

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 31 October 2019
2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for the 1st consultation meeting on the Process for review
by the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

This background document has been developed to assist member States in their consideration of UNEA decision 4/2 subparagraph 10 (a), which reads “The preparation, working arrangements, and scheduling of sessions of the UNEA and the objectives, preparation, working arrangements and the scheduling of meetings of its subsidiary body, namely the meeting of the Open-ended CPR and the regular and annual meetings of the subcommittee of the CPR”, in the context of the Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives as mandated by paragraphs 9 – 13 of that decision. The document has been updated on the basis of the discussions at the 6th meeting of the Annual Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held in Nairobi 7 – 11 October 2019, and builds on Section III in document UNEP/CPR/SC2019/6 entitled “Note on the implementation of UNEA decision 4/2, ‘Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly’”.

Member States are invited to provide guidance to the co-facilitators on the various options outlined in the note, with a view to identifying concrete proposals for consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session.

Agenda items

- Consideration of the preparation, working arrangements and scheduling of sessions of the UN Environment Assembly (Decision 4/2, subparagraph 10 a part I)
- Consideration of the objectives, preparation, working arrangements and scheduling of meetings of the Assembly's subsidiary body (Decision 4/2, subparagraph 10 a part II)

I. Introduction

1. Paragraph 11 of decision 4/2 "Requests the Executive Director to conduct a mapping exercise and provide an input paper on the topics specified in paragraph 10 of the present decision at least 3 weeks ahead of the 6th annual subcommittee meeting." A [mapping exercise](#) was considered by the CPR at its 146th meeting held on 20 June 2019, and an input paper consisting of specific options was considered at the 6th annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR held on 9 October 2019.
2. Through the written inputs and oral remarks made at the annual subcommittee meeting, Member States and stakeholders stated that concrete options should be considered to clarify and strengthen the roles of UNEP governing bodies within the confines of the current rules of procedure of UNEA. While broadly supporting the Chair's consolidated proposal for a consensual process for review by the CPR, Member States emphasized the importance of ensuring remote participation by those not resident in Nairobi. More importantly, they stressed that the review process should remain open, inclusive, transparent and flexible.

II. Options related to UNEA and CPR objectives, preparation, working arrangements and scheduling

3. The subsequent sections provide an updated set of options for discussion focusing on paragraph 10:
 - a) *The preparation, working arrangements, and scheduling of sessions of the UNEA and the objectives, preparation, working arrangements and the scheduling of meetings of its subsidiary body, namely the meeting of the Open-ended CPR and the regular and annual meetings of the subcommittee of the CPR;*

4. Organization of UNEA

Dates

- 4.1. Clarify whether to continue the UNEA-3 and UNEA-4 practice of organizing the meetings of the open-ended CPR (OECPR) back-to-back with UNEA, possibly in combination with measures to ensure effective, participatory and inclusive intersessional preparations.

- 4.2. Facilitate participation by Geneva-based Permanent Representatives to UNEP by ensuring that UNEA dates do not overlap with the Human Rights Council or other major conferences/meetings in Geneva.

Theme

- 4.3. Clarify the “reach” of UNEA theme – i.e. whether it applies only to the high-level segment or whether it covers the entire five-day session. In addition, should the UNEA theme be a guiding factor for resolution preparation? Various events such as dialogues and webinars could also be organized to raise awareness about the theme in the lead up to UNEA.

Side events

- 4.4. Rationalize the number of side and other events to enable small delegations to participate and ensure that these events do not compete with negotiations.

Impact

- 4.5. Deepen UNEA’s imprint at the regional level by, for example, organizing interactive briefing sessions with the participation of the members of the UNEA Bureau during the regional forums of ministers of environment and/or the regional forums on sustainable development. Ensure that key UNEA outcomes and messages are duly considered and harvest policy insights at the regional level.

Multilateral environmental agreements

- 4.6. Foster closer dialogue and collaboration between UNEA and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and their governing bodies. This could be done for example through their Chairs or members of their respective Bureaus by identifying mutual priorities for cooperation and for possible intergovernmental decisions that promote coherence and synergies on substantive issues.
- 4.7. Mobilize MEAs participation in and contributions to UNEA, keeping in mind their respective mandates; organizing dedicated dialogue with MEAs could be explored, for example through the organization of an “MEA Day” during UNEA which would enable the MEA Chairs/Presidents or members of their respective Bureaus holding dialogue sessions on mutual priorities for cooperation that promote coherence and synergies on substantive issues.

Science-policy interface

- 4.8. Better leverage the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment to strengthen science-policy interface and find a strategic timing for the Forum in relation to OECPR and UNEA.
- 4.9. Alternatively, consider consolidating the Science-Policy-Business Forum and the Sustainable Innovation Expo into a single forum.
- 4.10. Bring together the heads of global environmental assessments and subsidiary scientific and technology bodies of the MEAs to discuss emerging environmental challenges and identify synergistic solutions.
- 4.11. Finalise flagship scientific assessments well in advance of UNEA so that delegations can reflect on the key findings from these assessments in their decision-making process.
- 4.12. Prepare “science briefs” in consultation with the scientific community and other stakeholders on the theme of UNEA and/or proposed resolutions, highlighting relevant scientific facts, ongoing initiatives and past resolutions.

