

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Tuesday 24 March 2020  
9:00 am - 12:00 and 13:30 – 16:30 pm  
United Nations Office of Nairobi  
Conference Room 4

**Background Document for Agenda Item 4:  
Implementation of UNEA decision 4/2, paragraph 14**

This note - “Synthesis report on the progress of implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled ‘The future we want’” - serves as a background document for consideration under Agenda Item 4: Implementation of UNEA decision 4/2, paragraph 14.

At the meeting of the subcommittee on 23 January 2020, the Secretariat presented a synthesis report on the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development entitled “The future we want”, in view of the development of an action plan as mandated by UNEA resolution 4/2 (paragraph 14).

Following consideration of subparagraphs a), c), g) and h) of paragraph 88 at the meeting of the subcommittee on 5 March, Member States are, on the basis of the synthesis report, invited to further consider the following subparagraphs under paragraph 88:

- (b) Have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget for the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate;*
- (d) Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making;*
- (e) Disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information, and raise public awareness on critical, as well as emerging, environmental issues;*
- (f) Provide capacity-building to countries, as well as support, and facilitate access to technology.*

**Synthesis report on the progress of implementation of paragraph 88 of  
the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development,  
entitled “The future we want”**

1. This synthesis report provides an overview of the progress made in the implementation of paragraph 88 of “The future we want” outcome document adopted at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012. The report has been prepared in accordance with the roadmap presented to member States at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held in October 2019.<sup>1</sup>
2. The present report builds on and provides an update to the [Report of the Executive Director](#) and the [supplementary information](#) submitted to the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) in March 2019 on the *Implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”*.
3. The report aims to support thematic consultations with member States and stakeholders under the auspices of Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) which are foreseen to take place in the first half of 2020, with a view to identify possible gaps in the implementation of paragraph 88, also in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the reform of the UN development system. The guidance provided by member States and relevant stakeholders at these thematic consultations will subsequently inform the Secretariat in the development of an action plan for the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88, to be submitted for consideration by the UNEA at its fifth session in February 2021, in accordance with the mandate provided in paragraph 14 of [UNEA decision 4/2](#).

**(a) Establish universal membership in the Governing Council of UNEP, as well as other measures to strengthen its governance as well as its responsiveness and accountability to Member States.**

4. The 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council held in February 2013, which represented its 1<sup>st</sup> universal session, in its decision 27/2, decided on a range of measures aimed at strengthening the institutional governance framework of UNEP. The measures in the decision from the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council include the following:
  - Renaming of the Governing Council of UNEP to the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) of UNEP;
  - Discontinuation of the Global Ministerial Environment Forum;
  - Organization of a 5-day biennial session of UNEA, concluding with a 2-day high-level segment;
  - Organization of a 5-day biennial meeting of the open-ended CPR;

---

<sup>1</sup> The roadmap has been subsequently updated to reflect the comments made by member States at the annual subcommittee meeting.

- Organization of a 5-day annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR.

5. Further to the 27<sup>th</sup> session of the Governing Council, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 67/251 formally changing the designation of the Governing Council into the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

6. In its decision 27/1, the Governing Council adopted new rules of procedure consistent with universal membership. The new rules of procedure also increased the number of members of the Bureau of the Governing Council from 5 to 10, comprising a president, 8 vice-presidents and a rapporteur. At its 2<sup>nd</sup> session, in its resolution 2/1, UNEA adopted amendments to the rules of procedure so that the election of Bureau members takes place at the final meeting of a regular session instead of at the beginning, and that the term of office of Bureau members continues until the closure of the next regular session. As a result of these amendments the Bureau members can fully engage in the preparation of the session for which they are serving, including during the intersessional period.

7. UNEA sessions have been held in Nairobi on a biennial basis, starting in 2014. In view of the experience gained, in particular in relation to the budget preparation process, UNEA, at its 2<sup>nd</sup> session in May 2016, in its resolution 2/22, decided to hold its regular sessions in odd-numbered years instead of in even years, commencing with its 3<sup>rd</sup> session in 2017. Accordingly, UNEA held its 3<sup>rd</sup> session in December 2017 and its 4<sup>th</sup> session in March 2019. Thereafter, its sessions will be held biennially in odd-numbered years, during the last week of February, unless otherwise decided.

8. The CPR, as an intersessional subsidiary body of UNEA, has been carrying out its functions as mandated in Governing Council decisions 13/2 and 27/2, including through regular meetings (4 times per year) and subcommittee meetings (as needed). The Committee, in the form of an open-ended meeting to allow for participation from Member States and stakeholders without representation in Nairobi, has met four times to date, in Nairobi; in March 2014, February 2016, November/December 2017 and March 2019, in particular to prepare draft resolutions for final consideration by UNEA. In addition, the annual subcommittee of the CPR has met six times to date in Nairobi (in September 2013, October 2014, October 2015, March 2017, October 2018 and October 2019) to provide oversight and guidance to the implementation of existing and the development of new UNEP's medium-term strategies and programmes of work and budget.

9. The membership of the CPR remains limited as compared to the universal membership of UNEA. As of November 2019, 135 member States and the European Union were accredited to UNEP and were therefore members of the Committee. While this number has slightly increased over the past years, approximately 30 % of UN member States are however not yet accredited members of the Committee, and only 88 member States – less than half of all UN member States – are permanently represented in Nairobi.

10. Pursuant to paragraph 17 of Governing Council decision 27/2, the Executive Director proposed a new policy on access to information for UNEP in June 2014. Following extensive consultations with member States and stakeholders on the proposal, the Executive Director adopted a revised access-to-information policy in January 2016, which is effectively guiding UNEP to ensure an open, inclusive and transparent working methodology.

11. The UNEP secretariat has continued to progressively improve the timeliness and responsiveness to requests by member States, including through providing timely and accessible

relevant information, documents and briefings. However, as noted in document [UNEP/CPR/146/8](#), entitled “UNEA 4: Assessment and lessons learned”, further improvements can still be made in areas such as conference servicing, documentation management and remote access to meetings for the governing bodies. Some of these efforts may however require additional resources.

12. The ongoing process for review by the CPR, as mandated by paragraph 9-13 of UNEA decision 4/2, which aims to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNEP governing bodies – namely UNEA and the CPR – provides a timely opportunity to further assess and strengthen the implementation and follow up of subparagraph (a). The review process is expected to result in a set of recommendations developed under the CPR, to be discussed at the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the annual subcommittee of the CPR in October 2020 for final consideration at UNEA 5.

