

1st Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux
of the UN Environment Assembly and of the
Committee of Permanent Representatives
22 - 23 March 2018
Tribe Hotel
Nairobi, Kenya

Progress update on the identification of a theme for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly

In accordance with Assembly decision 2017/3 on the provisional agenda, date and venue of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, is requested to define a theme for the next UN Environment Assembly no later than 31 March 2018.

To this end, the Committee of Permanent Representatives has considered the matter on 15 February and 15 March 2018 in the context of a subcommittee meeting and at its 141st Committee meeting on 20 February 2018.

Building on these discussions the potential theme for the next UN Environment Assembly was further considered at a joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its meeting on 27 February 2018 (a summary is available at <http://web.unep.org/about/cpr/events/unea-bureau-meetings/joint-meeting-bureaux-un-environment-assembly-and-committee-permanent>).

To support further considerations by the joint Bureaux, the Secretariat has developed attached progress update including a set of guiding questions, with the aim to identify a theme with broadest possible support by Member States.

1 Progress update

As reflected in the minutes of the joint bureaux meeting on 27 February 2018, the Bureaux agreed that further discussions are needed on the theme of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly and expressed a preference for the following thematic areas:

- (i) Sustainable consumption and production; and
- (ii) Promoting innovative solutions to environmental challenges.

No support was expressed in the context of the joint bureaux for the third thematic area (Food and Nature) proposed by the Secretariat.

Several bureaux members underscored the complementarity amongst the thematic areas of sustainable consumption and production and innovation and encouraged the Presidency of the Assembly to identify a converging proposal.

The Bureaux also discussed the theme on the state of the environment and considered that the matter should be addressed within the context of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), which is already an integral part of the Assembly's agenda.

The joint Bureaux further agreed that further considerations by the Committee of Permanent Representatives would be useful, with a focus on the two remaining themes, and mandated the Assembly President to consult bilaterally. The President will propose a written President's compromise on the theme before the 1st Joint Preparatory Retreat on 22-23 March 2018, to prepare for a final decision to be taken by the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly before 31 March 2018.

2 Guiding questions for supporting a successful theme for the next session of the Assembly

The Secretariat has identified the following questions designed to facilitate further dialogue amongst Member States, with a view to proposing additional guidance to the bureau of the UN Environment Assembly:

1. *How can the theme be formulated with a view to, as far as possible:*
 - a. *Inspire citizens and generate partnerships between governments, the private sector, media and civil society to facilitate effective implementation of the outcome;*
 - b. *Promote the visibility and profile of the UN Environment Assembly; and*
 - c. *Be easily understandable and communicable to all, and be appealing for media?*
2. *To what extent can the process of voluntary commitments, public campaigns and plan of implementation for the pollution theme for the third session of the UN Environment Assembly be integrated into the preparation of the next Assembly?*
3. *How can the Secretariat background document best support the theme of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, building on the Global Environment Outlook report, reports of the International Resources Panel, etc.?*
4. *How can the Science Policy and Business Forum, the Sustainable Innovation Expo and the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum best support action by various stakeholders on the theme of the Assembly?*