- 4.13. Organize science-based discussions or “information sessions” with stakeholder participation on technical aspects of proposed resolutions.
- 4.14. Create a subsidiary scientific mechanism that can promote science-policy interface with relevant UNEP governing bodies.
- 4.15. Deepen UNEA’s imprint at the regional level by, for example, organizing interactive briefing sessions with the participation of the members of the UNEA Bureau during the regional forums of ministers of environment and/or the regional forums on sustainable development. Ensure that key UNEA outcomes and messages are duly considered and harvest policy insights at the regional level.

Stakeholder engagement

- 4.16. Improve stakeholder participation both during UNEA and OECPR and throughout the intersessional period, including in the context of selecting the UNEA theme, and at regional levels.
- 4.17. Encourage stronger participation from local, indigenous communities and small and medium-sized enterprises, learning from stakeholder engagement practices in processes such as the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.
- 4.18. Provide dedicated trainings or briefings for stakeholders on the UNEP governing bodies and how to contribute to them.

Relevant lessons-learned from UNEA-4

Lesson #1: Timely identification of politically appealing, strategic and policy-relevant themes for future UN Environment Assemblies and its High Level Sessions, based on broad consultations and benefiting from guidance from relevant scientific assessment reports, is of key importance.

Lesson #6: Further action and additional resources are necessary to ensure meaningful participation of Major Groups representatives at future UN Environment Assemblies.

Lesson #7: Regional environmental ministerial meetings, with stakeholder participation, provide a very valuable contribution to future UN Environment Assemblies.

Lesson #9: More consideration should be given to creating an optimal balance between political negotiations, the UNEA High-Level Segment, and official and non-official events, to ensure political ownership and alignment with its core mandate, and to avoid overloading the agenda of future UN Environment Assemblies.

5. CPR Meetings

Designation

- 5.1. Consider renaming the OECPR meeting, for example as a “Preparatory Committee” (PREPCOM), which convene biennially prior to UNEA, and the five-day annual subcommittee meetings, for example as a “Review and Oversight Committee” (ROC), to better reflect their functions and thereby also attract more attention and interest from stakeholders and capital-based experts.

Functions

- 5.2. Clarify or reinforce the role of the annual subcommittee, whose full potential may yet to be realized. Its oversight function on the implementation of the programme of work and

resolutions could be widened to also guide the tabling of new resolutions. The annual subcommittee may also wish to consider such reports as those from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Joint Inspection Unit and the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

- 5.3. Clarify the differences between regular quarterly CPR meetings (convening four times per year, chaired by the CPR Chair with interpretation provided)¹, subcommittee meetings (convened 1-2 times per month on a needs basis and chaired by the CPR Chair, without interpretation) and Secretariat briefings to the CPR (convened ad hoc and Chaired by the Secretariat).

Decision-making

- 5.4. Improve the identification and formulation of decisions and conclusions from CPR meetings to provide clear guidance and strategic direction to the Secretariat and other implementing partners on the implementation of the programme of work and UNEA resolutions.

Secretariat support

- 5.5. Reinforce the practice that supporting documents for regular meetings of the CPR and the annual subcommittee are made available online at least 3 weeks in advance, and for subcommittee meetings and bureau meetings at least 2 weeks in advance.
- 5.6. Solicit comments from Member States and stakeholders on meeting documents in advance of each meeting and address them during the meeting where relevant and possible.
- 5.7. Improve the interactive online calendar of meetings for the UNEP governing bodies, building on guidance from the CPR Bureau.
- 5.8. Maintain and strengthen the Secretariat's information technology support to facilitate for remote participation of representatives from non-Nairobi-based Member States and stakeholders.

Relevant lessons-learned from UNEA-4

Lesson # 8: Timely availability of official working documents for future UN Environment Assemblies and for its subsidiary bodies remains a fundamental prerequisite.

Lesson #11: Logistic support during the 4th session of the UN Environment Assembly was effective, but there is room for further improvement.

III. Compilation of practices in other governing bodies that could offer insights for the CPR review process

1. At the last Plenipotentiary Conference in 2018, it was agreed to focus on the substantive content, and no side events were held.
2. Recently, the secretariat has aided in organizing a few informal, inter-regional preparatory meetings to initiate discussions and start negotiations to find consensus before the start of the conference.

¹ Pursuant to Governing Council decision 14/4 "Periodicity and duration of sessions of the Governing Council" of 1987: "Decides that the Committee of Permanent Representatives established by Council decision 13/2 should continue to meet at least four times a year with the Executive Director on dates to be determined by the Committee itself, in consultation with the Executive Director, at its September meeting."

3. Prior to COPs (one or two months before), regional preparatory meetings were organized by the Secretariat, funded by voluntary contributions, in order to allow the UN regions to discuss the agenda items, familiarize with the meeting documents and develop their regional positions.
 4. Outcomes of the meetings are captured in official summary records, drafted by the Executive Committee Secretariat and approved by the Council at the following meeting. The summary records are extremely brief and capture only the decision.
 5. Continue to implement newly introduced procedure of using electronic means (timers, microphone cut off) to limit delegation statements to 3 minutes for individual delegations and 5 minutes for delegations speaking behalf of a group.
 6. The Secretariat wish to completely stop printing documentation for all meetings in compliance with the greening the UN initiative.
 7. The Corporate Secretariat continues innovation and refinement of systems to capture and systematize knowledge and automatic distribution of documents. The Secretariat has developed AMWeb, a site that is optimized for viewing on mobile devices.
 8. An on-line portal for delegates to deal with everything related to a formal session such as credentials could be ideal.
 9. For the International Labour Conference (ILC), each national delegation is composed of two government members, one worker and one employer members. The duration of the ILC was progressively reduced to the two-week format.
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