



**146<sup>th</sup> meeting  
of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP  
20 June 2019**

**Interventions on behalf of the EU and its MS**

*Agenda Item 6: Report of the Executive Director*

- Madame Chair, distinguished colleagues; it is my privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.  
Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
- The EU and its Member States warmly welcome the new Executive Director, Ms Inger Andersen. Madame, we wish you all successes in leading this organisation for a better future of the humanity and the Planet. We look forward to working with you to strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, to support the organisation's adaptation to UN reform and to implement the outcomes of UNEA-4. Together we hope to address new challenges as they arise.
- We also thank the Acting Executive Director, Ms Joyce Msuya, for the skilful handling of the organisation *ad interim* and the efficient and successful preparation and handling of the UNEA meeting.
- The EU and its Member States would like to congratulate the Chairperson and the members of the newly selected Bureau of the CPR and thank the outgoing Bureau, led by Ambassador Francisca Ashietey-Odunton of Ghana,

for their hard work over the past two years. We hope that the new Bureau will build upon that to ensure an effective and strategic oversight. The European Union and its Member States stand ready to support you in this endeavour.

- Let us finally welcome new Permanent Representatives and Deputy Permanent Representatives and say good-bye to colleagues leaving their posting in Nairobi thanking them for excellent cooperation.
- Madam Chairperson, the EU and its Member States would like to thank the Executive Director and the UNEP Secretariat for the Quarterly report to the CPR. We continue consider it as a relevant, informative and well organised reporting tool that has improved from one meeting to another.
- We would like, however, to comment on the timing of this report. Receiving on 20 June a report that covers activities ending in March is not a best solution. We recommend that in future the reports' coverage is better aligned with the CPR dates or vice versa. (For instance, in the next CPR meeting, on 11 October, we would expect the report to cover, to the extent possible, the period ending in September.)
- With regard to resources, in several places, the report makes references to additional financial needs, be it in the context of UNEA-4 resolutions or other mandates, e.g. the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration, or the Secretary-General's Climate Summit. We would like to request the Secretariat to provide the CPR with respective cost estimates for the abovementioned activities.
- We would like to echo the report's call on Member States to provide their contributions to the Environment Fund as an indispensable means to increase the security and stability of the organisation in line with paragraph 88 of "The future we want".

- Lastly, EU and its Member States welcome the overview of ongoing and planned audits and evaluations. We would like to request that the existing reports are made available on-line and web-links are clearly indicated in the future reports and on the UNEP's website. We would also like to recall our standing request for keeping the CPR updated on the progress and findings of the audits and evaluations.

*Agenda Item 7: Follow-up of UNEA-4*

- EU and its Member States welcome the outcomes of UNEA-4. A significant number of important decisions has been made and we look forward to a rigorous implementation of them.
- As CPR, we have the primary duty of overseeing this process. UNEA-4 gave a strong mandate to improve the reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget and UNEA resolutions as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the governing bodies of UNEP.
- The several processes identified for discussion under this Agenda point will contribute to this endeavour. We would like to offer our thoughts and recommendations on each of them individually.
- We however, we would like to repeat our request to the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau, to present to the CPR an overview of the planning and timelines for the preparation of important work-streams in the coming period, following-up the outcomes of UNEA-4 (and other relevant decisions). Whereas some information in this regard is provided for resolutions covered under agenda items 7 b-e, the following work streams need to be defined:

- the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023 and the Medium Term Strategy 2022-2025;
- follow-up to resolution 4/14 ("Sustainable nitrogen management") in lead up to report at UNEA-6;
- the process for deciding on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA).

*7a: Assessment and lessons learned*

- EU and its Member States thank the Secretariat for the updated document Lessons learned from UNEA-4 and warmly welcome the identified recommendations and areas for improvement.
- We have comprehensively commented on this document in the Subcommittee meeting on 11 June and shared our written inputs afterwards. We will forward our comments as part of the input to this meeting as well and recommend that the package informs the preparations of UNEA-5 and the review of UNEP governing bodies. (See Annex)

*7b: Implementation of decision UNEP/EA.4/1 (PoW/B 2020-2021)*

- EU and its Member States would like to thank UNEP for the comprehensive note identifying the implications of the UNDS reform implementation to UNEP and UNEP's planned efforts in supporting the reform.
- We share UNEP's positive perception of the reform.
- We recommend that UNEP would take into account the recommendations made by the Joint Inspection Unit last year (see JIU/REP/2018/5), where appropriate and applicable. The report by the JIU i.a. identifies opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation. These recommendations could help to further develop the ideas formulated under part 5. "Business innovations and efficiencies".

