



First informal substantive consultation meeting under the auspices of the CPR on UNGA Resolution 73/333

21-23 July 2020

Opening remarks by Brazil

as delivered by H.E. Ambassador Fernando Estellita Lins de Salvo Coimbra,
Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP

Madam Co-Facilitator / Mr. Co-Facilitator,

At the outset, I would like to echo previous speakers in congratulating both of you for taking on the task to serve as co-facilitators in this process under the auspices of the CPR towards the preparation of the political declaration mandated by General Assembly Resolution 73/333. I also commend you for preparing a document that also serves as a reminder that our purpose here is to discharge the mandate given by the General Assembly, and not to revisit it. I also wish to thank the Secretariat for its Information Note, a document that invites us to reflect on the many achievements on international environmental law and governance since 1972.

Brazil aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and on behalf of GRULAC. I am taking this opportunity to deliver opening remarks from a national perspective.

Madam Co-Facilitator / Mr. Co-Facilitator,

The political declaration we were tasked to prepare is an opportunity for all of us to recommit to the outcomes emanating from the UN conferences on sustainable development, in particular Rio+20. Backtracking is not an option.

We should therefore recall the Rio Declaration and recognize that human beings are at the center of concerns for sustainable development. We should recall that sustainable development itself will not be reached unless poverty is eradicated – "the greatest global

challenge", to quote from the first paragraphs of "The Future We Want". This was true in 1992, in 2002 and in 2012, and it is tragically truer today, as millions of human beings are being pushed back or deeper into poverty due to the consequences of a pandemic.

We should reaffirm our determination to strengthen UNEP in accordance with and as decided at Rio+20.

The political declaration should strengthen international cooperation and solidarity towards the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

The discussions culminating in Resolution 73/333 revealed the "gap" we are to address is not a normative one, but rather an operational one. We do not lack norms; we lack implementation of the norms we already have.

In line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, the political declaration must bring us into a world where developing countries can count with more assistance – in resources, in technology, in capacity – so as to be in a better position to implement the commitments that they sovereignly agreed on, to "leapfrog" towards sustainable development.

This is how the declaration can make a difference in real life.

The political declaration should therefore be aimed at the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the SDGs. They are our best - and only - roadmap to ensure that environmental, social and economic challenges are addressed in a holistic and balanced manner. The preparation of the political declaration is situated at the early steps of the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs. If the UN is to "deliver as one", this political declaration must be tightly aligned to it.

Madam Co-Facilitator / Mr. Co-Facilitator,

Delegations have been encouraged to seize this opportunity to share their views on when and where the political declaration should be adopted.

The mandate given to UNEA-5 by the General Assembly seems clear: to "prepare" a political declaration, not to "finalize" or to "adopt" it. This wording was intentional as the WG deliberated in Nairobi and appears even more relevant today, as we face the limitations of online diplomacy to conduct line-by-line consultations. Today's enthusiasm with our ability to ensure the continuity of work through virtual meetings should not lead us to the assumption that this is the new normal of multilateral work. It is not. Outstanding challenges associated with scheduling in various time zones, access to high-speed internet - and, above all, multilingualism - are all reminders of the exceptional nature of online diplomacy.

The commemorative event that is being envisaged for Nairobi in 2022 or at UNEA6 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP seems, therefore, to be the appropriate occasion for the adoption of this declaration, culminating the series of events to be launched at UNEA-5 – which we will be discussing in the CPR, thus honoring Paragraph 88 of "The Future We Want", and consolidating Nairobi as the center of gravity for the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Thank you, Madam Co-Facilitator / Mr. Co-Facilitator.