**(b) Have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate.**

13. UNEP is 95% voluntarily funded with only 5% of income provided from assessed contributions (UN regular budget). The share of earmarked contributions has grown since 2012 and currently amounts to 80% of financial support, while core and flexible funding constitute only 20% of the total funding (Environment Fund and the UN regular budget).

(b)1. Environment Fund

14. The Environment Fund budget allocation for the biennium 2014–2015 and the subsequent biennia was intended to ensure that UNEP would be able to deliver its programme of work with higher impact outputs and more ambitious outcomes with respect to capacity-building and involvement at the regional and national levels. The General Assembly, in its [resolution 67/213](#),<sup>2</sup> urged donors to increase voluntary funding to UNEP, including to the Environment Fund.

15. For the biennium 2014–2015, the Governing Council at its 1<sup>st</sup> universal session approved the budget for the Environment Fund in the amount of \$245 million,<sup>3</sup> which was reaffirmed by UNEA in its resolution 1/14.<sup>4</sup> However, the financial resources actually received for the Environment Fund in the biennium amounted to \$154 million, representing approximately 2/3 of the approved budget.

16. For the biennium 2016–2017, the UNEA, in its resolution 1/15,<sup>5</sup> approved the programme of work for the biennium and budget for the Environment Fund in the amount of \$271 million. The amount of the financial resources received for the Environment Fund, however, was \$135.3 million during the biennium, representing about half of the approved budget. It should be noted that the

---

<sup>2</sup> Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 2012 on “Report of the Governing Council of UNEP on its 12<sup>th</sup> special session and the implementation of section IV.C, entitled “Environmental pillar in the context of sustainable development”, of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development”

<sup>3</sup> [Governing Council decision 27/13 “Proposed medium-term strategy for 2014-2017 biennial programme of work and budget for 2014-2015”](#)

<sup>4</sup> [UNEA resolution 1/14 “Revised programme of work and budget for the biennium 2014–2015”](#)

<sup>5</sup> [UNEA resolution 1/15 “Proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2016-2017”](#)

exchange rate fluctuations between US dollar and contributions made in other national currencies have a substantial impact on the total amounts of actual income received.

Table 1 **Environment Fund allocations and contributions<sup>6</sup>**  
(in millions of US dollars)

<i>Biennium</i>	<i>Approved Environment Fund budget</i>	<i>Funds received for Environment Fund (as per audited financial statements)</i>
2002–2003	119.9	95.9
2004–2005	130	118.5
2006–2007	144	127.9
2008–2009	152	174.6
2010–2011	180	162.5
2012–2013	190.96	151.5
2014–2015	245	168.4
2016–2017	271	135.3

17. For the biennium 2018-2019, UNEA, in its resolution 2/20,<sup>7</sup> approved a \$271 million budget for the Environment Fund. The actual income will amount to around \$138 million<sup>8</sup> which is about 50% of the approved budget. For the 2020-2021 biennium, the Environment Fund budget was reduced to \$200 million by UNEA resolution 4/1.

18. Regarding the Environment Fund funding base, slightly less than 50% of all 193 member States contribute to the Fund on an annual basis. Of these member States, less than half contribute at or above the voluntary indicative scale of contributions (VISIC), their fair share, that was established by member States in 2002<sup>9</sup> to broaden the base of contributions and to enhance the predictability of financing of the Environment Fund. Furthermore, the top 15 member States provide around 90% of the funding.

[6 Exchange rate fluctuations between US dollar and contributions made in other national currencies have a substantial impact on the total amounts of actual income received.](#)

[7 UNEA resolution 2/20 “Proposed medium-term strategy for 2018–2021 and programme of work and budget for 2018–2019”](#)

<sup>8</sup> Final amount is subject to confirmation after the closure and analysis for December 2019 accounts.

[9 Governing Council decision SSVII/1 “International environmental governance”](#)

17. To broaden the base of contributions to, and to enhance predictability in the voluntary financing of the Environment Fund, there should be a voluntary indicative scale of contributions, to be developed specifically for UNEP’s Environment Fund, taking into account, inter alia, the UN scale of assessment as well as the following:

- (a) A minimum indicative rate of 0.001 per cent;
- (b) A maximum indicative rate of 22 per cent;
- (c) A maximum indicative rate for the least developed countries of 0.01 per cent;
- (d) Economic and social circumstances of the Member States, in particular those of developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- (e) Provisions to allow for any Member State, in a position to do so, to increase its level of contributions over and above its current level.

Table 2 **Member States contributing to the Environment Fund (2014–2018) vis-à-vis their fair share, the VISC<sup>10</sup>**

<i>Contributions to Environment Fund</i>	<i>Number of member States</i>				
	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>
100% and above of VISC	38	30	37	37	47
1–10% below VISC	9	2	2	1	1
11–50% below VISC	10	16	16	17	8
51–99% below VISC	40	45	38	39	34
<b>Totals</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>90</b>

(b)2. UN regular budget allocation

19. As a result of the analysis carried out on the cost implications of the requirements set out in paragraph 88 of the Rio + 20 outcome document, an increase in the allocation of the UN regular budget to UNEP was proposed for the biennium 2014–2015 and for subsequent biennia.

20. For the biennium 2014–2015, the General Assembly approved 47 new positions and a revised increase for non-staff items, totalling \$34.4 million out of \$47.7 million requested by the Secretary-General on the basis of the programme of work and budget approved by the UNEP Governing Council at its 1<sup>st</sup> universal session. By comparison, the regular budget allocation for the biennium 2012–2013 amounted to \$18 million. The number of staff under the regular budget doubled, from 48 to 95, and non-staff allocations were substantially increased.

21. For the biennium 2016–2017, the General Assembly approved an appropriation for UNEP in the amount of \$35.3 million out of \$49.7 million requested by the Secretary-General’s budget submission. A total of 21 out of 35 proposed regular budget posts were approved, all of which were for the regional offices. The total number of posts funded by the regular budget increased from 95 to 116. There was, however, a reduction of 10% of costs for consultants and 5% for other staff, supplies and furniture in the regular budget allocation.

22. For the biennium 2018–2019, the General Assembly approved the allocation of the regular budget to UNEP in the amount of \$39.6 million. The Secretary-General did not request an increased regular budget allocation for this biennium. The difference from the previous biennium is due to re-costing and inflation.

23. At its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 3 December 2018, the General Assembly’s Economic and Financial (Second) Committee agreed on a draft resolution [A/C.2/73/L.49](#) on the “Report of UNEA of UNEP”, which was later adopted by the General Assembly on 22 December 2018. This resolution, [A/RES/73/260](#), “Expresses concern about the sustainability, predictability and stability of the funding of the UNEP governing body, and requests the Secretary-General to make proposals, as

<sup>10</sup> USA does not participate in VISC

appropriate”. Accordingly, UNEP presented a programme budget implication requesting additional funds for the biennium 2018-2019.

