

**Speech of the GRULAC President during UNEP's
CPR nr. 150, 30 April 2020, Nairobi**

FIRST INTERVENTION

Agenda Item 5 – Implementation of Paragraph 8 of UNEA Decision 4/2

Thank you, Chair.

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of GRULAC, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries.

At the outset, we would also like to express our sincere condolences to all Member States who have lost citizens due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the peoples of your countries.

At the same time, allow me to congratulate the Chair and the Secretariat for ensuring the business continuity of the work through virtual conferences and meetings.

To allow for improved communication, GRULAC would like to express its support to the notion that it is important to ensure simultaneous interpretation at the virtual meetings of the CPR, as has been the practice in physical meetings.

GRULAC understands the current challenges to provide for simultaneous interpretation, but would like to encourage the Secretariat to continue seeking solutions for our future online meetings.

In this way, we would be more aligned with multilingualism, a key component of the good functioning of our joint efforts at the United Nations.

Mr. Chair,

Now, please allow me to turn specifically to the agenda item at hand.

GRULAC welcomes the beginning of a conversation about the substantive contours of the commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of UNEP.

Although we thank and appreciate the effort made by the Secretariat in preparing the documents for this meeting, considering the importance of this subject, we were expecting to receive a dedicated, separate report.

Even if we, Member States, agree on UNEA-Five as the starting point of UNEP plus fifty , we must not forget that they are still two different events, based on different mandates.

Preparing a single report for the discussion on two different issues risks inadvertently conflating them.

The substantive debate about the preparation of UNEA resolutions, for instance, is independent from the debate on the substantive contours of the commemoration.

We have not agreed that the theme of UNEA-5 would serve as the theme of UNEP plus fifty.

GRULAC therefore requests the Secretariat to prepare a standalone report for the implementation of Paragraph eight of UNEA Decision four slash two, and also requests that this item be included in the agenda of the next CPR meeting.

GRULAC believes that the fiftieth Anniversary of UNEP is an opportunity to examine the achievements and the challenges of the Programme during the half century in which it has been operating.

This evaluation should be forward looking so as to enable improvements in the organization's performance within its mandate and institutional framework.

And thus more effectively, contribute to the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development and to the achievement of the goals and targets set in Agenda 2030.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SECOND INTERVENTION

Agenda Item 6 (Preparations for UNEA-5)

Thank you, Chair.

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of GRULAC.

It is essential to continue our journey towards UNEA-Five and work jointly on ensuring the continued relevance of the upcoming Assembly given the current global crisis caused by COVID-19.

GRULAC would like to thank the Secretariat for its report on the preparation for the Fifth Session of the UN Environment Assembly and takes this opportunity to share its views on the issue.

First of all, as I said in my previous intervention on behalf of my regional group, GRULAC considers that the preparations for UNEA Five and the Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of UNEP should have been the object of two different, separate reports.

By having only one report, it becomes more difficult to separate the distinct mandates and contexts.

Secondly, GRULAC considers that UNEA Five represents an opportunity for all of us to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

It will allow for an opportunity to draw more attention to the steps that need to be taken, to fully realize its environmental dimension.

Thirdly, GRULAC believes that UNEA-5 should serve as a platform for Member States and other stakeholders to share their successful approaches, best practices and solutions that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, in a balanced and integrated manner.

Please let us recall that progress towards the achievement of sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner is critical for a better world and future for all.

In this regard, GRULAC considers that rethinking the approved framework for sustainable development particularly of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals is not desirable.

Our only mandate is to implement the 2030 Agenda.

Therefore, we consider that the document should be based itself on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SGDs.

The road towards UNEA-5 should therefore invite us to reflect on how to increase and strengthen environmental actions for nature towards a holistic implementation of the Agenda.

Please let me also state that GRULAC is fully committed to the outcomes of Rio Plus Twenty, including Paragraph Eighty eight, of the “The future we want”.

GRULAC considers that strengthening UNEP means enhancing its ability to assist Member States in implementing their environmental commitments.

We consider it a positive approach, to create synergies with the MEAs and other UN agencies, while fully respecting their mandates.

GRULAC is interested to further explore the format of omnibus resolutions for UNEA Five.

However, the way in which the four proposed action areas are drafted, seem to encroach on the roles and competencies of other UN bodies.

This does not imply that the efforts and achievements of UN agencies cannot be recognized, as long as we are working in the context of the sustainable development goals.

Nonetheless, the issue deserves further consideration, so that we can ensure that all Member States collectively agree on the way forward.

Finally, GRULAC considers that UNEA Five will be the appropriate space to strengthen and complement the ideas that have already emerged from previous Assemblies and Conferences of the Parties.

And that a balanced and integrated implementation of all three dimensions of sustainable development must *always* be the objective of our debates!

Thank you, Chair!