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**United Nations Environment Assembly of
the United Nations Environment
Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
146th meeting
Nairobi, 8 March 2019**

**Draft minutes of the 145th meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 19 February 2019**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 19 February 2019, by Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
2. The meeting was attended by 93 participants representing 72 members and two observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Xia Yingxian (China) and Mr. Gariballa Khidir Ali Eldaw (Sudan).
4. She then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Andrew Marriott (Australia); Mr. Liu Ning (China); Mr. Mohammed R. Danjaji (Nigeria); and Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar (Pakistan).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/145/1).
6. At the invitation of the Chair, the acting Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Joyce Msuya, provided an update on key recent developments. With regard to senior-level appointments, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had informed the General Assembly of his intention to appoint Ms. Inger Andersen, a national of Denmark, as the new Executive Director of UNEP. The matter now rested with the General Assembly, which was expected to endorse the nomination within days. In addition, Ms. Suzanne Gardner had recently joined UNEP as the new Director of the Ecosystems Division.
7. With regard to the internal management reform, UNEP had continued to strengthen its internal processes in order to improve accountability, results delivery and communication. Recent developments included an assessment of the leadership skills of senior management and the identification by management of areas for improvement; the training of staff in their role as custodians of UNEP policies, including on travel; the gathering of best practices from other United Nations and public sector entities as a benchmark for the practices of UNEP; engagement with auditors and the Department of Management to extract lessons from the 2018 audit report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services of UNEP official travel; and the development of an online public platform to share information on UNEP projects, which was being tested and would soon be shared with member States.

The new UNEP delegation of authority framework, which would help to advance the United Nations system-wide management reform, would be operational by 31 March 2019, and UNEP was mapping areas where further delegation of authority could help to improve accountability and efficiency.

8. As for UNEP finances, out of the \$67.96 million pledged to the Environment Fund in 2018, only \$61.4 million had been received. The secretariat was therefore working with member States to ensure that outstanding contributions were made. She urged member States to make their contributions for 2019 as soon as possible so that UNEP could continue to deliver on its mandate. In December 2018, the General Assembly had revised the United Nations voluntary indicative scale of contributions, used to calculate contributions to the Environment Fund, for the period 2019–2021, the details of which would be shared with member States prior to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

9. Turning to recent programme developments, she said that in December 2018, with the support of Israel, the State of Palestine and other regional partners, UNEP had undertaken an inception mission to the State of Palestine and Israel, with another mission scheduled for 23 February 2019, to enable the preparation of **a report on the state of the environment of the occupied Palestinian territory**, in line with resolution 3/1 on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism adopted by the Environment Assembly at its third session.

10. Lastly, in preparation for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, UNEP had continued to push for inclusive and sustainable economies that fostered innovation and circularity, including during regional consultations and at the third ministerial conference of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, held in Cape Town on 10 and 11 January 2019. To date, some 65 ministers for the environment and 100 ministerial-level representatives had confirmed their participation in the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, and 1,700 participants had registered to participate in the session's various events.

11. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the acting Executive Director for her leadership over the previous six months and welcomed the nomination of Ms. Andersen as the new Executive Director of UNEP, stressing that they looked forward to her appointment by the Secretary-General following the anticipated endorsement by the General Assembly of her nomination. One representative, welcoming the nomination and the growing number of women in leadership positions, said that the position of Executive Director had for too long been held by nationals of a single region and that highly qualified candidates from other regions should be afforded the opportunity to hold the position of Executive Director, in accordance with the principle of balanced geographical representation.

12. The representative of Kenya said that the Government of Kenya, as the host country of the fourth session, was determined to ensure that it be held in a secure environment and drew attention to an information note on logistics prepared by the secretariat.

13. The acting Executive Director thanked member States for their comments and, stressing that she would not comment on the nomination of the new Executive Director because it was an ongoing process, said that it had been an honour to serve as acting Executive Director and that she was eager to continue engaging with member States in her capacity as Deputy Executive Director.

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 144th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

14. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 144th meeting, held on 8 January 2019, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/145/2).

