



Comments from World Animal Net (WAN): 150th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Please find below comments from World Animal Net (WAN) on the 150th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR). We are grateful to the Chair of the meeting for inviting further written comments.

World Animal Net already submitted some general written comments on the preparations for UNEA 5 in advance of the 150th meeting, but it was not clear whether these were made available – because they were not linked from the meeting website. If not, we hope that these will also be made available.

Civil Society Space

A representative of World Animal Net attended the 150th CPR meeting, which was held virtually. This was an important meeting, and it soon reached capacity. Non-essential UNEP staff were asked to leave, so Member States could join. Then an email was sent asking Major Groups to restrict representation to one for each major group. Further, there were a number of stakeholders wishing to speak on the item about UNEA 5, but there was no opportunity to do so, because the meeting was running late.

We would like to make a special plea for UNEP and the CPR to ensure that civil society space is not eroded due to virtual working. It is likely that meetings will continue to be held virtually for a long time to come, so it is important that UNEP invests in meeting/webinar platforms which permit full representation and participation.

Also, there was not sufficient time allocated to this packed and important meeting. So, we respectfully ask that key agenda items, such as UNEA 5 and Stockholm+50 preparations, are allocated plenty of time in future meetings, to allow full consideration and stakeholder participation.

We are also concerned that the use of Silence Procedure does not include any opportunity for stakeholder participation, and whilst this can be effective for final tweaks to documents, it is lacking in democracy for it to be used repeatedly, or for substantial amendments.

Preparations for the Fifth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA5) and Stockhoms+50 (Agenda Items 5 and 6)

Our submission welcomed the move towards the four suggested “Action Areas” which would provide important pillars for the work of UNEA 5, and a focus for four significant resolutions – all very relevant to present and future pandemics and other future existential threats. We also particularly welcomed the recognition of the need to tackle structural and systemic issues within these pillars – including direct and indirect drivers. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that the relationships expressed in these chosen pillars are not

working as they should. Humans have brought nature out of balance. As has been stated before – key are our relationships with biodiversity and animals.

There is much lip service paid to the need to move out of silos, and consider issues holistically. Yet when attempts are made to do this in practice, there are claims of overstepping competences – possibly from fear of significant change. However, considering wider issues from the perspective of how the environment and animals need to be treated or protected in order to achieve SDG objectives is not overstepping competences at all. This is rather reframing problems, ensuring an environmental lens is used, and at the same time looking at interrelationships. Surely this is the only way to achieve the systemic change which all the major UN flagship reports say is necessary – not only to achieve the SDGs, but also for our future survival.

As was wisely stated in the CPR meeting, this “nexus” approach is particularly valuable as UNEA 5 will take place in the run up to a series of global meetings on associated issues - including biodiversity, food systems, and climate – enabling clear messages to be developed which can be carried forward.

A far-sighted and holistic approach is needed at this time of pandemic and existential crises, together with brave, wise and visionary leadership. We look forward to seeing this in action.

World Animal Net
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