24. Though its report entitled [“Report of UNEA of UNEP: Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.49” \(A/73/646\)](#) dated 12 December 2018, which was later endorsed by the General Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) considered that “the proposals of the Secretary-General should be first decided upon by the appropriate body and reviewed by the Advisory Committee thereafter, if and as appropriate.”

25. Consequently, the UNEP secretariat made a proposal to the 4<sup>th</sup> session of UNEA that resulted in [UNEA decision 4/1 “Programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020-2021”](#) adopted on 15 March 2019, which in its paragraph 33 “notes the funding gap for the provision of conference services, information technology and communication services, security and medical services at sessions of the Environment Assembly since its 1<sup>st</sup> session and welcomes the request of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General of the UN in its resolution 73/260 entitled “Report of the UNEA of the UNEP”, to make proposals, as appropriate, concerning the sustainability, predictability, and stability of the funding of the governing body of UNEP”.

26. In its 2020 regular budget proposal, the Secretary-General included an additional provision of \$8,800 for UNEP, covering overtime and rental of equipment in support of the annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR while noting that the main cost drivers for UNEA will be proposed in the 2021 submission for an approximate amount of \$410,000, excluding travel of representatives. The 2020 proposal was reviewed by the ACABQ through its [“First report on the proposed programme budget for 2020” \(A/74/7\)](#) dated 9 August 2019 under paragraph IV.72(b)<sup>11</sup> and is currently awaiting endorsement by the General Assembly.

(b)3. Earmarked contributions

27. Earmarked contributions, including to specific trust funds and in other forms, have constituted a significant proportion of the total financial resources made available to UNEP in recent years. Earmarked contributions enable the upscaling and replication of the results of the organization’s core work, including capacity-building in more countries and with more partners. Table 3 shows earmarked contributions made available to UNEP (i.e. earmarked income) over the past 3 biennia. The sources of those earmarked contributions include member States, the European Commission, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, foundations, private sector organizations and other UN entities.

---

<sup>11</sup> (b) New and expanded mandates: an increase of \$8,800 relating to a new mandate pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/260 on the report of the UNEA of UNEP, in which the General Assembly expressed concern about the sustainability, predictability and stability of the funding of the UNEP governing body and requested the Secretary-General to make proposals, as appropriate. The proposed provision relates to the annual session of the subcommittee of the CPR, as indicated in table 14.11 of the budget proposal.

Table 2 **Earmarked contributions** (in millions of US dollars)

<i>Biennium</i>	<i>Earmarked contributions (other than from the Global Environment Facility and trust funds for multilateral environmental agreements)</i>	<i>Global Environment Facility funding</i>	<i>Total earmarked contributions</i>
2012–2013	391	131	522
2014–2015	415	306	721
2016–2017	368	372	740

28. The amount of the earmarked financial resources made available to UNEP in the past 3 biennia has far exceeded the amount of the approved Environment Fund budget.

(b)4. Resource mobilization strategy

29. Following the Rio+20 Summit, the UNEP secretariat prepared a resource mobilisation strategy which was approved by the Executive Director in January 2014. Subsequently, and in accordance with UNEA resolution 2/20, the secretariat developed a new resource mobilization strategy, which was approved by the Executive Director in November 2017. The implementation of the strategy will be reassessed in 2020.

30. Regarding the Environment Fund, however, action has already been taken in line with the strategy to retain the funding of the top donor member States that currently provide the majority of the contributions to the organization; to obtain new commitments from high-income and middle-income countries that either do not yet contribute in line with the VISC or do not contribute at all; and to engage with low-income and least developed countries to emphasize the importance of making even small contributions as a means to making a difference and demonstrating political support for UNEP.

31. In addition to individual outreach, the secretariat has engaged with member States to discuss the future of the organization's financial situation and to agree on how member States and the secretariat can jointly address the funding challenges. UNEP has also recognized the need for strengthened communication in support of resource mobilisation, especially to express appreciation to those member States that provide core funding, and to more effectively communicate about UNEP's mandate, comparative advantage as well as the value for money it provides.



**(c) Enhance the voice of UNEP and its ability to fulfil its coordination mandate within the UN system by strengthening its engagement in key UN coordination bodies and empowering it to lead efforts to formulate UN system-wide strategies on the environment;**

(c)1. Intergovernmental coordination

32. Interaction between UNEA and the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) has been strengthened progressively over recent years, including through General Assembly resolution 71/231 and UNEA resolution 3/3. In addition to providing written inputs to HLPF, UNEA Presidents have been presenting outcomes of UNEA sessions during the high-level segment of HLPF. UNEP regional offices also contributed to the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development organized by the respective UN regional commissions. UNEP has been engaged in the substantive preparation of HLPF, in support of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs and in collaboration with relevant UN entities.

(c)2. Inter-agency coordination

33. UNEP is executing its mandate as the authoritative voice on environment within the UN system, supporting the effective consideration and integration of environment and the interlinkages among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets, including at national and regional levels through, inter alia, its active participation and contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, the regional assessment on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Regional Forums on Sustainable Development.

34. UNEP is also executing its mandate of integrating environment across UN agendas, working collaboratively through various interagency mechanisms such as the UN Sustainable Development Group, the Environment Management Group and the Sustainable UN (SUN) team, as well as through strategies and innovative partnerships to deliver better, more impactful results and to create synergies, strengthen collective action and maximize the potential for environmentally sound development. UNEP has strengthened its engagement with key UN coordination bodies and reinforced its regional presence to better serve the needs of member States and to promote a more coherent and integrated approach in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as consideration of the resolutions and decisions adopted by UNEA and in the framework of the decision making bodies of the multilateral environmental agreements, as appropriate.

35. UNEP is a member of the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) which is responsible to the Chief Executives Board (CEB) chaired by the UN Secretary-General. The HLCM identifies and analyses administrative management reforms with the aim of improving efficiency and simplifying business practices across the UN system. UNEP is also participating in the Secretary-General's management reform agenda through the Business Innovations Group which is tasked with delivering and building on proposals aimed at maximizing programmatic gains through efficient and

high-quality back office operations that strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the UN system for “better results for people and planet”<sup>12</sup>.

(c)3. Environment Management Group

36. The UN Environment Management Group (EMG) is a system-wide coordination body that facilitates collaboration and enhances coordination on the environment in the UN system. Established through the UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/53/242 in 1999, EMG consists of 48 specialized agencies, programmes and organs of the UN including the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and 3 non-governmental organizations. UNEP acts as chair of the Group and provides its Secretariat.

