

ADC Interventions
141st Meeting of the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives
Tuesday 20th February 2018

(Interventions to be delivered separately under each agenda item)

Agenda item (4): Report of the Executive Director

- 1- The African Group would like to thank the Executive Director for his report, which highlighted the official engagements he undertook since the last regular CPR, the activities of the UNEP Secretariat in providing technical support to national government and regional organizations as well as the various initiatives that ambitiously seek to contribute to addressing the various environmental concerns.
- 2- We note that the report of the Executive Director referred to UNEP's involvement in the Secretary General's reforms tagged "Repositioning of the UN Development System to Deliver on the 2030 Agenda" which among others, aims for a renewed space for Member States to guide UN system-wide actions and bring greater transparency and accountability.
- 3- However, the African Group is concerned that very little is known about UNEP's involvement in this process which has been on-going for the past year. We would appreciate if the CPR is enlightened further so as to enable Member States make valuable inputs into this important process.
- 4- Similarly, the report under the heading "Corporate Management and Management Reform" highlighted the budget performance of UNEP for year 2017 and indicated that utilization rate of 97%, 81% and 94% were recorded from The Environment Fund, The Overhead Trust Account, and Regular Budget allotments, respectively.

- 5- In this regard, while at a glance the numbers are impressive, there is need to understand how this translates to implementation of resolutions adopted by the three UNEA sessions and the former Governing Council sessions.

- 6- The Group would like to congratulate the Executive Director on the setting up of the new website for the Program. Nevertheless, we have noticed that the web address has changed from www.unep.org to www.unenvironment.org. In a purely practical sense, the shorter web address is more accessible, easier to memorize, and reflects more the nature of UNEP as a “program” rather than the new web address that does not. We request the Executive Director to revert to the usage of the old web address.

- 7- Last but not least, the African Group would like to value the willingness of the Executive Director and his staff to engage with the Continent in general and with the African Diplomatic Corps here in Nairobi. We look further for enhancing this engagement and having regular Group meetings with the Executive Director and his staff on a quarterly basis.

Agenda Item (5): Implementation of the Program of Work and Budget and the Assembly Resolutions

- 8- The African Group welcomes the Secretariat's update on the implementation of the resolution on Marine Plastic Litter and Microplastics as well as the proposed implementation plan.
- 9- Nevertheless, the Group remains concerned, that despite all the previous calls for the enhanced and accelerated implementation of the previous GC and UNEA resolutions, little has been achieved in that regard. This is a matter of high priority and utmost importance to the continent.
- 10- Many of the previous GC and UNEA resolutions remain unimplemented, or partially implemented at most, in addition to a lack of a follow up and monitoring mechanism or platform through which member states can follow up the updated status of implementation.
- 11- The Group renews its request for a solid and concrete implementation plan for all resolutions with designated timelines and milestones, in addition to the setting up of an easily accessible online platform for the monitoring of implementation by member states.

Agenda item (6): Assessment of the Third Session of UNEA

- 12- The African Group would like to congratulate all Member States, the former President of the Assembly, the Executive Director as well as the Secretariat on the success of the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly held here in Nairobi last December.
- 13- The adopted resolutions and ministerial declaration showcase the commitment of Member States and the international community to the preservation of our environment, and to putting an end to the challenges facing it, including pollution.
- 14- The Group would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Government and the People of Kenya for the hospitality and the impeccable organization of the event, as has always been the case. Africa is committed to the outcomes of UNEA 3 and is looking forward for their implementation.
- 15- The African Group takes note of the “Lessons Learned” document compiled by the Secretariat at the request of the Committee Bureau and would like to take this opportunity to briefly highlight some points in that regard, contributing to setting up the path for the Fourth Session:
- 16- The Group welcomes the online registration process implemented for UNEA 3 but would request the Secretariat to further work on a “group / delegation registration” option, as in many cases the registration for the entire delegation is done by one officer, making it very tiresome to register using a unique email address for every delegate.
- 17- The early setting up of the drafting groups contributed greatly to the negotiations process, ultimately resulting in reaching consensus on all draft resolutions in a timely manner. Nevertheless, we would

like to reiterate on the importance of taking into consideration small delegations that face challenges in participating in multiple parallel negotiating groups, and make sure that no more than two such groups are convened at any point in time.

- 18- Secondly, while setting up deadlines for the submission of resolutions during the intersessional period does help the process of negotiations, it should be noted that these deadlines are entirely voluntary and self-imposed, and while the Group encourages all Member States to strive as much as possible to abide by these deadlines, it should also be noted that in some instances necessity dictates some later submissions. This is fully in line with the Assembly's rules of procedure.

- 19- Lastly, the Group would like to positively note that UNEA sessions are becoming an event of global significance on the international environment arena. This is showcased by the participation of 4921 registrants from 157 countries, including 65 ministers. 35 UN agencies were represented, as well as other 21 intergovernmental organizations. It is also reported that 300 business representatives attended the Session and almost 500 Major Groups and Stakeholders representative. The Group is encouraged by this positive direction.

Agenda item (7): Consideration of Selection Criteria and Possible Themes for UNEA 4

- 20- The African Group takes note of the selection criteria for the theme included in the Secretariat's paper and would like to extend our thanks to the President of UNEA and Members of the bureau for drafting them.
- 21- We believe these criteria can provide much-needed guidance for Member States in identifying the theme of the upcoming session. Nevertheless, we believe that these criteria are non-exhaustive and should remain only as guiding parameters.
- 22- The Group also believes that there is no need for formal approval of these criteria as this would consume valuable time that would be better directed at agreeing on the theme itself.
- 23- The African Group has actively engaged during the Subcommittee meeting held last week on this matter, and values the views expressed by all Member States on the suggested themes. The Group is of the view that further consultations among Member States are needed moving forward towards adopting a theme.
- 24- The Group tends to believe that the suggested broad topic on innovation for the environment offers a good option to frame a more targeted, relevant and overarching theme. Innovation is a broad encompassing topic that resonates with all regions and all Member States, and various focus areas within that theme could be entertained during the session.

25- The Group is thus expecting that the paper on that suggested theme, to be prepared by the Secretariat as agreed in the subcommittee meeting, would enrich the consultations, and it remains readily available for engagement with the Secretariat on its preparation.

Agenda Item (8): Preparation of the Contribution of UNEA to the HLPF

- 26- The African Group thanks the secretariat for the note on the process of UNEA contributions to the HLPF which will be held mid this year.
- 27- We welcome and support the political outreach underway to ensure that the President of UNEA will be given a stand-alone opportunity to present the main messages of UNEA-3 in his capacity as president of UNEA, rather than a Minister of his country. We believe that this will raise the profile and visibility of UNEA as the leading global authority on the environment.
- 28- On the suggestion that members of UNEA Bureau should speak to their counterparts in the ECOSOC Bureau, we are looking forward for the Secretariat to facilitate these meetings and to brief the CPR on their outcomes.
- 29- On the steps to be taken in preparation for the input, it would be advisable to have the draft briefly discussed by the CPR sub-committee before the Joint retreat on 22-23 March 2018.

End of Interventions