- In general we would appreciate some clarification on the timelines proposed. Most actions with regards to cooperation frameworks and staff capacities seem to be planned for the end of this year and later in 2020. We would recommend UNEP to undertake the review of its country presence strategy as soon as possible, since many crucial decisions have to be taken in this regard (about country presence, deployment of advisors in other agencies or at RC-bureaus, etc.).
- For efficient implementation of the reform UNEP needs to focus on partnerships with other UN actors. A more coordinated UN country team and an independent resident coordinator provides an opportunity for UNEP to contribute to UN's work without having to be present in the field.
- It's vital that UNEP is engaged in the work with the UNDAF, otherwise we risk that the environment dimension is very weak or completely missing. By actively embracing the opportunities provided by the UNDS, UNEP can effectively advance mainstreaming of the environment.
- EU and its Member States see the UNDS reform as an enabling opportunity to deliver better and more efficiently and strengthen coordination within the UN system at regional and country levels. (Also enhanced linkages of the EMG with UNSDG and RCs will be very helpful.
- We encourage UNEP's efforts in supporting the UNDS through e.g. UNEP 'menu of services' offered to UNCT and RCs as well as review of country and regional presence strategies. However, we would welcome more information from UNEP on what in practice the 'menu of services' would entail.
- We also welcome the considerations of strengthening staff capacities on SDGs, improving SDG data collection and monitoring, in particular on considerations for integrating environmental sustainability into UN operations and management of premises.
- On this new human resource strategy, we strongly encourage UNEP to link this not only with the UNDS reform, but also with the strengthening of foundational controls and principles for management and administrations (as outlined in the document for agenda item 8).

- We would be interested in hearing from UNEP some further background on the open data policy, and how it relates to UNEP Live.
- We would also appreciate a clarification what is meant, in this context, by business operations (is it e.g. procurement?).
- With regard to the funding of the RC system: We are pleased that further steps are taken to implement the 1% levy. On the other hand, it look surprising that UNEP does not yet have a complete picture of current resources dedicated to joint UN activities (15% requirement), since UNEP already has a system wide mandate (see p.4).
- We would like to request the Secretariat to provide an indication of potential costs and savings to UNEP, linked to the implementation of the UNDS reform (e.g. the paper identifies internal policies, guidelines and regulations that UNEP needs to assess to implement the UNDS reform; some of which may also have budgetary and funding implications).
- Finally, we would like to thank UNEP for the initiative to bring to Nairobi the Head of the Transition Team, Ms Gunilla Olsson. It is indeed very valuable, as it offers an opportunity for the Member States to strengthen our support to UNEP in its adaptation to the UN development system reform.

*7c: Implementation of decision UNEP/EA.4/2 (UNEA-5/Review)*

- EU and its Member States would like to thank UNEP for the overview of the calendar for the review process, as well as the thought starter and questions. This helps to outline the overall process and steps to be taken over the next two years.
- We underline the importance of this process as it will improve efficiency and effectiveness of UNEA's governing bodies, and thereby help strengthening UNEP and UNEA. Many issues for improvement have been identified already, for instance in the Lessons learned paper from UNEA4 and previous UNEAs.
- We welcome the proposed input paper aiming to identify concrete options for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNEP governing bodies as specified in paragraph 10 of the decision 4/2.