Agenda item 4

Preparations for the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee and the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

15. Introducing the item, the Chair said that the Committee would consider the possible structure and agenda of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee and updates on the consultations on the draft ministerial declaration and draft resolutions to be presented for consideration and possible adoption by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

A. Structure and agenda of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee

16. The Chair drew attention the provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (UNEP/OECPR.4/1) and the annotations thereto (OECPR.4/1/Add.1), and a document entitled “Structure and sequence of documentation of the meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (15 February 2019)” (EA.4/INF/12). The provisional agenda had been revised in the light of comments made during the 144th Committee meeting, while the proposed structure was the result of in-depth discussions held the previous week by the Bureau of the Committee. In essence, the structure proposed that no more than two working groups be held in parallel, in accordance with past practice, while giving flexibility to the Bureau of the Committee to further define the structure of the last three days of the session with a view to reaching agreement, by 8 March 2019, on the text of the draft resolutions and the draft ministerial declaration to be considered with a view to adoption by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

17. The Committee endorsed the proposed provisional agenda, annotated agenda and structure for the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

18. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recommended that sufficient time be allocated during the meeting for discussion of the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021, the contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development, and the proposed new UNEP marine and coastal strategy. With regard to marine issues, he lamented that the secretariat had not yet presented the document requested by the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities at its fourth meeting, on the future of the Global Programme of Action, and expressed the view that the Environment Assembly should guide the work of the partnerships under the Global Programme of Action and that this should be reflected in the UNEP programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021.

19. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern that the structure of the open-ended Committee meeting allowed for the convening of two working group sessions in parallel with plenary sessions, which would make it difficult for small delegations to participate in the meeting discussions. He requested that, should the plenary complete its work ahead of schedule, no more than two working groups be allowed to convene in parallel at any time. One representative suggested that only one working group should convene in parallel with the plenary during the first one and a half days of the meeting, after which the plenary should be suspended until Friday and two working groups could convene in parallel. She also drew attention to references to agenda items 8 and 9 in the draft provisional agenda (UNEP/OECPR/4/1), which did not match those contained in documents UNEP/OECPR/4/1/Add.1 and EA.4/INF/12.

20. One representative suggested that, to make the best use of time during the open-ended Committee meeting, plenary discussions should not dwell on issues such as the updates on the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook, budget and programme performance, or the implementation of resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly; administrative and budgetary matters, which were addressed in a draft resolution; or the contributions of the Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development.

21. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it was important for the open-ended Committee to take stock of the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly and to discuss its contributions to the meetings of the high-level political forum, which was a standing agenda item for Environment Assembly sessions.

22. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat had taken note of the issues raised, including the need to revise the provisional agenda so that references to items 8 and 9 matched those in the annotations to the provisional agenda and in the endorsed structure, and would strive to ensure that plenary sessions ran efficiently. With regard to agenda item 6, on contributions to the meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, the secretariat would prepare a document on the item for consideration by the subcommittee at its meeting of 27 February 2019, revise the document in the light of the subcommittee’s discussions, and present the revised document for consideration by the open-ended Committee at its fourth meeting.

B. Update on the consultations on the draft ministerial declaration

23. The Special Envoy of Estonia, Mr. Ado Lõhmus, speaking on behalf of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, reported that, in the light of substantial input received from member States and stakeholders, including during informal consultations held on 6 February 2019, the

President had revised the draft ministerial declaration to be presented for consideration and possible adoption by the Assembly at its fourth session and had shared it with member States the previous day. Stressing that it had not been possible to incorporate all the proposed changes in the revised draft because this would have considerably lengthened the document, he outlined the main changes in the revised draft and expressed the hope that they accommodated the main concerns voiced by member States. Further consultations on the draft declaration would be held during the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, both in regional group meetings throughout the day on 4 March 2019 and in evening sessions on 5 and 6 March 2019, so that the open-ended Committee could endorse the draft declaration on 8 March 2019.

24. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the President and his team for the revised draft declaration, which marked an improvement on previous versions, and for their efforts to implement a transparent drafting process and incorporate all points of view in the latest version of the document. Several representatives said that they would review the changes and submit comments in writing.

25. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, reiterated that the ministerial declaration should reflect, in a balanced manner, the two components of the theme of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

26. Another representative said that he could not support the inclusion in the declaration of concepts that had not been agreed at the multilateral level, such as “environmental security” or “circular economy”, or of 2025 as a deadline by which Governments should take certain actions. Deadlines, he said, should be set domestically, in accordance with national realities, priorities and levels of development, and the proposed 2025 deadline might not be in line with targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. He further suggested that a reference to fair and equitable benefit-sharing should be made under paragraph 4, on access to and use of environmental data, and requested clarification on the proposed global environmental data strategy, as well as the proposed work on chemicals beyond the year 2020, which might prejudice the outcome of the discussions on that very issue being held under the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

