

Meeting of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly
1 April 2020
16:30 – 18:00 (GMT +3 – Nairobi time)
Online meeting

MEETING SUMMARY

All background documents and presentations are available on the [meeting portal](#)

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the UN Environment Assembly and Minister of the Climate and Environment of Norway. H.E. Mr. Rotevatn welcomed all participants and thanked all member States for electing him as President of the UN Environment Assembly replacing the former Minister of Climate Change and Environment, H.E. Mr. Ola Elvestuen whom he recognized for his leadership, openness and honesty.
2. He thanked H.E. Ms. Brune Poirson for assisting as Acting President of the UN Environment Assembly during the transition period and welcomed H.E. Mr. Reggy Nelson of Suriname for his recent election as Vice President of the UN Environment Assembly.
3. The President referred to the current unprecedented global COVID-19 health crisis and acknowledged UNEPs efforts in supporting the World Health Organization (WHO) in ensuring that the response from the United Nations to this global challenge is made in a coherent manner. Furthermore, he paid tribute to the healthcare professionals on the frontline of the fight against the coronavirus.
4. The Executive Director informed the meeting that WHO was is in the lead of UN agencies in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and recalled the recent statement by the UN Secretary-General to call for global ceasefire in light of the current health crisis. She outlined three priority areas from an environmental context:
 - a) The issue of waste management is one that will need to be brought to the forefront of UNEP's agenda on waste as hospitals experience a higher than usual waste streams – highlighting that this will be done through the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and UNEP's work programme on waste management.
 - b) The need for a better understanding of where COVID-19 came from and how it has transferred from wildlife to humans.
 - c) Ensuring sustainable post-COVID-19 recovery through green economic stimulus packages.

5. The meeting attended via video conference by the following Members of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly:

- Norway (P) H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of the Climate and Environment;
- France (VP) H.E. Ms. Brune Poirson, Secretary of State for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition;
- Indonesia (VP) Ms. Laskmi Dhewanthi, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Forestry, Asia-Pacific Group;
- Estonia (VP) Mr. Ado Lohmus, Permanent Representative, Eastern European Group;
- Bahrain (VP) H.E. Dr. Mohamed Mubarak Bin Dainah, Chief Executive of Supreme Council for Environment, Asia-Pacific Group;
- Burkina Faso (VP) H.E. Mr. Bassiere Batio Nestor, Minister of Green Economy and Climate Change, African Group;
- Costa Rica (VP) H.E. Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez Echandi, Minister of Environment and Energy, Latin America and Caribbean Group;
- Suriname (VP) H.E. Mr. Reggy Nelson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Latin America and Caribbean Group;
- Serbia (VP) H.E. Ms. Biljana Filipovic, Assistant Minister of International Co-operation and EU Integration, representing H.E. Mr. Goran Trivan, Minister of Environment, Eastern European Group;
- South Africa (Rapporteur) Ms. Shahkira Parker, Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries representing Hon. Ms. Barbara Creecy, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, African Group.

Other representatives present:

- H.E. Marta Juarez-Ruiz, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to Kenya;
- H.E. Dragan Županjevac, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Serbia to Kenya;
- H.E. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway;
- H.E. Ms. Aline Kuster-Menager, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France
- Ms. Guri Sandborg, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway;
- Ms. Amanda Mkhwanazi, Deputy Permanent Representatives of South Africa;
- Ms. Estelle Halimi, Deputy Permanent Representative of France

The Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was represented ex officio by:

- H.E. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil;
- Mr. Patrick Luna, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil.

The Secretariat of the UN Environment Programme was represented by:

- Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director;
- Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director;
- Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies;
- Mr. Ulf Bjornholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies;

6. The meeting conveyed its condolences to the Government of Serbia, upon receiving news of the passing of H.E. Branislav Blazic, former State Secretary of the Ministry for Environmental Protection of Serbia.
7. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda.

Agenda Item 2: Synergies between the 2020 “super year for nature” and UNEA-5

8. The Executive Director presented a background document on the synergies between the 2020 “super year for nature” and UNEA-5, and underlined that the paper needed to be updated to take into account the current health crisis.
9. The meeting confirmed that the theme of the Environment Assembly is closely ~~inter~~ linked to the super year for nature, noting that all the meetings and milestones mentioned in the background document will have an important role to play to halt the loss of biodiversity and lead the way to a more sustainable society that protects and restores nature as the foundation for our collective welfare.
10. The meeting agreed on the need for a strong narrative to position UNEA in the center of the debate on how to ensure that economic recovery plans contribute to healthier planet and is based on sound science.
14. The President thanked the Bureau Members for their contributions and guidance as a useful basis for further discussions on how to prepare for a successful UNEA-5.

Agenda item 3: Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

11. The President informed the meeting of this year's theme of the High Level Political Forum, “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”, and referred to the draft submission to the HLPPF which had benefitted from concrete input from members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi, noting that it will be subject to final consideration

by the Committee on 2 April 2020.

12. The Chair of the CPR informed the meeting that the contribution paper had improved significantly based on inputs from Member States and underlined the need to improve the process of preparation of the paper, to allow for adequate review and contributions by the CPR in future.
13. The President requested the Secretariat to support the Chair of the CPR in making sure that all inputs from Member State are adequately reflected in the final document to be submitted to the Chair of the HLPF.

Agenda item 4: Consultations on General Assembly Resolution 73/333

14. The President's representative in Nairobi, Ambassador Elin Rognlie, and the Chair of the CPR updated the meeting on their consultations on the way forward on UNGA resolution 73/33, which resulted in the adoption of a roadmap for consultations at the 149th meeting of the CPR. They noted that further informal consultations would be needed to identify two co-facilitators to lead the consultation process in preparation for UNEA-5.
15. The meeting agreed that the co-facilitators should be appointed as soon as possible in order for them to start developing an outline/elements/building blocks paper for consideration by member States, and invited the President's representative in Nairobi and the CPR Chair to continue to lead these consultations together with the Chairs of regional groups.

Agenda item 5: Preparations for the joint retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Oslo, 9-10 June 2020

16. The President informed the meeting that his team and the Secretariat are moving forward with preparation for the Joint retreat in June 2020, which will be focusing on the theme for UNEA-5 and organized online back-to-back with several other virtual events involving civil society, academia, youth, private sector and governments.
17. The President noted that the online format of the meetings will require flexibility and adaptability and that a revised proposal of the structure and agenda will be developed by his team and the Secretariat, for further consideration by the CPR and UNEA bureaux members in the upcoming weeks.

With regard to the preparations of the ministerial declaration, the President informed the meeting that while the COVID-19 situation may impact the preparations of the ministerial declaration, all Member States and Stakeholders must have the opportunity to provide

inputs also at an early stage. The President suggested that the ministerial declaration should identify concrete opportunities to halt the loss of nature and ecosystem services towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals, and announced that he would send a letter to initiate the process, with a view to allow for a substantive consideration at the joint retreat in June, followed by the development of a first draft to be made available before the summer break.

18. The meeting considered that ministerial declaration should be closely aligned to the theme for UNEA-5 and underlined the importance of consultations with all regions.

Agenda item 6: Date for the next UN Environment Assembly Bureau meeting

19. The next meeting of the Bureau will take place during the Joint Retreat in June, unless otherwise decided by the President.

Agenda Item 7: Other Matters

20. No other matters were introduced for consideration by the meeting.

Agenda Item 8: Closing of the Meeting

21. The meeting closed at 18:00.