- In our view it is important to clearly distinguish between the 2 major work-streams central to the role of UNEA's governing bodies with a view to see how these functions can be more effectively and efficiently performed by the relevant bodies, namely:
  - a) the role to provide strategic guidance and decisions (on UNEP's Programme of Work and its role to set the international environment agenda and as the authoritative voice on the environmental dimension of sustainable development), and
  - b) the oversight role on the implementation of UNEP's work (mandated through resolutions, including the Programme of Work).
- In this exercise it will be important to look at relevant practices from other UN bodies (for example: the decision-making or negotiation processes/procedures for resolutions, the roles, mandates and functioning of their bureaus). Indeed, many entities have gone through similar processes to streamline their operations. It is also important to provide opportunity for input from relevant stakeholders.
- We also highlight the importance of the selection of the co-chairs for the process and we look forward to the consolidated proposal outlining a consensual process to be developed by the CPR Chair for presentation in the ASC meeting in October 2019.
- We recognise and appreciate the relation between the CPR review process and the other elements of the decision, e.g. the development of an action plan for implementation of paragraph 88 of the Future We Want. As requested in the Subcommittee meeting on 11 June, we would appreciate information on proposed timelines for these processes. We would also welcome an update on progress of the preparation of these documents in the next CPR meeting in October.
- A link with other paragraphs of Decision 4/2 should be mentioned as well, as they very closely relate to the scope of the review and may be influenced by the process, specifically: OP2 (format and agenda of OECPR-5: CPR in consultation with UNEA Bureau); OP4 (annotations to UNEA-5 agenda: CPR in consultation with UNEA Bureau); OP5 UNEA-5 theme (UNEA Bureau in consultation with CPR); OP6 (submission of draft resolutions 8 weeks before OECPR-5); OP7 (submission of draft decisions 8 weeks before OECPR-5).
- As also mentioned in the document, we agree that there are close connections with the resolution UNEP/EA.4/Res.22 on the follow-up of implementation of UNEA resolutions

and that the guidance to be provided by the MS for the reporting frameworks should be taken into account when considering paragraph 10 d). We would also welcome more information from UNEP on how the UNEA resolutions could be better linked with the preparation of the Programme of Work and Budget and the use of the Environment Fund.

- We assume that the UNEA-4 Lessons learned exercise, including inputs received from the Member States is duly taken into account in the Mapping document, along any inputs requested specifically by 19 July.
- Comments on Figure 1 (which we find helpful):
  - Meetings of subcommittee should not be considered informal;
  - CPR is composed of UN Member States and members and specialised agencies (e.g. EU);
  - It would be useful to also include a separate table outlining the process of preparation/negotiation/follow-up of resolutions and the tasks each body, including the bureau, carry out in this process.
- EU and its Member States will provide written comments to the questions posed by UNEP by the deadline 19 July.

*7d: Implementation of resolution UNEP/EA.4/Res.22 (Monitoring)*

- EU and its Member States thank UNEP for the clear options provided for follow-up of implementation of resolutions (UNEP/EA.4/Res.22) as well as their useful comparison.
- We recognise the challenges of the current reporting framework described in the document.
- In general we support the idea for a reporting mechanism that fulfils the mandate of UNEP/EA.4/Res 22 while avoiding unnecessary added reporting burden for UNEP Secretariat and makes use of existing structures, where possible.
- The follow-up of this resolution should be seen in conjunction with the decision UNEP/EA.4/2 and should be implemented simultaneously in an iterative process. We also believe that the implementation of UNEA resolutions and implementation of the Programme of Work should be considered in conjunction, including with a view of providing further guidance for preparation of resolutions in a manner that will facilitate their consecutive follow-up.



- Nevertheless, we see scope for improvement of the document in describing how the different options respond to the 4 key challenges identified (i.e. integrating and rationalising the relationship between the mandate in resolutions or the MOD with the activities in the PoW; lack of a standardised process/procedure for monitoring and encouraging/facilitating reporting by other stakeholders, improved feedback and guidance on reports on implementation of past resolutions; and improved guidance on financial implications of resolutions beyond the PoW/B), in particular in chapter 4 (page 6). We would welcome UNEP to provide further clarifications on this (both at the CPR meeting, as well as in the follow up of the document).
- We believe that an important principle to guide the design of the monitoring and reporting mechanism is that it should build upon existing data collection systems, as well as to ensure that the results will be used to guide future decisions by both UNEP and Member States (to improve and/or guide future implementation).
- Therefore EU and its Member States, **support tentatively option two: rationalisation**, but would like to have more information on how in practice the monitoring mechanism will be organised, with a view to respond to the challenges identified. We underline the need to integrate work on the monitoring mechanism (as specified in para 3 and 4) and work on the reporting framework (para 5), as well as to develop a comprehensive calendar to get feedback from the CPR on related work-streams.
- We agree that it will be very useful to enable reporting also by Member States, other UN organisations as well as stakeholders, and to take this into account when designing the monitoring mechanism. However, we need to be realistic with the expectations of reporting by others. We therefore propose to take a stepwise approach where UNEP starts building the mechanism with readily available information, including the possibility to link the mechanism with other reporting frameworks such as related to the implementation of the SDGs and MEAs.
- We welcome that the mechanism is envisaged to build on the Programme Information and Management System (PIMS). We hope that this functionality over time will allow for accessing individual activities/projects, ideally through an on-line browsing tools.