27. A third representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the concept of a circular economy was widely recognized at the international level and was reflected, for instance, in the outcome document of the third ministerial conference on the Partnership for Action on Green Economy and in the summary for policymakers of the sixth Global Environment Outlook report. Its inclusion in the ministerial declaration was both desirable and appropriate. Another representative said that the time was ripe to strengthen global momentum to tackle plastic pollution and accelerate the transition to a circular economy, and invited representatives to attend a side event on plastics during the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

28. One representative said that the elimination of single-use plastics by 2025 would be challenging for many countries, and he questioned whether the Environment Assembly was the appropriate forum to deal with the harmonization of international environmental data standards. He further suggested that the declaration should not only mention the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, but also emphasize the special needs of developing countries and the role of North-South and South-South cooperation in meeting such needs. Lastly, he wondered whether the proposed review of the implementation of the declaration through the submission of national reviews was realistic and whether the submission of national reviews would be voluntary.

29. Another representative said that the commitment to ensuring the participation of civil society in achieving sustainable development, set out in paragraph 4 (p), should be modified, since member States could not guarantee such participation.

C. Update on the consultations on the draft resolutions

30. The Chair said that informal consultations on the draft resolutions to be presented for consideration and possible adoption by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session had been held from 7 to 14 February 2019 under the leadership of the co-facilitators of each of the five clusters of draft resolutions. She invited the co-facilitators of each cluster to update the Committee on their work.

31. The co-facilitators of cluster 1, on innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production, reported that the nine draft resolutions in the cluster had been consolidated into five. Specifically, two draft resolutions relating to food loss had been consolidated into one, as had four resolutions on sustainable consumption and production, whose proponents had agreed to integrate their proposals into a single draft resolution by 19 February 2019 as the basis for further discussion by the open-ended Committee. In order to facilitate negotiations on two draft

resolutions, dealing with clean and electric mobility and sustainable infrastructure, respectively, the secretariat had been asked to provide information on UNEP activities in those two areas. Lastly, no comments had been received on a draft resolution on green business.

32. The co-facilitators of cluster 2, on resource efficiency, chemicals and waste, reported that the eight draft resolutions originally in the cluster had been consolidated into three. One regional group had submitted a new resolution on strengthening the science-policy interface for chemicals and waste, but had agreed to integrate the proposal into the draft resolution on chemicals and waste submitted earlier by another regional group.

33. The co-facilitators of cluster 3, on ecosystems and biodiversity management and protection, reported that the initial dozen draft resolutions under the cluster had been consolidated into eight draft resolutions, which related to innovations on biodiversity and land degradation; rangelands and pastoralism; a sustainable blue economy; commodity supply chains; sustainable nitrogen management; sustainable mangrove management; protection of the marine environment from land-based activities; and sustainable coral reefs management. Comments submitted on all the resolutions were available on the draft resolution portal. The co-facilitators requested the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly to reassign the resolutions on nitrogen and the blue economy to other clusters that were better aligned with their topics.

34. The facilitator of cluster 4, on environmental governance, reported that there were five resolutions in the cluster and that no consolidation had taken place. Comments had been received on two resolutions, one related to geoengineering and its governance and the other related the poverty and environment nexus, and the proponents of both resolutions were expected to revise their proposals in the light of the comments received.

35. Lastly, the co-facilitator of cluster 5, on the UNEP programme of work and related issues, reported that the draft resolutions and draft decisions in the cluster could not be combined and the versions posted in the resolution portal would be submitted for consideration by the open-ended Committee.

36. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed appreciation to the co-facilitators, the secretariat and the focal points for the progress achieved under each cluster, including the consolidation of many draft resolutions. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to prepare an analysis of the budgetary implications of all the proposed resolutions and their alignment with the programme of work for the biennium 2020–2021 in preparation for the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee.

37. One representative announced that he would submit a resolution urging member States to phase out single-use plastic products by 2025, stressing that the world's ability to cope with plastic waste was overstretched and had caused social, economic, environmental and health challenges. He noted that his Government had made a commitment to phase out such products by 2022. Another representative, applauding the commitment to phase out single-use plastics, stressed that action was needed to rid the world of marine litter and microplastics.

38. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, appealed to proponents of new resolutions to incorporate their proposals into existing draft resolutions dealing with the same topics. Another representative remarked that there was a proliferation of resolutions on marine and coastal issues and suggested the adoption of a sea-to-source approach that examined issues such as nutrients, plastics and marine litter in a holistic manner, rather than as separate issues.