37. As the only UN inter-agency mechanism entirely focused on the environment, EMG serves as a unique mechanism for UNEP in implementing its coordination mandate. EMG promotes the recognition, integration and operationalization of environmental issues within the UN system by providing a neutral platform for policy dialogue, strategic and integrated thinking, information exchange and joint action among the UN agencies. It also helps place critical and emerging environmental issues at the centre of the UN system’s attention.

38. Since the endorsement of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, "The future we want", in 2012, many environmental issues have been jointly addressed in the EMG, leading to system-wide analysis, strategies and joint statements through which the UN system spoke with one, unified voice for the environment. Examples include raising the priority given to chemicals management in the UN system and ensuring additional synergies between the UN organizations in supporting countries in activities to achieve the 2020 goal, the establishment of a UN Coalition to jointly combat sand and dust storms, and the release of the Model Approach to Environmental and Social Standards for UN Programming, which helps UN entities ensure that environmental and social aspects are integrated into their programmes and projects.

39. Since 2017, the EMG Nexus Dialogue Series has provided key recommendations and policy messages on coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, to relevant forums including UNEA and HLPF. To date, 10 Nexus Dialogues have been held, covering nexus topics such as poverty and environment, biodiversity and human security and environment and health in urban settings.

40. Building on the past work of EMG on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, a Consultative Process on Biodiversity has been put in place to produce a system-wide contribution to the development and implementation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. Identifying lessons learned by UN entities from implementation of current biodiversity-related goals and targets, the EMG will provide recommendations to inform the development of the new framework. An analysis on the role and contributions by the UN system to the implementation of the global biodiversity framework, including an analysis of how these efforts fit within the frames of the 2030 Agenda will be prepared.

---

<sup>12</sup> Secretary General’s report, Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet, A/72/684-E/2018/7, December 2017.

41. Other currently ongoing interagency collaboration initiatives include developing a joint implementation mechanism for UN entities on tackling e-waste at the country level and engaging the UN system in addressing marine litter and microplastics.

42. Paragraph 88(c) of the Rio+20 outcome document specifically refers to UNEP's role in leading efforts to formulate UN system-wide strategies on the environment. Pursuant to Governing Council decision 27/5 and Environment Assembly resolution 1/11, the UN System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment was prepared through consultations among UN system entities with the facilitation of EMG. Launched at the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of UNEA in May 2016, the Framework's objectives are to enhance cooperation and collaboration across the UN system on the environment in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and to strengthen the UN system's capacity and synergies to enhance the integration of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. The Framework prepares a triennial synthesis report on UN system-wide contributions to the implementation of the environmental dimension of the SDGs, as well as thematic reports focusing on specific SDGs.

43. The first "System-wide Collaboration on the Environment: Synthesis Report on UN System-wide Contributions to the Implementation of the Environmental Dimension in the SDGs (2016-2017)" was published in November 2017. The first thematic report will be published in 2020 and focus on biodiversity. The report will highlight opportunities for UN agencies to enhance their own core objectives by advancing the biodiversity agenda as well as identify areas of work that may benefit from further collaboration.

#### c)4 Multilateral Environmental Agreements

44. UNEP currently provides the secretariat functions to 15 multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) which include the provision of administrative and financial management support. The services are common to all secretariats of the UNEP-hosted multilateral environmental agreements, which are dispersed geographically in different countries.

45. Since the adoption of UNEA2 resolution 2/18 on the relationship between UNEP and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat, UNEP set-up a process to strengthen its support to MEAs. UNEP's services to MEAs on administrative and financial monitoring functions have been further strengthened through the establishment of a dedicated unit. UNEP and MEA secretariats' programmatic cooperation is guided by relevant UNEA and MEA governing bodies decisions and resolutions, as well as the wider efforts of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNEP also convenes regular working level meetings with the focal points of the MEA secretariats to discuss and promote programmatic cooperation related to UNEP's Programme of Work and UNEA resolutions.

46. There are various on-going workstreams which provide pathways to enhance programmatic cooperation between UNEP and the MEAs. During the MTS preparation process, consultations will be undertaken with the UNEP-hosted MEAs to solicit views on how UNEP's global priorities can align with the mandates of the MEAs and how delivery of planned UNEP projects can align with the related policy processes. To support this process, the MTS development team will also engage in an

analysis of the MEA strategic plans and pertinent resolutions from MEA Conferences of Parties to identify priority areas for synergy.

47. The ongoing CPR-based review process, mandated by UNEA decision 4/2, to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNEP governing bodies provides opportunities to look for ways to further involve the MEAs in the UNEA sessions, as well as fostering dialogue and cooperation among the relevant governing bodies more generally.

(c)5. Participation in the UN Development System (global, regional and national levels)

48. Since assuming office in January 2017 and considering the guidance given by the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, the Secretary-General has pursued a reform agenda that aims to enhance the UN contribution to sustainable development, ensure more effective capacities to tackle conflict and sustain peace, and improve the UN's internal management and ability to deliver.

49. The UN development system reforms provide opportunities for UNEP to promote an integrated approach mainstreaming environmental sustainability in a more collaborative and coherent UN development system where all the relevant UN mandates, resources and competencies at the global, regional and country level are brought together in support of the 2030 Agenda.

50. UNEP is undertaking efforts to align, support and implement the UN development system reform at all levels. In this regard, UNEP is actively participating in the implementation of the reform at the country level including engagement in a number of Strategic Planning and Prioritization Retreats linked to the development of the common country analysis and cooperation frameworks and discussions regarding the delivery model to be implemented. In response to the regional UNDS review UNEP is fully engaged in the regional UN Sustainable Development Groups and has been instrumental in the establishment of an Issue-based Coalitions (IBCs) on environment to support member states in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and UN Country Teams on environmental issues. At the global level, UNEP has contributed to all the Companion Pieces to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework- guidance submitted to the Deputy Secretary General in mid-December 2019.

51. UNEP has been developing a menu of services which will become a key tool for engagement with our UN partners on the ground especially in the context of the Common Country Assessment and Cooperation Framework development processes.

**(d) Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making;**

52. In accordance with [General Assembly resolution 2997 \(XXVII\)](#),<sup>13</sup> UNEA has the responsibility of keeping under review the world environmental situation, promoting international cooperation in the field of the environment, recommending policies, and providing general policy guidance for the direction and coordination of environmental programmes within the UN system. In that regard, the science-policy interface is at the core of the functioning of UNEA, and the strengthening of UNEP requires UNEA to reinforce science-policy interface on the global environment.

