

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday 12 September 2019  
10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri  
Conference Room 4

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.**

1. H.E. Mr. Fernando Estellita Lins de Salvo Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representative, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil opened the meeting and invited H.E. Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway, to join him on the podium as a representative of the President of UN Environment Assembly so as to introduce the outcome of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly.
2. The meeting agenda was adopted.

### **Agenda Item 2: Briefing on the outcome of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly.**

3. The representative of the President of the Assembly briefed the meeting on the outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly, which was held on 3 July 2019 in Trondheim, Norway. She underlined that the meeting was well-attended and that discussions were productive. She referred to the 'thought-starter' document and highlighted the three broad areas for the proposed themes. She also stressed the importance of finding a theme that inspires concrete action to address key environmental challenges.
4. The Chair underlined that the consultation process for the theme is a member state-driven process and called for broad discussion within the Committee. He also referred to his letter dated 9 September 2019 outlining a tentative schedule of consultations on the theme of the Assembly and also encouraged regional and political groups to consider the matter within their respective groups in order to be prepared for the upcoming consultations. The Chair highlighted that, following consultations in the Committee, the Bureau of the Assembly is mandated to decide the theme of UNEA-5 by 31 December 2019.
5. The Secretariat provided a brief presentation introducing the three proposed thematic areas, emanating from the discussions in the UNEA Bureau on the basis of a Secretariat proposal. Reference was made to the 'thought-starter' document, which was annexed to the letter from the UNEA President and made available on the UNEA Bureau meeting portal. The Secretariat underlined the importance of choosing a theme built on scientific evidence, building on the findings in the GEO-6 report.
6. Member States welcomed the information from the UNEA Presidency, the Chair of the CPR and the Secretariat, and provided the following initial guidance for the upcoming consultation on the theme:

- The theme should be action-oriented, contribute to sustainable development as a whole, and promote increased visibility to the Assembly;
  - There is a balance to be struck between a theme that provides clear direction and scope, while at the same time ensuring the theme is not too narrow;
  - The theme should enjoy maximum ownership by member States and regional groups, including through effective consultation with the CPR, and it should also enjoy ownership of the broader environmental community, including interested stakeholder groups;
  - A main objective of the theme should be to support implementation of existing agreements including through strengthened cooperation and partnerships;
  - The theme should be relevant for UNEP’s core mandate and avoid overlap with the responsibilities of other UN entities;
  - Some said the theme should be constructed through language consensually agreed at the UN, avoiding unnecessary debate on definitions;
  - There should be a conceptual link between the UNEA 5 theme and previous UNEA themes, and consideration could also be given to the relevance of the theme for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the creation of UNEP in 2022;
  - Further information and clarification to interested Member States on the proposed thematic areas may be useful. Some found the third thematic “nexus” option difficult to understand and with elements where UNEA has a limited mandate.
  - One member State suggested to replace the term “clean environment” by “sound environment”, with regard to the first thematic area.
7. Several member States expressed a preliminary preference for one or the other of the proposed thematic areas; other member States indicated willingness and readiness to consider integrated alternatives in view of achieving broad consensus.
8. The representative of the President of the Assembly thanked member States for the feedback provided and acknowledged the interlinkages between many of the issues brought up by the Committee. She also re-emphasized the need to identify a theme that is easy to communicate to the wider audience.
9. The Chair also thanked member States for their inputs, encouraged them to submit their comments in writing to the Secretariat, and reminded delegations that informal consultations on the theme with regional and political groups will also be organized in the context of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee meeting on 7 – 11 October. The Chair further informed that the next round of dedicated consultations on the theme for UNEA-5 will be held in a Subcommittee meeting scheduled for 31 October 2019.

