A member suggested that the Expo be officially launched before the 2017 UN Environment Assembly as it would not be easy to participate in every meeting and event, especially for small delegations.

(c) Resolutions Platform

34. Mr. Victor Oburu, Governance Affairs Office briefly introduced the resolution platform. His presentation focused on how to access, register an account and use the Platform.

35. The meeting closed at 11:46 a.m.