

Meeting of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly

Tuesday, 30 January 2018,

4:00 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri.

Executive Office Board Room

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Siim Valmar Kiisler, President of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau and Minister for Environment of Estonia.

The meeting was attended by the following members of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly:

- Antigua and Barbuda (VP) H.E. Mr. Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Health and the Environment via audio link, Latin America and Caribbean Group
- Switzerland (VP) H.E. Mr. Franz Xaver Perrez, Ambassador for the Environment, Western Europe and Others Group
- Finland (VP) H.E. Mr. Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of Environment, Energy and Housing via video-conference, Western Europe and Others Group
- Brazil (VP) H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative-designate to the UN Environment Programme via video-conference, Latin America and Caribbean Group
- South Africa (VP) Mr. Alf Willis, Deputy Director-General, Ministry of Environment representing H.E. Ms. Edna Molewa, Minister of the Environment via audio link, Africa Group
- Czech Republic (VP) Mr. Lukas Pokony, Ministry of the Environment, representing H.E. Mr. Vladislav Smrž, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment via video-conference, Eastern European Group
- Iran (VP) Mr. Ahmad Ghalandari, Deputy Permanent Representative, representing H.E. Mr. Kaveh Madani, Vice Minister of the Environmental Department, Asia-Pacific Group
- Pakistan (Rapporteur) H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative, Asia-Pacific Group

Other representatives present:

- H.E. Mr. Pavel Řezáč, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Czech Republic
- H.E. Ms. Tarja Fernandez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland

- Ms. Amanda Mkhwanazi, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa
- Mr. Toni Sandell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland
- Mr. Pedro Escosteguy Cardoso, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil

The Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was represented by:

- H.E. Mr. John Moreti, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana

The UN Environment Programme was represented by:

- Mr. Erick Solheim, Executive Director
- Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director via audio-link
- Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies
- Mr. Ulf Bjornholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies
- Mr. Stadler Trengrove, Principal Legal Officer

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda with an amendment of the addition of the following items under agenda item 6, Other Matters.

2. Lessons Learned from the Third Session of the UN Environment Assembly

- 1) At the invitation of the President, H.E. Mr. John Moreti, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, informed the meeting of the discussions of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives with regard to lessons learnt from the 2017 UN Environment Assembly, on the basis of a note from the Secretariat. He particularly highlighted the following areas:
 - a. The need for effective planning and organization during the intersessional period;
 - b. The need to put in place adequate resources for the Assembly;
 - c. The importance of effective procedures and governance of the Assembly
 - d. The significance of transparency, ownership, and inclusiveness of the process;
 - e. The importance of involvement by non-state actors;
- 2) Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, shared his views on key elements that made the 2017 UN Environment Assembly a success, as follows:
 - a. Strong ownership by Member states;
 - b. Timely distribution of documents in all six official UN working languages;
 - c. Regional groups were well prepared through regional environment ministerial fora;

- d. Broad engagement of stakeholders from academia, the private sector and civil society throughout the process leading up to the Assembly and during the Assembly itself;
- 3) In the subsequent discussion., members of the Bureau shared additional views on lessons learned, including the following:
- a. The importance of a focused theme, well aligned with the mandate of the UN Environment Programme;
 - b. Early decision on the theme for the Assembly
 - c. Timely and transparent preparation of the Ministerial Declaration;
 - d. Sufficient and timely funding for the Assembly;
 - e. Effective follow-up on the resolutions and decisions, as well as on the voluntary commitments and pledges made during the Assembly;
 - f. Agree on and respect strict informal deadlines on the submission of resolutions and other documents;
 - g. The need to engage actively at the High-Level Political Forum and other political fora to enhance the role of the Assembly;
 - h. Link and relevance to the 2030 Agenda;
 - i. An Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representative held back-to-back with the UN Environment Assembly;
- 4) The President invited Bureau Members to share written inputs on the lessons learned document to the Secretariat, preferably by Friday 2 February 2018 at the latest. The Secretariat was requested to present a revised note for consideration by Member States at relevant upcoming meetings with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, taking into account the discussion in the Bureau.

3. Criteria and Rationale and exchange of views on the theme of the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly

- 5) The President proposed the following selection criteria for identifying a theme for the next Assembly in 2019:
- Provide a targeted yet sufficiently interdisciplinary environmental policy focus that engages the economic and social spheres and has a significant scope for progress at global, regional and local levels.
 - Address issues of acute importance that builds on momentum of on-going global initiatives and processes to help amplify the results.

- Result in an actionable and solution-oriented outcome that is meaningful and inspiring to the world, to foster effective political will, mobilize cooperation and provide momentum to drive change on the ground.
 - Inspire citizens and generate partnerships between governments, the private sector, media and civil society to facilitate effective implementation of the outcome.
 - Ensure consistency between the themes of earlier sessions of the Environment Assembly, to promote synergy and avoid duplication of work.
 - Support the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals, and resonate with the annual themes of the High Level Political Forum.
 - Ensure alignment with UN Environment's core mandate and capacity, while at the same time being relevant to the broader UN family.
 - Promote the visibility and profile of the UN Environment Assembly.
 - Be easily understandable and communicable to all.
- 6) The Executive Director, introduced three possible broad thematic areas for consideration by the Bureau, namely: Sustainable Consumption and Production, Food and Biodiversity, and Environment and Security.
- 7) In the subsequent discussion, suggestions were made on the proposed selection criteria, and two additional themes - State of the Environment, and Innovation for the Environment - were introduced. Some members of the Bureau also underlined the need for more time to consult with their regional groups before forming a view on an appropriate theme. The President invited Members to submit their proposals and underlying rationale in writing to the Secretariat, for further distribution to other member States.
- 8) The Bureau decided to base further discussions with Member States on the thematic areas Sustainable Consumption and Production and Food and Biodiversity, and thus to exclude Environment and Security from further consideration. It agreed to revisit this agenda item at the next meeting of the Bureau, and requested the Secretariat to revise the note on

selection criteria and thematic areas for further consideration by Member States at relevant upcoming meetings with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, taking into account the discussion in the Bureau.

4. Organization of work of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly

- 9) The Secretariat presented a draft roadmap to the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, and highlighted some of the key upcoming meetings.
- 10) The President invited Members of the Bureau to send any comments on the roadmap to the Secretariat, preferably by 5 February 2018 at the latest.
- 11) The meeting agreed that the Secretariat and the President should consult with the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to determine the most suitable date for the Joint Preparatory Retreat to be held in Nairobi, Kenya in March.

5. Date for the next UNEA Bureau meeting

- 12) The meeting decided that the next UN Environment Assembly bureau meeting will be held on 27 February 2018.

6. Other Matters

- 13) The meeting agreed that the following agenda items will be considered during the next Bureau meeting:
 - a) The Global Pact for the Environment
 - b) Preparations for a Ministerial declaration of the Fourth Session of the UN Environment.
 - c) The Programme of Work and Budget

7. Closing of the Meeting

- 14) The meeting closed at 6:15 p.m