### **Agenda Item 3: Preparations for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee.**

10. The Secretariat provided an update on preparations for the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee, on the basis of a draft provisional agenda and structure which had been revised on the basis of guidance provided by the Bureau at its meeting on 3 September 2019. The Secretariat also confirmed that the background documents for the meeting will be made available by 16 September 2019, three weeks before the meeting.
11. Member States welcomed the briefing, approved the agenda and structure of the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee, and provided the following general guidance to the Secretariat:
- The key importance of timely availability of documents on the meeting portal;
  - The need to ensure that the content, length and timing of the Secretariat presentations will allow for in interactive discussion with member States;
  - The importance of providing more information update on the implementation of the travel audit;
  - Support for the initiative to provide financial assistance to promote participation from developing countries, especially from countries without diplomatic

- representation in Nairobi;
  - Request for additional information on the recent meeting of UN Resident Coordinators in Africa at the UN Compound in Nairobi.
12. The Secretariat took note of the guidance provided and confirmed that presentations would allow for an interactive discussion with member States, in the presence of lead Division Directors. The Secretariat also committed to provide more information on the UN Resident Coordinator meeting in Nairobi, and confirmed that member States will receive an update the implementation of the travel audit, including in the context of the next quarterly report of the Executive Director which will be considered at the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of CPR on 11 October.

**Agenda Item 4: Implementation of UNEP/EA.4/HLS. 1 Ministerial Declaration.**

13. The Secretariat provided an update on the follow-up, monitoring and reporting of the Ministerial Declaration adopted at UNEA-4, on the basis of a background document made available online on the meeting portal.
14. Member States welcomed the update and expressed support for the information provided, while highlighting the following comments:
- The Secretariat was reminded of the need to inform Member States on the status of implementation of all resolutions and decisions, as well as the ministerial declaration;
  - Suggested that a clear distinction needs to be made between the agreement to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025, and other more general efforts to implement the ministerial declaration;
  - Requested more information on how the global environmental data strategy will be developed, including on key objectives, partners, milestones, estimated budget and sources of financed;
  - Requested further clarification on performance indicators, especially in relation to existing SDG indicators.
15. The Secretariat took note of the guidance provided and committed to revise the document for further discussion at an upcoming meeting of the subcommittee.

**Agenda Item 5: Implementation of the UN Environment Programme Marine Strategy.**

16. The Secretariat presented a progress update on the implementation of the Marine Strategy on the basis of a background document made available online on the meeting portal, with particular focus on three resolutions adopted at UNEA-4 relating to marine plastic litter and microplastics; protection of the marine environment from land-based activities; and sustainable nitrogen management.
17. The meeting welcomed the update and provided the following guidance to the Secretariat:
- On the future of the Global Programme of Action on the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities, member States requested the Secretariat to share the Intergovernmental Review Meeting report and to brief member States on the outcomes of recent informal consultations, in particular with regard to governance-related issues.
  - On marine litter, member States requested additional information on the development of a multi-stakeholder platform and on linkages with related work under G20 cooperation, and asked to extend the expert nomination deadline for the Scientific Advisory Committee;
  - On sustainable nitrogen management, member States welcomed the briefing and recommended the Secretariat to consider different the impact of nitrogen pollution in different regions of the world and to ensure that new initiatives build on existing

workstreams. Member States also welcomed the launch of the global campaign on nitrogen management in Sri Lanka on 23-24 October 2019.

18. A stakeholder representative informed the meeting that the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under its Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) had allocated 20 million GBP in support the South Asia Nitrogen Hub.
19. The Secretariat took note of the information requests and committed to provide additional information in writing and at the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee.

**Agenda Item 6: Visual Identity of the UN Environment Programme.**

20. The Secretariat presented a proposal from the Executive Director on UNEP's visual identity, on the basis of a background document made available online on the meeting portal. The proposal had already been considered by the Bureau of the CPR at its meeting on 3 September 2019.
21. Member States raised no objection to the proposal made by the Executive Director to use the acronym "UNEP" as the short form of the United Nations Environment Programme, and adjust the logo and visual identity of UN Environment Programme in accordance with option 1 in the background document. Following the approval of the proposal at the 147<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on 11 October 2019, the agreement is expected to be formalized through a decision at the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly.

**Agenda Item 7: Other matters.**

22. No other matters were raised during the meeting.

**Agenda Item 8: Closing of the meeting.**

23. The meeting closed at 1:30 pm.