39. As a way forward, the Chair proposed that the co-facilitators of each cluster continue to work with resolution proponents to further consolidate proposals and requested that they post the new consolidated draft resolutions on the resolution portal.

40. Responding to a comment, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat could prepare a note, in consultation with cluster co-facilitators, to identify which draft resolutions might be further modified by proponents in the lead-up to the fourth open-ended Committee meeting. With regard to translation, the secretariat could not commit to translating the draft resolutions into the six official languages of the United Nations as they currently stood, since many resolutions were still being consolidated and modified, but it would translate all the resolutions at least 24 hours prior to their adoption at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

41. Many representatives said that there was a need for clarity regarding which versions of the draft resolutions would be forwarded to capitals for consideration by the open-ended Committee. They

insisted that the Committee should agree at the current meeting on a full package of draft resolutions and draft decisions to be so forwarded, stressing that the package could include consolidated resolutions with bracketed text on which the various resolution proponents had not reached agreement.

42. Following the discussion, the Committee agreed that, after the current meeting, the Chair would put together a package of draft resolutions and draft decisions to be shared with capitals for consideration by the open-ended Committee at its fourth meeting.

Agenda item 5

Consideration of resolution 2/10 on oceans and seas

43. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Proposal for a new Marine and Coastal Strategy of UN Environment Programme for 2020–2030” (UNEP/CPR/145/5), which contained the latest version of the new UNEP marine and coastal strategy, developed by the secretariat pursuant to Environment Assembly resolution 2/10.

44. The representative of the secretariat recalled that the first version of the draft strategy had been developed by a consultant, following a two-day workshop convened by the Oceans Branch in January 2018, and that the secretariat had revised the document in the light of comments from staff and member States in December 2018 and presented the revised draft to the Committee at its 144th meeting. Since that meeting, the secretariat had further revised the draft strategy in the light of additional comments from member States, and the latest version of the strategy (UNEP/CPR.145/5), which had been shared with member States on 4 February 2019, would be presented as an information document for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session. Following the fourth session, the secretariat hoped to work with member States and other partners to move towards the implementation of the strategy.

45. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the secretariat for the revised version of the strategy, which represented an improvement on the previous version.

46. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the recognition of the role of the regional seas conventions and action plans in the implementation of the strategy, but suggested that there was a need to revise objective 3.1 and to acknowledge the need for improved coordination between the various UNEP offices responsible for the implementation of the strategy. Another representative said that there was a need to make the strategy more action-oriented and guidance-oriented, including by incorporating best practices and lessons learned from the past work of UNEP on marine and coastal issues; by better defining the work of UNEP under the strategy after assessing its comparative advantage in terms of expertise and technical capacity; and by better defining possible partnerships with key entities, such as the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter of 1972.

47. One representative voiced her concern that the draft strategy relied on a coordinating mechanism under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in which States that were not parties to that treaty could not participate, and asked the secretariat to ensure that the coordination mechanism in the strategy was open to all member States. She further suggested that the secretariat should revise the objectives and indicators in the strategy to make them more ambitious; revise the section on carbon sequestration by oceans, so that it focused on information management and did not foresee the use of such information by countries in their nationally-determined contributions under the Paris Agreement; define terms on which no agreement existed, such as “blue economy”; and ensure that all references to fisheries subsidies used the language of target 14.6 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

48. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the draft strategy deserved further consideration by member States, including during the fourth open-ended Committee meeting, and stressed that they would submit comments in writing, asking others to follow suit.

49. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for endorsing the strategy through the ministerial declaration to be adopted by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session, stressing that the document had been produced in response to a resolution adopted by the Assembly. Another representative sought clarification on the way forward, noting that the strategy would be presented for the information of the Environment Assembly at its fourth session and did not constitute a negotiated document. One representative said that it would be difficult for him to endorse a strategy that used terms or approaches that had not been widely agreed, such as “blue economy”, “circular economy” or “source-to-sea approach”, and which provided for increased UNEP involvement in trade issues.

50. The representative of the secretariat thanked representatives for their feedback and said that the secretariat was in the hands of member States with regard to the strategy. For its part, the secretariat was eager to move towards implementation immediately after the conclusion of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly and, to that end, was prepared to provide further clarity on the issues raised by representatives, including by articulating metrics to measure progress and by clarifying the roles of different actors and frameworks under the strategy. Responding to a query, she said that UNEP had finalized and would release shortly the report on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities requested by the **recent meeting** of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action.