53. The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) supports member States to uphold the work of UNEA in ensuring the science-policy interface on the global environment. Drawing from all major global assessments from international science panels and the UN bodies, the GEO presents environmental trends for air, climate, water, land, oceans and biodiversity.

54. The 6th edition of GEO, with the overall theme “Healthy planet, healthy people”, has been designed to inform policy decisions by Governments, underpinning the decision-making processes of UNEA, supporting the entire UN system to address the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda and informing the discussions of the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development. GEO-6 is the only UN report that offers an overarching analysis of all the major global environmental issues. Launched at the 4<sup>th</sup> session of UNEA, GEO-6 and its summary for policymakers have provided a coherent picture of progress to date, current policy challenges and forward-looking scenarios, as well as policy options for achieving the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda with multiple co-benefits across the Sustainable Development Goals.

55. UNEP has also produced a broad range of other reports and assessments to inform policymaking processes, including the report [“Strengthening the Science-Policy Interface: A Gap Analysis”](#); [the Frontiers report](#), a biennial report on emerging environmental issues; the [Global Gender and Environment Outlook](#) series; [a Global Assessment of Sand and Dust Storms](#); and the [Global Waste Management Outlook](#) reports. Further, the secretariat has provided Parties to the respective multilateral environmental agreements with support for evidence-based decision-making, by providing reports on pertinent subjects. The annual Emissions Gap reports and the 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), for example, are used for reference purposes at sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The 2019 edition of the [Emissions Gap Report](#) presented the latest data on the emissions reductions needed for achieving the temperature decrease targets of the Paris Agreement by 2030. This edition of the Emissions Gap Report informed the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in December 2019.

56. UNEP has been undertaking additional assessment work, in collaboration with partner organizations, in such areas as ambient outdoor air pollution, transboundary water systems, and the

---

<sup>13</sup> International and financial arrangements for international cooperation (December 1972)

world's oceans. It has also provided inputs to the assessment work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and provided scientific and technical support for capacity-building workshops for the first UN World Ocean Assessment through the Regional Seas Programme.

57. UNEP continues to provide secretariat support to IPCC, IPBES, the International Resource Panel and the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), among others.

58. In 2019, partnerships have been strengthened through the network of collaborating centres and thematic centres of excellence, such as the global and regional integrated data centres, with multilateral environmental agreement secretariats and regional bodies. UNEP is committed to working with partners in the framework of the Global Earth Observation System of Systems, including on indicators for the SDGs based on remote-sensing data.

59. UNEP has been serving as one of the organizations contributing to the preparation of the Global Sustainable Development Report, since the inception of the 2014 prototype edition, followed by its 2015 and 2016 editions, up to the preparation of the 2019 edition. The secretariat has been involved in generating data and statistics for monitoring progress in the implementation of the SDGs and serves as the custodian agency for 26 environment-related SDGs indicators.

60. UNEP hosts The UN Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment, which contributes to the science-policy interface by promoting initiatives to foster green technology markets that are driven by advances in science and technology, empowering policies and innovative financing. In November 2019 the Forum's Working Group on Big Data and Digital Ecosystems for the Planet brought together participants from across sectors in Canberra during GEO Week 2019 to review and map the future direction of global sustainable digital ecosystems.

<p><b>(e) Disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information, and raise public awareness on critical, as well as emerging, environmental issues;</b></p>
--

(e)1. Environmental information

61. UNEP's foundational mandate to keep under review the world environmental situation, is now benefitting from new and emerging technologies (big data, blockchain and artificial intelligence) which support the achievement of Agenda 2030.

62. Since 2016, UN Secretary General Progress Reports on Achieving Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, underline that the availability of quality, reliable, timely and disaggregated data is fundamental for achieving Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

63. As mandated by the UNEA4 ministerial declaration in March 2019, UNEP is committed to promote the use, sharing and application of environmental data and to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025. This will be done in cooperation with other relevant UN bodies, with progress reports in 2021 and 2023.

64. Through UNEA resolution 2/23 the member States requested UNEP to improve its own capacity to manage an on-line data and knowledge platform providing repository functions, and open access to the best available environmental data that is timely, quality-assured, credible and relevant. Taking note of this new mandate, UNEP conceived the concept of a World Environment Situation Room (WESR) to better integrate all key information relevant to the mandate of UNEP and to provide an authoritative platform to all environmental actors.
65. Comparable international data is also achieved through the global and thematic assessments on the environment, such as the Global Environmental Outlook (GEO). UNEP is contributing to other key assessments such as the Global Chemicals Outlook, the reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES), as well as the International Resource Panel's Global Resources Outlook.
66. UNEP is actively engaged in the global geospatial information management. UNEP was elected in May 2019 to Chair the UN Geospatial Network which aims to strengthen the coherence and coordination across the whole UN system.
67. With regard to follow-up and reviews of SDGs and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) the lack of comparable data renders difficult the ability to monitor the environmental dimension of sustainable development globally, regionally and nationally. Through the InforMEA information portal UNEP provides access to interoperable information systems in support of international environmental reporting obligations of countries.
68. UNEP also leads the implementation of Global Environmental Monitoring Systems, in water, air, land, biodiversity and oceans. A good example in this regard, is the launch of the World Water Quality Alliance in 2019, which attempts to establish global standards on monitoring water quality; and the GESAMP (Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection) network in the monitoring of the oceans.
69. In support of over 100 developing countries, UNEP is making available the knowledge repository of more than 10,000 publications and scientific information on the environment through the Online Access to Research on the Environment (OARE). In this regard the UNEP Science Policy Business Forum and the partnership with global citizens science associations (e.g. European Citizen Science Association ESCA, American Citizen Science Association ASCA) are important in promoting the use of citizen science, the engagement of civil society and integration of private environmental data.
70. Producing comparable data for future studies and foresight analysis to support policy making and action is also a growing trend. A good example is UNEP's participation in the recently established Informal Strategic Foresight network in the UN High-level Committee of Programmes. A pilot study on strategic foresight is underway with focus on "The future of work in sub-Saharan Africa".

(e)2. Communication

71. The UNEP secretariat has strengthened its activities for raising public awareness on global environmental issues, in particular through programmatic alignment, intensified campaigns and improved content creation and dissemination. Efforts in improving communication on global environmental issues have helped to make the organization more visible, relevant and accessible to a wider public.

72. The secretariat had initiated a new multimedia approach in 2016 focused on audience-specific communication and social media-friendly content which could be shared across multiple platforms. The new strategy had resulted in a threefold increase in viewership across all the main platforms in the first year. The exposure to and engagement with UNEP's communication has been gradually increasing ever since. The organization's social media presence across different platforms and languages has also grown and strengthened over time. It now has 25 social media accounts representing all six UN official languages and more than 4 million followers across accounts. Innovative digital activations include Wild for Life's morphs, and the 2018 and 2019 World Environment Days "Tag challenge" against single-use plastic and beat air pollution.

