

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday 12 September  
10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri  
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for Agenda Item 6:  
Visual identity of the UN Environment Programme**

This note serves as a background document for consideration of Agenda Item 6: Visual identity of the UN Environment Programme. The topic was considered by the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its meeting on 3 September 2019, whereby the Bureau welcomed the initiative of the Executive Director to phase out the short form "UN Environment" and to instead revert to the globally recognized acronym "UNEP" in all future communication where an acronym/short form is needed. As a consequence, the Executive Director has also proposed to adjust the current logo of the organization, for final consideration and approval of Member States. With respect to the choice of logo, the Bureau expressed general agreement with option 1 in the background note. The Bureau decided to add this topic as a new agenda item for the meeting of the Subcommittee scheduled for 12 September 2019, with a view to receive further guidance from member States.

*Members of the Committee are invited to express their views on the proposal from the Executive Director, including with regard to the two options for the logo as reflected in Annex 2 and 3 of this background note. Should the Committee agree to option 1, it is further recommended that the Environment Assembly would formalize the agreement through a formal decision at its Fifth Session.*

## **Draft: Note for Committee of Permanent Representatives re: acronym/name/logo**

The purpose of this Note is (i) to address the use of the short form/acronym of the United Nations Environment Programme; and (ii) to seek guidance on the logo for the United Nations Environment Programme.

Since its creation in 1972, the United Nations Environment Programme has steadfastly pursued its mission to protect our planet, becoming the leading global environmental authority. Today, that mission is more urgent than ever. At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the United Nations Environment Programme be as effective as possible. To that end, clear, unambiguous communication is critical to inspire, inform and encourage all regions, countries and people to protect our world and live more sustainably.

Bearing this in mind, the United Nations Environment Programme wishes to clarify the use of terminology with respect to its name and its short form/acronym and to address the question of its logo in order to promote effective and consistent communication.

### **Name and acronym**

The name of the United Nations Environment Programme was adopted by the General Assembly by its resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972. This name has never changed, just as the overall mission of the Programme has remained the same. However, since 1972, the Programme as well as its Governing Bodies have as a matter of practice, used the acronym, “UNEP” as the short form for the Programme.

Since 2017 and based on a decision by the then Executive Director, the secretariat has used the term “UN Environment” as an alternative to the acronym “UNEP”,

However, the use of the term “UN Environment”, has not met with the agreement and approval of all Member States.

Consequently, the Executive Director, deems it advisable to return to the globally recognised acronym “UNEP” that has been in use since 1972 in all future communication where an acronym/short form is needed, that includes, inter alia, official documents, publications, and social media. The term “UN Environment” will therefore be phased out by the Secretariat.

### **Logo and visual identity of the United Nations Environment Programme**

The current logo and visual identity, which was introduced in 2017 (see Annex 1 for ease of reference), has evolved since the Programme’s creation in 1972 to reflect modern design trends across the United Nations system and the public and private sectors. This visual identity resonates with today’s sophisticated, social media-savvy public audience.

In line with the phasing out of the short form “UN Environment” as referred to above, the Executive Director proposes to adjust the current logo, and would welcome the guidance and approval of Member States to this end. The Executive Director therefore submits to Member States for their consideration the following two options with respect to the logo:

- (i) The first option – presented in Annex 2 - entails adding the word “programme” to the existing design. This option would be cost-effective, cause minimal disruption to our critical core mission, and would also preserve hard-won public awareness of, and affinity with the Programme’s online identity.
- (ii) The second option – as laid out in Annex 3 - would entail returning to the original logo used since the Programme’s creation in 1972. There is a risk, however, that this option would appear anachronistic in a rapidly evolving digital world and would fail to convey with the same immediacy the agency’s cutting-edge role in environmental action and the radical transformation of global societies and economies.

**Proposed course of action**

The Executive Director will present this proposal on the logo and the visual identity to the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its meeting on 3 September 2019 and, subject to the Bureau's guidance, to the Committee itself, bearing in mind its role and mandate as the inter-sessional Governing Body of the Programme.

Once endorsed by Member States through the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the United Nations Environment Programme will implement the agreed adjustments immediately, in a cost-effective manner.

Should the Committee agree to the Executive Director's recommendation in favour of the first option for an adjusted logo and visual identity, it is further recommended that the Environment Assembly formalize such decision at its Fifth Session.

Regardless of the final choice of logo, the United Nations Environment Programme will seek to ensure minimal disruption by implementing a new visual identity pragmatically, ensuring that existing (print) resources are depleted without financial implications.

The United Nations Environment Programme looks forward to the guidance and support of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in arriving at a decision on these issues.

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## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Logos introduced in 2017

English



French



Spanish



Russian



Chinese



Arabic



Annex 2: Proposed adjusted Logo (Option 1)



Annex 3: Original Logo from 1972 (Option 2)

English



French



Spanish



Russian



Chinese



Arabic