51. In closing, the Chair suggested that member States reflect on how the Environment Assembly should pronounce itself on the strategy.

Agenda item 8

Update on the implementation of the United Nations system reform

52. Introducing the item, the Chair, H.E. **Mr. Marek Rohr-Garztecki**, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland and member of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, drew attention to an information note entitled “Update on the UN Development System Reforms” (UNEP/CPR/145/6) and invited the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Reforms, Mr. Jens Wandel; the Director of the UNEP New York Office, Mr. Satya S. Tripathi; and the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Mr. Victor Kisob, to update the Committee on the implementation of the United Nations system reform and its implications for UNEP.

53. In his presentation, delivered via teleconference from New York, Mr. Wandel said that the reform of the United Nations system was organized around three resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in July 2018, which together sought to lift the United Nations system to the level expected of a modern, twenty-first century organization.

54. The reform had three mutually dependent pillars. The development pillar sought to increase the relevance of the United Nations to the member State-driven 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to improve the position of the Organization’s development system vis-à-vis bodies such as the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the General Assembly. That objective was being pursued by reinvigorating the role of the United Nations resident coordinators and by changing United Nations planning for and action in countries and regions, including by moving the resident coordinator function from the United Nations Development Programme to the United Nations Secretariat and by modernizing the planning instruments and accountability frameworks used at the regional and country levels, including the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

55. The peace and security pillar sought to ensure that the United Nations peacekeeping and political affairs functions were geographically connected, and that there was more policy coherence and collaboration between the United Nations and external partners and between the peace, security and development functions of the United Nations. Lastly, the management pillar sought to address management problems, primarily through massive decentralization, such as the issuance by the Secretary-General of delegations of authority which enabled managers to manage their portfolios and made them accountable to the Secretary-General, and through the simplification of computer and other systems.

56. The three resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in July 2018 had set the stage for the reform, but some time would be needed to complete the process and see results. The reform of the resident coordinator system, for example, would not be complete until June 2019. Furthermore, in order to achieve results, it was critical that individual United Nations entities link their own reform efforts to the wider United Nations system reform, following the example of entities such as the World Health Organization, and that member States engage in the reform process and hold the United Nations accountable, including by providing feedback on benefits and changes observed.

57. In his remarks, also delivered via teleconference from New York, Mr. Tripathi said that UNEP was a very strong partner in the United Nations system reform process and was not only engaging in discussions on the reform process, but also driving forward the environmental and climate-related dimensions of the sustainable development agenda upon which the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals depended. For example, UNEP was producing science-based reports that

demonstrated the need for action to avoid runaway climate change, which if realized would jeopardize the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

58. Mr. Kisob shared the experience of UN-Habitat in the reform process, stressing that the Programme was focused on fostering a culture of results within the architecture of the system-wide reform process to ensure its relevance and its ability to deliver on its mandate and to support member States' efforts to implement Sustainable Development Goal 11. As part of the process, UN-Habitat was leading a task team of United Nations entities in preparing a paper on United Nations system-wide coherence for sustainable urban development.

59. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the secretariat and the presenters for the information provided and requested that the Committee be kept apprised of the reform process, stressing that the reform of the United Nations development system presented an enormous opportunity for UNEP to increase its influence, engage with United Nations partners, strategically place its expertise, make changes at the country level, deliver on its mandate, and further contribute to the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed that the United Nations reform be included as a standing item on the agendas of Committee meetings.

60. Two representatives requested the secretariat to prepare an overview of the changes that UNEP could expect from the United Nations system reform, including in terms of changes to policies and guidelines and the resident coordinator system. One representative said that the overview should also include timelines and suggested that, in the context of the reform, consideration should be given to the fact that UNEP was primarily a normative, and not an implementing, agency, and the Environment Assembly should be involved in devising any necessary adjustments. He further suggested that member States should examine the budgetary and other implications of the management and development pillars of the reform, both separately and together, and asked whether the relationship or reporting lines between resident coordinators and UNEP headquarters were expected to change as a result of the reform.

61. Another representative sought clarification on how the United Nations reform would be reflected in the new UNEP programme of work, and conveyed her expectation that UNEP would follow up on General Assembly resolutions 71/243, on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and 72/279, on the repositioning of the United Nations development system in the context of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system.

62. One representative said that the contribution by UNEP to drafting the system-wide strategic document called for in paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 72/279 was critical, as it would ensure that the environment-related Sustainable Development Goals were appropriately resourced. He called for stronger engagement between UNEP and other United Nations entities and for stronger coordination of environmental issues within the United Nations system, including through a strengthened Environment Management Group.