73. The secretariat has undertaken a major overhaul of media outreach since the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, including the launch of a new website at the end of 2017. Its new approach has helped to amplify its voice in the global media cycle and promote the organization's high-profile new research findings, such as the Emissions Gap report, the Global Environment Outlook and the Frontiers report, and draw attention to big events, including UNEA sessions.

74. An increasing number of influencers and celebrities is advocating for environmental issues and promoting UNEP campaigns, extending the Organization's reach to broader audiences well beyond those interested in environmental issues. The secretariat has also started applying innovative techniques for storytelling, like virtual reality, interactive multimedia content and animations, to create a more immersive engagement experience for the audience. Launched in 2018, a new digital asset media library houses more than 40 years' worth of readily-available digital assets.

75. Presently, UNEP is running 4 campaigns to provide an intensive advocacy and social mobilization push on key issues. These include the Clean Seas campaign against plastic pollution, the Wild for Life campaign against illegal wildlife trafficking, the Glowing, Glowing Gone campaign on protection of coral reefs, and the BreatheLife campaign against air pollution. In addition to global awareness-raising, the campaigns have mobilized citizens, Governments and the private sector to act on environmental issues and have had a significant impact on policy change. Government action for clean air under BreatheLife is benefiting nearly 300 million people. 60 Governments – accounting for more than 60 % of the world's coastline – have joined the Clean Seas campaign with action plans to reduce plastic pollution. Wild for Life has reached more than 1.2 billion people around the world and engaged 5 million in a deeper level of involvement through morphs, pledges and social media interactions.

76. UNEA and the issues it considers have been promoted through press releases, media partnerships, storytelling, video and visual content, and social media. In tandem with the theme of the 4<sup>th</sup> session of UNEA, the secretariat conducted a global campaign, #SolveDifferent, focused on an informative and emotive approach to communicating the environmental cost of key consumption and production models. Through the SolveDifferent interactive Habit Planner, over 3 million



commitments were made. Engaging and inspiring multimedia content boosted visibility, with more than 3 million views for the English language videos alone.

77. UNEP runs annual events to maintain, and build on, the reputation of the organization as a leader in environmental issues and environmental agenda-setting. World Environment Day, marked annually on June 5 with a specific theme, mobilizes millions and has seen private sector and government commitments relevant to the theme every year. The theme for the World Environment Day in 2019 was air pollution. With official celebrations hosted in China, the world rallied around a movement to “Beat Air Pollution”. By tapping into a growing public realization that air pollution must be tackled, World Environment Day 2019 galvanized people across the world to explore renewable energy and green technologies and make changes to their everyday lives to improve air quality. Thousands of events were organized to raise awareness of the solutions to air pollution.

78. The UNEP secretariat-led Champions of the Earth award, the highest environmental honour of the UN, celebrates outstanding figures from the public and private sectors and from civil society whose actions have had a transformative positive impact on the environment. Young Champions of the Earth, being held annually since 2017, is a global initiative designed to showcase and accelerate the ambitions of talented young environmentalists around the globe.

**(f) Provide capacity-building to countries, as well as support, and facilitate access to technology;**

79. The medium-term strategy and programme of work are the key strategic documents anchoring the operational mandate of UNEP. The Organization delivers its work within the context of the priority areas set in these strategic documents, tailoring its support to regions and countries to address their diverse environmental challenges. Such activities also help countries implement the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, the UNEA resolutions, the multilateral environmental agreements and the plans, resolutions and decisions of their conferences of the parties, as well as internationally agreed global environmental goals.

80. Capacity-building and the facilitation of technology development and sharing in countries underpin the delivery of all UNEP support to countries and have been mainstreamed in its programmes of work, in line with the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building. A snapshot of highlights of relevant activities during the past 5 years are described in the following paragraphs.

(f)1. Thematic areas

81. UNEP has continued to support countries’ efforts to equip themselves to adapt to climate change as part of its climate change sub-programme, which contains provisions supporting capacity building and technology transfer in both climate change mitigation and adaptation. It provides assistance to enable their access to finance for ecosystem-based adaptation, and to integrate ecosystem-based and other adaptation approaches into national plans. It supports countries in the uptake of renewable energy and has brought together first-mover financiers and renewable energy

project developers to mitigate risks. It also provides support to countries to develop policies and undertake actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other climate pollutants, and to achieve low-emission growth.

82. Under its partnership with the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNEP has been assisting a number of countries worldwide to build their capacities to meet their commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in an integrated way. The organisation has also been strengthening its collaboration with the Green Climate Fund, particularly in the area of readiness projects in developing countries.

83. On behalf of UNFCCC, UNEP hosts the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN), the operational arm of the Paris Agreement's Technology Mechanism. During the past two years the CTCN has responded to more than 50 technical assistance requests submitted by developing countries and concluded technical assistance on 50 other requests received in previous years. This support complements that provided by UNEP to developing countries through the GEF-funded Technology Needs Assessment programme, which has helped over 75 developing countries identify their climate mitigation and adaptation technology priorities and develop action plans.

84. UNEP supported developing countries to reduce the environment-related risks of natural disasters, industrial accidents and conflicts. It also responded to acute environmental emergencies in countries as part of humanitarian response teams. Its work included conducting post-crisis assessments to assess environmental damage and recovery needs and providing guidance to those involved in recovery.

85. While UNEP provided environmental assessments immediately after a crisis on request from the country concerned or UN system organizations, it also supported countries that required more sustained environmental assistance for recovery. Moreover, it supported countries emerging from crisis as they sought to put in place critical environmental policies, plans and institutions as part of a wider recovery process.

86. UNEP has been helping countries take account of ecosystem services and use the valuation results and scenario analysis to inform policy, assess freshwater ecosystems, water quality and water resource management, and incorporate considerations pertaining to the health and productivity of ecosystems and landscapes in their policy frameworks. As a result, those countries have incorporated ecosystem services values in their planning processes, taken steps to adopt and implement the international water quality guidelines to improve water quality, or incorporated the health and productivity of ecosystems into their policy frameworks. The organization has also enabled a number of water basin authorities to take steps to secure the health and productivity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. It has also supported the establishment of protected areas and the advancement of ecosystem restoration.

87. UNEP provided support to countries to establish action plans to address marine litter and wastewater at the regional, national and subnational levels, which has resulted in an increase in countries' action on marine litter and wastewater. Through the Regional Seas Programme and the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based

Activities, the organization has supported countries in integrating the ecosystem approach in their efforts to sustain coastal and marine ecosystems.

