



**141st meeting
of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP
20 February 2018**

Interventions on behalf of the EU and its MS

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Executive Director

- Mister Chairman, Mister Executive Director, distinguished delegates and observers, ladies and gentlemen; it is my privilege to speak on behalf the European Union and its Member States. Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
- This meeting being the first CPR meeting after UNEA-3, we would like to congratulate all who contributed to the success of the last Environmental Assembly. Let me express our gratitude to Mr Erik Solheim and the entire Secretariat of UN Environment Programme for the hard work, innovation and skilful preparation and support before and during the UNEA meeting. UNEA-3 proved to be a success of the Member States who showed the political determination, and under the leadership of the former President of UNEA, Mr Edgar Gutiérrez, as well as the Bureaus of UNEA and CPR, achieved to agree the Ministerial Declaration and

the set of resolutions spelling out actions to advance "Towards a pollution-free planet".

- We are not going to stop there. We agreed at UNEA-3 to consider during the next Assembly an implementation plan of these actions, which will be prepared by the Executive Director, in consultation with CPR – a task that we look forward to engaging on.
- Looking towards UNEA-4, we acknowledge the short time available for its preparation. We therefore appreciate the swift start of the discussion of its theme and we encourage the UNEA Bureau, the CPR and the Secretariat to set up carry out a rigorous preparatory process based on lessons from previous UNEAs.
- However, we would like to recall that the core mandate of CPR includes the oversight of the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget, including the Assembly's resolutions. Executing this mandate should take the lion share of the CPR efforts and we look forward to discussing, later today, how to improve the respective reporting and monitoring processes.
- This endeavour will no doubt be only beneficial for another important task for the CPR in 2018, which is the preparation of the new Programme of Work and Budget, for the period 2020-2021 which needs to be adopted at UNEA-4. This will also be the first such document prepared by the Secretariat under the leadership of Mr Solheim, which offers the opportunity to translate the Executive Director's vision into the Programme of Work, under the

guidance of the Member States. We look forward to an inspiring cooperation in this regard and count on the Executive Director's engagement with the CPR.

- Let me finish by thanking the Executive Director for his very useful update on the activities of the last quarter and assure him of our continuous support.

I thank you

Agenda Item 5: Implementation of the programme of work and budget and the Assembly resolutions

- The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the note "Draft Outline for a consolidated tool to the CPR", as well as the Projects Portfolio 2018-21 shared before the meeting.
- The oversight of the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget, including the Assembly's resolutions lies in the core of the CPR mandate. In line with our longstanding requests, we would like to improve the monitoring and reporting, which currently, in our view, is not sufficient.
- What we would like is not to add additional reporting layers or to increase the labour intensity of the reporting. Instead, building on the current processes and information readily available, we see the need for regular updates to CPR on the progress on the implementation of the Programme of Work and resolutions, including the explanation how the activities in the given period, and the financial and human resources allocated to those activities, contribute to objectives set out in the Programme of Work. Importantly the updates should also include information on the resources mobilisation.
- Such quarterly updates, presented to the regular CPR meetings, should not compromise the well-established results-based reports which use the indicators prescribed in the Programme of Work. It might be sensible though to reconsider the frequency of these

reports, given their labour intensity, and balancing it with the value added of reviewing the indicators in biannual vs. e.g. annual intervals.

- In this regard, the note presented by the Secretariat heads in the right direction and provides a good basis for further discussion on improving the format and process of monitoring the implementation of the Programme of Work. We stand ready to further contribute to this discussion with the aim to arrive with a first report in the new format by the next CPR meeting. We maintain our earlier suggestion to the CPR Chair, that such a discussion on developing the reporting format could be streamlined through an ad-hoc Working Group.
- As regards the Project portfolio 2018-21, while still analysing this very valuable information, we would like to be briefed on how the mandates prescribed by UNEA-3 and, where relevant, previous UNEAs' resolutions, are embedded in the foreseen projects.
- Pending this process to be established, we would like to turn now to an actual implementation issue. As we referred to it repeatedly in our various interventions, we have been concerned about the financing situation of the GEO-6 process which is one of the "flagships" and key deliveries of UN Environment Programme. We therefore regret that detailed written information on financial allocations from the Environment Fund and extra-budgetary resources have not been presented so far, despite such request

being presented and agreed in the OECPR meeting last year. We would like to request the Executive Director to present this update without further delay.