63. Responding to comments, Mr. Tripathi thanked representatives for their remarks and said that UNEP was playing a critical role in the reform process, including by actively engaging in various processes and by mainstreaming environmental and climate-related issues, which were central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, into the development agenda. The secretariat planned to hold a retreat to examine how regional arrangements could be used more efficiently and produce greater returns for the United Nations system, and it would provide regular updates to member States on the reform process.

64. Also responding to comments, Mr. Wendal drew attention to the reform public website (<https://reform.un.org/>), which was updated every two weeks and provided detailed information on the reform process. With regard to a query on the advantages of the reform for UNEP, he said that, given the nature of the 2030 Agenda, it was important for every United Nations entity to articulate its "collaborative advantage," that is, how others benefitted from collaborating with it and how it benefited from collaborating with others, including at the country, regional and global levels, and its role as a partner in the multi-stakeholder partnerships foreseen under Sustainable Development Goal 17. He further suggested that each United Nations entity should drive its own reform process to become the best entity it could be, while fully integrating and leveraging the wider United Nations system reform, including the reinvigoration of the United Nations resident coordinator system. The World Health Organization had produced a report in December 2018 that explained to its governing bodies and constituents how the organization was reforming and contributing to making the entire United Nations system better, and he encouraged other entities to produce similar reports.

65. The acting Executive Director said that UNEP was heavily involved in the discussions and substantive aspects of the reform process and would keep member States abreast of the reforms. She said that senior management both in New York and in Nairobi had been discussing what the reforms meant for UNEP, its programme of work and its processes and systems. With regard to the decentralization aspects of the reform, the Director of Corporate Services was looking at the issue of delegation of authority and extracting lessons learned that could be shared with colleagues in New York. At the regional and country levels, the Asia-Pacific regional office was developing an environment diagnostic tool that could help United Nations resident coordinators and country teams in the region to assess the environmental needs of specific countries and the interventions needed, and the senior management team hoped that the tool could be customized and deployed in other regions. Meanwhile, the Western Asia office had invited United Nations resident coordinators to attend the fourth session of the Environment Assembly in order to expose them to the work of UNEP.

66. Responding to questions raised, the acting Executive Director said that the secretariat could disaggregate data on the different reform pillars in future reports to the Committee and would take into account the need to balance UNEP normative and operational work, stressing that many resident coordinators saw value in its normative work, such as its Emissions Gap and Global Environment Outlook flagship reports. With regard to possible changes in the reporting lines between resident coordinators and UNEP headquarters, it was too soon to tell what those changes might be although resident coordinators in some regions were asking for more information from the Nairobi office.

67. Responding to a query on the collaboration between UNEP and UN-Habitat, Mr. Kisob said that such collaboration included initiatives such as the Greener Cities Partnership and others on smart cities and the protection of ecosystems in cities.

Agenda item 7

Report of the subcommittee

68. The Committee took note of the document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/145/7).

Agenda item 8

Other matters

69. One representative, recalling that the decision to hold the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee and the fourth session of the Environment Assembly back to back had been made on a provisional basis, proposed that the Committee discuss at its next meeting whether future meetings of the open-ended Committee and sessions of the Environment Assembly should be held back to back, or whether there should be a gap between the two, in line with past practice. He further requested the secretariat to prepare an information note for consideration by member States describing the way in which UNEP had worked in the past in order to facilitate a discussion on the issue.

70. He further proposed that the Committee discuss at its next meeting of the Committee whether the term “UN Environment” should be used to refer to the United Nations Environment Programme, and requested the secretariat to prepare a note on that issue for consideration by member States.

71. Another representative drew attention to a draft decision on the date and venue of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, which provided that the fifth meeting of the open-ended Committee and the fifth session of the Environment Assembly would be held back to back in February 2021.

72. Several representatives said that there was a need for member States to discuss issues pertaining to governance and procedures and for all representatives to be given the opportunity to participate in such discussions in the context of Committee meetings.

73. Following the discussion, the Committee agreed to request the secretariat to include as items on the agenda for its 146th meeting the issues of the timing of open-ended Committee meetings and the designations of the United Nations Environment Programme, and to prepare information notes on both issues for its consideration.

Agenda item 9

Closure of the meeting

74. The meeting was declared closed at 4.45 p.m. on Tuesday, 19 February 2019.