88. An increasing number of governments, businesses and industries addressing priority chemical issues have used risk assessment and management tools provided by UNEP. The organization has, for example, been working with the World Health Organization and civil society under the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint to help countries to phase out lead paint and put in place appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks for that purpose.

89. UNEP works with Governments, businesses and industries, and civil society organizations to help them use innovative tools and methodologies to address priority waste issues. As an integral part of the pilot and demonstration projects on integrated solid waste management and management of specific waste streams, the UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre has organized regional training programmes for policymakers and personnel involved in waste management in developing countries. It has also convened regional university consortiums for the development of academic curricula on holistic waste management for professional postgraduate degrees and training for practitioners and policymakers.

90. UNEP has supported countries and regions in their transition to an inclusive green economy and their adoption of sustainable consumption and production action plans at the national and subnational levels. With the support of UNEP, an increasing number of Governments, businesses and other stakeholders have adopted sustainable production and consumption practices in global supply chains in building and construction, food and agriculture, finance and tourism sectors and with small and medium-sized enterprises across a number of manufacturing sectors. It has supported Governments to develop or implement action plans on sustainable public procurement, in close coordination with the related public procurement programme area of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns and the One Planet Network.

(f)2. Governance support

91. UNEP has been supporting countries to develop national legislation and strengthen institutional measures to improve the implementation of internationally agreed environmental goals, including obligations under the multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), focusing on a variety of issues such as water management, biodiversity conservation, law for a green economy, climate change, environmental rights, and chemicals/waste management. It has supported countries, based on their national priorities, to develop framework environmental laws, as well as environmental legislation in such areas as wildlife, extractives, climate change and crimes with serious impacts on the environment. It has also continued to work with and provide support to Governments, in collaboration with other organizations, to uphold the environmental rule of law and environmental justice by integrating critical environmental considerations into the elements of the rule of law, including the judiciary and prosecution sectors.

92. UNEP has been assisting countries to mainstream environmental sustainability objectives into national and regional development policies and plans. Through the Poverty-Environment Initiative, run jointly with UNDP, a number of countries have integrated environmental objectives

into national policies, plans and processes focusing on poverty reduction. It has also promoted dialogue and cooperation through regional environment ministerial forums and related mechanisms.

93. UNEP is assisting countries to strengthen national reporting on environment, which is expected to improve the access to and quality of key data flows available for decision-making. It has developed a national reporting system to streamline data collection and facilitate information sharing for multiple purposes.

94. The UNEP's InforMEA Initiative brings together MEAs to develop harmonized and interoperable information systems for the benefit of the Parties and the environment community at large. InforMEA harvests decisions and resolutions from the Conferences of the Parties as well as news, events, MEA membership, national focal points, national reports, and implementation plans from MEA secretariats and organizes this information around a set of agreed terms.

95. For the decade beginning 2020, all of UNEP's support to member States on environmental law will be coordinated and delivered through the Fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo V Programme). The Montevideo V Programme is a 10-year intergovernmental programme adopted by UNEA under resolution 4/20. The Montevideo V Programme will promote the environmental rule of law, strengthen the related capacities in countries, and contribute to the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The first global meeting of national focal points under the programme will be held in Rio de Janeiro on 23-25 March 2020.

**(g) Progressively consolidate headquarters functions in Nairobi, as well as strengthen its regional presence, in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies, collaborating closely with other relevant entities of the UN system;**

(g)1. Headquarters functions

96. The Governing Council, at its first universal session held in February 2013, committed to progressively consolidating headquarters functions of UNEP in Nairobi.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, the Executive Director submitted a report to the first session of UNEA on "Implementation of Governing Council decision 27/2: Consolidation of headquarters functions". The report provided an overview of the organization's strategic presence worldwide and the steps that had been taken to implement subparagraph (g).

97. The report also recapped the definitions of "headquarters functions" as presented by the secretariat to the CPR in September 2013, namely:

- Corporate leadership;
- Relations with governing and oversight bodies;
- Corporate institutional relations;

---

<sup>14</sup> [Governing Council decision 27/2 "Implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development"](#).

- Strategic decision and work planning;
- Corporate management;
- Corporate communications;
- Coordination of donor relations.

98. As at April 2014, when the above-mentioned report was issued, all of those functions had been performed at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi with the exception of the following:

- (a) The functions of the Director of the former Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (currently the Economy Division) was based in Paris at that time;
- (b) The coordination of 4 out of the 7 subprogrammes, which includes elements of the strategic direction and work planning functions and was carried out by the subprogramme coordinators from their respective offices in Paris and Geneva at that time (climate change and resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production in Paris, and chemicals and waste and disasters and conflicts in Geneva);
- (c) The functions performed at the New York office pertaining to corporate institutional relations with UN headquarters, including with the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the UN coordinating bodies. The Director of the New York office also oversees and manages the Environment Management Group secretariat.

99. All the members of the Senior Management Team of the organization have now been located at UNEP headquarters, and the corporate leadership and corporate management functions have been consolidated in Nairobi. The coordinators of all 7 subprogrammes are located in Nairobi and perform their coordinating functions from the Organization's headquarters. The New York office continues to perform functions related to corporate institutional relations with UN headquarters, in order to effectively fulfil the mandate of the organization to coordinate environmental activities within the UN system.

100. With a view to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the consolidated headquarters functions, the following changes have been made to the organizational arrangements of the secretariat since 2016:

- (a) Establishment of the Corporate Service Division, replacing the Office of Operations, to consolidate administrative management functions and to safeguard corporate interests;
- (b) Establishment of the Policy and Programme Division to consolidate the policy, programme, monitoring, gender and social safeguards functions of the organization as well as its engagement with the UN system and key global processes such as the 2030 Agenda;
- (c) Establishment of the Governance Affairs Office, which includes the Civil Society Unit and the Private Sector Unit.

101. Effective headquarters functions also require modern and sufficient infrastructure – in terms of office and conference facilities – that provide adequate conferences services to host international conferences, and reliable information and communication technology tools.

102. As mandated by decision 4/2 paragraph 14, UNEP has worked closely with the UN Office at Nairobi (UNON) to identify and find solutions to address these infrastructure needs. UNEP will

continue to do so, including in anticipation of general changes and improvements to the Nairobi compound and its conference and other facilities.

(g)2. Regional presence

103. UNEP, through its strengthened regional presence, engages with member States on substantive and strategic issues in regions and countries.

104. UNEP has six regional offices: for Africa, in Nairobi; for Asia and the Pacific, in Bangkok; for Europe, in Geneva; for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Panama City; for North America, in Washington, D.C.; and for West Asia, in Manama.

