

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday 26 November 2019
1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
United Nations Office of Nairobi
Conference Room 4

MEETING SUMMARY

Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Agenda item 1: Implementation of paragraphs 9-13 of Decision UNEP/EA.4/2 entitled “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly”.

1. Mr Mapopa Kaunda, Malawi, and Mr. Marcus Davies, Canada, opened the meeting and invited the members of the Committee to continue consideration of paragraph 10 a) of Decision UNEP/EA.4/2, which was initiated at the subcommittee meeting on 31 October 2019. Specifically, member States were invited to continue to consider:
 - The preparation, working arrangements and scheduling of sessions of the UN Environment Assembly (Decision 4/2, subparagraph 10 a part I)
 - The objectives, preparation, working arrangements and scheduling of meetings of the Assembly’s subsidiary body (Decision 4/2, subparagraph 10 a part II)

Organization of UNEA - Theme: options 4.3.

2. Some Member States observed that the theme should cover and guide the High-Level segment, side events and ministerial declaration, as well the tabling of resolutions. Others advanced that it should be applied to the full duration of UNEA, not just the High-level segment, and it should be a tool to help countries to come together. Some member States considered that the theme should not guide the resolutions in a strong way, as it would create a precedence in breach of the rules of procedure.

Organization of UNEA - Side events: options 4.4

3. Many member States recommended that the side events should be rationalized to enable delegates to participate in the main deliberations of the assembly. The discussion focused on how to rationalize the side events, both in terms of the number but also with regard to the scheduling, including with regard to the use of methodology and criteria. Some Member States raised the possibility of also organize side events during the Open-Ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Organization of UNEA - Multilateral Environmental Agreements: options 4.6 and 4.7

4. Several member states supported stronger engagement and collaboration with Multilateral Environmental Agreements, which should be geared towards improving implementation of

UNEP programme's at the national level and could take the form of a UNEA "MEA Day". MEAs could provide their own contribution to the issues being discussed at UNEA, if it is in their field of expertise. This could also help to promote the importance of having synergies, collaboration and dialogue between MEAs and UNEA to avoid silos.

5. Some member states called for a closer dialogue, but also collaboration with MEAs towards implementation. MEAs could for example attend UNEA and present how they can support UNEP in implementing relevant UNEA resolution.
6. Other member States pointed to the independent nature of the MEAs and their governing bodies, and underlined the need to carefully consider any concrete proposals to formally link MEAs to UNEA, as well as the need to discuss this with the MEAs secretariats and to inform COPs on the outcome of the MEAs consultations with UNEP.
7. The question was also raised as to how the links should be made – through Secretariats only or through the representatives of the governing bodies such as their bureaux. If for example the Chairs and presidents of MEAs governing bodies would be involved, it would be important to see in which capacity they participate.
8. Some member States also suggested that MEAs could be called on to propose actions for UNEA to consider, or to be consulted on draft UNEA resolutions. Support was also expressed to continue the consultation with MEAs to identify other organizations' governing bodies' best practices.

Organization of UNEA - Science Policy Interface: options 4.8 - 4.15

9. Many member States underlined the importance of a strong science policy input to UNEA. The Science-Business Forum to UNEA was generally recognized, and some support was expressed for the proposal to combine the Sustainable Innovation Expo and the Science Business Forum. There is merit in finding some timing alignment between the forum and UNEA so that the Forum can inform UNEA and vice versa.
10. There was also general support for the idea of developing relevant science briefs by the Secretariat, and a more active involvement by the UNEP Chief Scientist in UNEA deliberations. Caution was however advocated on adjusting the timelines on major assessments to fit the UNEA schedule, and there was a call for more clarity on the Secretariat leads on various global environmental assessments and on subsidiary scientific mechanisms. No new subsidiary bodies should be established, also considering financial implications.

Organization of UNEA - Stakeholder engagement: options 4.16 - 4.18

11. Member states expressed general support to improve stakeholder engagement, as outlined in Paragraph 88 h) of the Rio + 20 Outcome Document, provided that the intergovernmental nature of the UNEP governing bodies' meetings is retained, and that actions are implemented in accordance with the rules of procedure and established practice. No objection to any of the specific proposals listed in the document. There was also general agreement that such undertakings would not entail re-opening the discussion on the UNEP Stakeholder Engagement Policy. Potential action should focus on a wide range of stakeholders including local communities and indigenous people.

CPR Meetings: options 5.1 - 5.8

12. Many member States underlined the need to ensure a common understanding of the established functions of the CPR, the Annual Subcommittee, Subcommittees and the OECPR before considering any potential modifications. The Secretariat was requested to re-issue such information.
13. On this basis, many member States agreed in principle to clarify the role and designation of the various bodies so as to streamline and better describe their role and functions, in particular the Annual Subcommittee and OECPR. Many underlined that this should be done without changing any formal mandates as contained in the Rules of Procedure or relevant Governing Council/UNEA decisions. It was also noted that any such recommendation would require a decision by UNEA.
14. Several member States cautioned against giving the Annual Subcommittee a role in the deliberation of draft resolutions and decisions, possibly with the exception of decisions relation directly to the Programme of Work and budget.
15. General support was expressed for the options listed under 5.5 – 5.8 (Secretariat support).

Agenda Item 2: Closing of the meeting.

1. The meeting closed at 4:30 p.m.