

Egypt's statement during UNGA resolution 73/333 consultations held on 27/7/2020

Distinguished co-facilitators, Madam Deputy ED of UNEP, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to align myself with the statement made by the State of Palestine on behalf of the G77 and China.

I wish to congratulate H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan, and Mr. Ado Lohmus, Permanent Representative of Estonia once again for being designated as the co-facilitators for this critical task. We have full confidence in you and are certain that you will ably guide us through this process towards a fruitful outcome at UNEA 5, one which has buy-in from all parties and which ultimately recognizes, leverages and strengthens UNEP's central role in the multilateral environmental sphere.

I also wish to thank you both for the very well thought out and crafted co-facilitators document you have prepared, noting with appreciation that it follows the blueprint laid out by the annex of resolution 73/333 and that it offers plenty of food for thought, and a rich basis for discussion, which can eventually move the process forward with specific action-oriented proposals.

At the outset, it is important to emphasize that our consultations this week are an opportunity to have a dynamic exchange of ideas, and is not by any means a negotiation. As the world continues to grapple with the severe disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to note that virtual meeting modalities are not suitable for inclusive substantive negotiations or for taking formal decisions.

Once again my delegation wishes to emphasize the need for this process to be inclusive, participatory and transparent. In this regard, we welcome the keenness of the co-facilitators to start engaging with all the regional/political groups early on, and for continually reaching out to have discussions with us. We hope that this spirit of inclusivity will be maintained throughout the process, with regular and frank exchanges, supported of course by our able Secretariat.

Another key consideration for maintaining inclusivity is to apply the same working methods applied to UNEA resolutions to ensure the input of member states without representation in Nairobi, and ultimately to keep in mind that the draft text

emanating from this process will also be forwarded to the second committee of the General Assembly, thus ensuring representation from all member states.

It is crucial to note that while the CPR will most certainly have an instrumental role with regard to the political declaration, the mandate handed to UNEA by the General Assembly is to “prepare” a political declaration, not to adopt one.

As far as substance is concerned, my delegation wishes to stress the need for the draft political declaration to be based exclusively on the objectives and recommendations of the Ad-hoc working group as annexed to UNGA resolution 73/333. These objectives and recommendations were reached after extensive consideration over three 5-day meetings held in Nairobi, and the drafting process for the recommendations took into consideration the wide array of views and opinions expressed by all Member States during the process. Any consideration of matters outside the scope of these recommendations would not be conducive to attaining consensus on the draft declaration and would amount to a renegotiation.

It is also vital to note that the final outcome (the political declaration) of this process should be aspirational and political in nature, and any recommendations made (even those that are action-oriented) should be encouraged rather than prescribed.

Having said that, there is plenty to work with in the recommendations put forward by resolution 73/333 - and the co-facilitators’ note - towards strengthening environmental law and governance. In this regard, I wish to emphasize the following at this stage:

- It is crucial to enshrine the fundamental principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity in this process, keeping in mind that the right to sustainable development and poverty eradication must remain at the forefront.
- Ambition and progress can only be achieved by living up to obligations and commitments under existing conventions and agreements, and enhanced ambition regarding means of implementation, including finance, technology transfer and capacity building, is a fundamental prerequisite for this. This must all be done in the context of the specific national circumstances and development imperatives of member states.
- In this regard it is important to recognize the interdependence of the three informal “categories” outlined by the co-facilitators for our discussions -

ambition in environmental governance and rule of law depend on ambition in means of implementation and are essentially two sides of the same coin.

- It is crucial in the current COVID-19 pandemic to further bring to the forefront the importance of focusing on the instrumental role of means of implementation and the importance of not backtracking on them, noting that the pressing recovery efforts that all of our countries are undertaking to cope with the destructive impacts of the pandemic are taking a significant toll, and this toll is felt most strongly by developing countries.
- The declaration could include clear provisions on ramping up climate finance, including meeting the \$100 billion dollars per year goal by 2020 (which hasn't been met) and also towards starting the consultations on the new collective goal of climate finance beyond 100 bn per year, in accordance with the relevant COP decisions, noting that climate ambition necessitates commensurate support.
- In this regard, UNEP can play a role in assessing the pre-2020 finance gaps, as well as working with member states in exploring the potential for the beyond 2020 finance goal from developed to developing countries.
- Egypt has long emphasized on the importance of synergies and complementarity across the various environmental conventions and agreements. This would be the optimum approach to push forward the environmental agenda without creating new legal obligations - for which there is no appetite, particularly since the shortfalls in the work of multilateral environmental work is due to the lack of implementation of existing commitments rather than a lack thereof. Egypt launched an initiative at CBD COP14 to achieve synergies, coherence and complementarity across the three Rio Conventions which may help contribute to these efforts.
- The science policy interface and promoting policy coherence across environmental instruments is a matter of utmost importance, and UNEP is uniquely placed to bring its insights and scientific rigor to strengthen this dimension. In this regard, we may tap into the proposals already made under discussions of the UNEP@50 commemorations regarding the science-policy interface, and in particular as it relates to the synthesis reports proposed, and the assessment reports on the evolution of the science-policy interface.
- On a related note, it may be possible to provide capacity building expertise through the science division of UNEP to those regions most underrepresented in scientific discourse and publication and provide practical advice on how best they can contribute to major reports and to the science-policy discussion more broadly.

- It is critical to encourage member states to mainstream the environment into sectoral policies and programmes at all levels, as appropriate and recognizing national circumstances.
- The role of the Environment Management Group, under the stewardship of the Executive Director, will be indispensable in ensuring the environmental dimension of sustainable development is enshrined across the UN system and given the attention it deserves alongside the social and economic pillars, towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Strengthening the CPR's role in the intersessional period can contribute to strengthening UNEP in the more holistic sense. This can be done through emphasis on capacity building for Nairobi based delegates, including the provision of "orientation courses" in some form for delegates who join missions here in Nairobi.
- Proposals to have regular briefings by MEA secretariats to the CPR in the intersessional period may be an effective method of increasing cooperation and complementarity (as already proposed during consultations on the CPR based review).