105. The UNEP sub-regional, country, liaison and programme offices, which fall under the regional offices and work under the supervision of the regional directors, are:

- (a) 5 sub-regional offices: for the Caribbean, in Kingston; for Central Asia, in Almaty, Kazakhstan; for the Pacific, in Apia; for the Southern Cone (South America), in Montevideo; and for West Africa, in Abidjan;
- (b) 6 country offices: for China, in Beijing; for Brazil, in Brasilia; for Mexico, in Mexico City; for the Russian Federation, in Moscow; for India, in New Delhi; for South Africa, in Pretoria;
- (c) 2 liaison offices: in Addis Ababa, for the African Union, and in Brussels for the European Commission;
- (d) 1 programme office in Vienna.

106. In addition to opening the sub-regional offices that are instrumental for reaching out to countries, UNEP, in accordance with UNEA resolution 2/5,<sup>15</sup> has actively engaged with UN bodies and other partners at the national and regional levels to raise the voice and profile of UNEP and the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development while strengthening institutional and human capacity for integrated delivery of the 2030 Agenda.

107. UNEP is a key player in the Regional UN Sustainable Development Groups to translate policies and good practices from the regional levels into concrete actions at the country level. UNEP also contributes to the repositioning of the UN development system at the regional level and to several Issue Based Coalitions that promote cross-sectoral and joint actions at the country level through preparation of interagency guidance notes, common position papers, and collective support to intergovernmental processes.

108. In addition, UNEP serves as the secretariat of a number of international conventions and action plans and many of them contribute to the organization's regional presence. It has other programmatic initiatives, for example those related to disasters and conflicts, which also require the organization's presence in a number of locations around the world.

109. Through the increased appropriations from the UN regular budget, the capacity of the regional offices has been enhanced to respond to the needs of member States in the regions,

---

<sup>15</sup> [UNEA resolution 2/5 "Delivering on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" \(27 May 2016\)](#).

particularly through the establishment of the posts of Regional Subprogramme Coordinators and Regional Development Coordinators. The increased number of staff located in the regional offices has significantly strengthened the strategic regional presence of the organization. The regional office teams are still relatively small, however, when compared with the growing demands of member States, the UN country teams and other partners, for expertise and technical support and services.

110. The strengthening of the UNEP strategic regional presence through decentralization has also been pursued by means of the delegation of authority to the regional directors. Since October 2013, the regional directors report directly to the Deputy Executive Director, and they have become part of the Senior Management Team.

111. Through its regional offices, UNEP engages actively in the UN regional coordination mechanisms and regional thematic working groups. It has been increasingly engaged in the UN common country programming processes to mainstream environmental sustainability in the UN Development Assistance Frameworks and Delivering as One programmes.

112. Despite significant progress in supporting United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and Delivering as One, UNEP still faces challenges, such as those arising from the difference in cycles of programme of work planning and budgeting processes between entities. A limited operational and staffing budget has constrained the organization's ability to consistently and actively engage in the relevant country-level processes.

113. Engagement with regional ministerial environment forums has been an important factor in strengthening the UNEP regional presence. The secretariat provides institutional and technical support to the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia-Pacific, the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, as well as supporting existing ministerial environment and health forums, including the Environment for Europe and Environment and Health processes. These processes continue to be instrumental in identifying common national and regional environmental priorities and challenges and help develop policies and strategies to address them. Engagement with member States in the regions has been enhanced through those forums; nevertheless, challenges remain, including adequate resource mobilization to finance successful ministerial forum meetings or similar events and their follow up.

**(h) Ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.**

114. Since 2012, stakeholder engagement has increased significantly, following efforts to strengthen and broaden the scope of the existing UNEP stakeholder engagement policy. Despite the absence on an agreement on a revised and modernised stakeholder engagement policy, UNEP has put in place several new approaches to improve stakeholder engagement within existing rules and regulations, as follows:

- (a) While fully respecting the intergovernmental nature of the decision-making process in the governing bodies of UNEP, representatives of major groups and stakeholders accredited to UNEP may participate in all public meetings of CPR, including its subcommittee meetings and briefings, and have the opportunity to make oral statements, including via video connection;
- (b) Representatives of major groups and stakeholders accredited to UNEP are also given the opportunity to submit written and oral inputs to UNEA and its subsidiary organs, including working groups. Such inputs are made available online by the secretariat;
- (c) Representatives of major groups and stakeholders accredited to UNEP are provided full access to information relevant to the work of UNEA and its subsidiary bodies. Such information is usually distributed to member States and to accredited organizations at the same time, including through full access to meeting websites and the CPR web portal;
- (d) Relevant organizations working in the areas of environment and/or sustainable development that meet the established accreditation criteria are granted accreditation by the Secretariat. Their number has substantively increased since the decision to strengthen and upgrade UNEP.
- (e) The granting of consultative status to a non-governmental organization by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is considered evidence of having an international scope of work. However, given that UNEP-accredited organizations have to work in the areas of the environment and/or sustainable development, ECOSOC accreditation does not replace the need to apply for separate accreditation to UNEA;
- (f) Working with international partners, including UN entities, is considered to demonstrate sufficient international scope of work to meet the related accreditation criteria. Non-governmental organizations do not necessarily have to prove that they have a physical presence (e.g., an office) in more than one country. In practice, this means that organizations with a mainly national scope of operations can be considered for accreditation;
- (g) Back-to-back with sessions of UNEA, the secretariat organizes science-policy or science-policy-business forums, which offer relevant stakeholders an additional opportunity to provide expert input and advice to UNEP;
- (h) Regional consultative meetings in UNEP regions, as well as the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum held in Nairobi prior to each UNEA session, provide unique opportunities for major groups and stakeholders to come together and prepare inputs to the intergovernmental decision-making process under UNEA.
- (i) Since UNEA 3, UNEP is holding a multi-stakeholder dialogue during the high-level segment of the Assembly, allowing for direct interaction between Major Groups and Ministers. Similar interaction between high level representatives of member States and Major Groups takes place at regional ministerial fora.

115. These new approaches to stakeholder engagement are set out in the [UNEP Stakeholder Engagement Handbook](#).



116. The above, together with other measures such as UNEP's policy on access to information from 2013 (see section a), have led to increased transparency of the work of UNEP and its governing bodies.

117. Furthermore, a dedicated Private Sector Unit established in January 2018 within the Governance Affairs Office is responsible for enhanced engagement with the private sector, and a new Private Sector Strategy was adopted by UNEP Senior Management in 2019 and further endorsed by member States.