- Lastly, with regard to the Programme of Work and Budget for the period 2020-21, we would like to ask for a roadmap with clear time-lines for developing this document, given the short time available until UNEA-4, at which meeting the document needs to be adopted.

Agenda Item 6: Assessment of UNEA-3.

- The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the document "Lessons learned from UNEA-3 and the way forward towards UNEA-4".
- We would like to make reference to our detailed comments made during the meeting of the CPR subcommittee on 6 February and subsequently submitted in writing. These comments concerned the UNEA-3 outcome, the preparatory process, the programme, organisation and logistics of UNEA-3 as well as the stakeholders' engagement. Most of the comments have been taken on board in the Secretariat's document.
- As regards the further process towards UNEA-4, building on the good experience of UNEA-3 preparatory process, we would like to recommend that the "lessons learnt" are further discussed in the Joint Bureaux retreat on 22-23 March 2018 with the view to provide actionable recommendations.

Agenda Item 7: UNEA-4 theme.

- The EU and its Member States would like to thank the Secretariat for the document "Selection criteria and possible themes for UNEA-4".
- We would like to make reference to the discussion held in the CPR subcommittee on 15 February in which we recommended to focus further discussion solely on possible themes – without discussing further the selection criteria. Furthermore we expressed our openness to continue exploring the two Secretariat's proposals: "Sustainable Consumption and Production" and "Food and Nature / Biodiversity". We also expressed our concern that focusing the discussion of UNEA around the theme of "Innovation" could frame it too narrowly. Instead it could be considered as an aspect of a broader theme, such as 'Sustainable Consumption and Production' or be linked to food production and sustainable agricultural practices. Highlighting innovation should not take attention away from implementing solutions that are already well known.
- Our more comprehensive written comments have been posted on the CPR portal.
- While awaiting the additional background documents, we look forward to continuing the discussion on the themes, notably in the Joint Bureaux meeting on 27 February and the Retreat on 22-23 March.

Agenda Item 8: UNEA's contribution to HLPF.

- The EU and its Member States would like to thank for the " Note by the Secretariat on the process of contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development" of 2 February 2018.
- EU/MS maintain their support for strengthening the visibility of UNEA – and the environmental dimension in general - in the UN system, including HLPF. UNEA, as the main universal body for environmental decision-making, should have a prominent role in ensuring that the environmental perspective is taken into account in the proceedings of the HLPF on the implementation of the Agenda 2030.
- Ensuring timely substantive inputs from the UNEA to the HLPF is especially important this year, as the 2018 HLPF will focus on a number of SDGs most relevant for UNEA.
- With regards to the written input, EU/MS support the proposed timing in UNEP's note, as it allows to respect the 27th April deadline given by ECOSOC, while also reflecting the need to prepare these inputs under the guidance of the UNEA President and in consultation with the CPR.
- However, with regards to the involvement of the MS, we would recommend that prior to the Joint Bureaux retreat, the first draft of the input should be presented to the CPR subcommittee. This

would better respond to the requirements of the UNEA-3 resolution. The Joint Bureaux retreat could then work and hopefully agree on a second version incorporating the comments.

- In terms of the content, EU/MS support that the UNEA inputs will focus on the in-depth SDGs to be reported this year as well as the central HLPF theme and in accordance with UNEA 3 HLPF resolution (as proposed under points 4 and 6). However, we would welcome if the input could also take into account the template suggested by ECOSOC in their letter dated 27 November 2017.
- With regards to the oral presentation by the UNEA President during HLPF (points 3 and 8 in the paper), EU/MS strongly support the importance of such an oral presentation to the HLPF by the UNEA President in that capacity. We consider this crucial to reflect the status of UNEA in the UN system and give it appropriate visibility.
- We are pleased to hear that the necessary outreach is underway to ensure that such an oral presentation would be possible this time, and would be interested in being kept informed about outcomes thereof.