- We also believe that the document should include references to the dedicated website summarising the implementation of resolutions (required by the Resolution 4/22 OP 4b)<sup>1</sup>. The paper is not clear about UNEP's plans to develop this website and we urge the Secretariat to move forward with this, using existing information, reports, briefings etc.
- We also find the reference to Briefings misleading. It should remain a prerogative of the CPR/Bureau to request various briefings (whether or not on the implementation of resolutions). Hence, this element should not feature as a method distinguishing between proposed options.
- Finally, EU and its Member States would like to seek clarity on budgetary implications of the proposed activities. It is our understanding that the work on the reporting framework will be done within existing resources. On the other hand, we imagine that the work on monitoring mechanism may require additional resources. Can UNEP confirm this understanding and complement the options with an overview of the financial implications for each of the proposed scenario?

*7e: Implementation of resolution UNEP/EA.4/Res.23 (GEO future)*

- We would like in first place to thank the nominated members of the Steering Committee for their availability to take on the important task of preparing the options for the future of the Global Environment Outlook.
- We thank UNEP for handling the nomination process and preparing the information note on the Steering Committee of the GEO.
- We would like to request UNEP to provide more information on the process and the timelines of developing the options document and the consultative process.
- Finally, we would like to clarify that one of the members of the Steering Committee has been nominated by the European Union and we would like that this is presented accordingly in the document.

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<sup>1</sup> Indeed, this request for a dedicated website which links the different sub-programmes to the implementation of resolutions was central to the request by MS in UNEA 4 res 22. In our view OP 4 sets out clear terms of reference for this monitoring mechanism through a webpage, which: " c. Identifies existing linkages between each resolution and the Programme of Work and Budget; d. Provides links to existing reports related to UNEA resolutions; e. Provides the opportunity for Members States to voluntarily report on national implementation efforts; f. Based on available information, including existing UNEP and national voluntary reports, summarizes specific challenges that have hindered implementation efforts, including those of member States".



## ANNEX

### **Detailed comments related to Agenda item 7a Assessment and lessons learned**

- EU/MS warmly welcome the document and its analysis of successes and areas for improvement.
- We support the most of the recommendations. More specifically:
- Recommendation 1 (UNEA theme selection): EU/MS believe that the proposal to invite Member States to consider to define themes or general focus areas that cover more than one future session of the UN Environment Assembly is interesting. The HLPF and other major environmental meeting calendars should be taken into account, also when deciding on any singular UNEA theme. Furthermore, MS should be encouraged to take into account the outcomes of relevant scientific assessment reports, when selecting a theme.
- Recommendation 2 (Ministerial Declaration): We consider that it would be useful if the Declaration – in addition to contributing to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda – could also contribute to the annual theme of the HLPF and relevant to the SDG's that are reviewed.
- Recommendation 3 (Resolutions): We welcome that the Secretariat has already noted the linkages with UNEA Decision 4/2 (L.29), paragraph 10 a) – c). This "Lessons learnt" paper can overall provide useful food for thought for the CPR based review process.
- Recommendation 4 (Political outcomes): We fully support this recommendation, especially the recognition of the responsibility of Member States in bringing up UNEA's messages, also at the meetings of MEAs.
- Recommendation 6 (participation of Stakeholders): EU/MS agree that more should be done to ensure a more meaningful participation of Stakeholders.
- Recommendation 8 (Availability of documents): the timely submission of resolutions is a key issue and should also be looked into in the CPR-based review process.
- Recommendation 9 (Balanced programme of UNEA): More thought should be given on how the ministerial engagement and 'political ownership' of the outcomes of UNEA can be ensured/improved.
- Recommendation 11 (Logistic support): We appreciate the continued attention to improve logistics and technology to support the meetings. In particular, further improvement could be made to provide access and transparency on availability of documents through the website, as well as maintaining and improving information technology and internet tools to facilitate the participation of Member States who do not have resident missions in Nairobi. Better on-line access could also positively affect the carbon footprint of the event.
- One issue that is not included in this Lessons learned document is related to the costs. We would appreciate if the Secretariat could include a separate section indicating what steps could be taken to further lower the costs of future meetings, e.g. as part of the budgeting for the next UNEA.