

GRULAC Intervention

Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives

10 September 2020

Chaired by: Co-facilitators **Mr. Marcus Davies** of **Canada** and **Mr. Mapopa Kaunda** of **Malawi**

Item 2. Implementation of paragraphs 9-13 of Decision UNEP/EA.4/2 entitled “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly”.

Thank you, Chair. It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of GRULAC. First of all, we would like to thank you for the elaboration of the document *Converging elements of consensus – Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives (Version VI)*, and thank the Secretariat for its note entitled *Reference document to the proposals identified under the Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives*. Both documents aim to guide our common effort into preparing a transparent, inclusive and —above all— successful UNEA-5.

Many are the challenges of a UNEA preparation, especially during these difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we all know, these challenges have obliged us to revise the ways we work and, therefore, the timing of this process of review could not be better. GRULAC believes a lot of progress has been made during this process, but there are certainly several aspects that still prevent us from reaching a convergence and require more work and clarification. Some of them are:

1. Paragraphs 3 and 5 - Changing the names of the *Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR)* into *Preparatory Committee Meeting (PREPCOM)* and that of the *Annual Subcommittee Meeting* into *Review and Oversight Committee Meeting (ROC)* without changing their function, role or mandate. We do not support changing their names, i.e. giving them nicknames, so that we know what they do. All the delegates and stakeholders involved do know and can easily convey the function, role or mandate to those who do not. A change of the name can only imply changes in the function. Changing these names do not reflect the region’s concerns, as we consider detriments the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

2. Paragraph 6 – GRULAC considers that in subparagraph c), the expression “to the extent possible” should be eliminated, because minimizing the number of formal and informal negotiation groups working in parallel at the OECPR and UNEA is of pivotal importance. “To the extent possible” leaves this subject open to interpretation. We must force ourselves to organize the workload better in order to help small delegations to attend and participate in the very important negotiation meetings taking place.

3. Paragraphs 7 and 9 – Our region completely agrees with strengthening the contributions and active participation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) to UNEA to promote coherence between the UNEA resolutions and the MEAs governing bodies’ decisions presented in paragraph 7. However, we note that the guidance should be a joint task of the UNEA Bureau and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, within their

respective competencies according to the Rules of Procedure and relevant Governing Council resolutions and decisions. This is a Member State driven organization. The guidance of the UNEA Bureau is deemed appropriate as explained in paragraph 9.

4. Paragraph 12 – Our group welcomes furthering broaden ownership and inclusiveness of CPR meetings in the ways described in this paragraph. However, we strongly believe that these activities should not be conditioned to the availability of resources.

5. Paragraph 16 – Our region has been advocating for finding a better use of the intersessional period and engaging in early discussion and negotiation of possible resolutions, which results in our agreement with the spirit of this paragraph. However, subparagraph b) indicates that Member States should announce their intention to table draft resolutions 16 weeks in advance of UNEA and submit draft resolutions at least 10 weeks in advance. In our point of view, that is not realistic. We respectfully suggest announcing the intention to table draft resolutions 8 weeks in advance and presenting resolutions 6 weeks in advance.

Mr. Chair,

GRULAC is eager to engage, under the clear guidance from the co-facilitators, in discussions that lead to a convergence that has not been reached yet.

Our region advocates in particular for a better use of the intersessional period and considers that there is a strong, evident need to strengthen the Committee of Permanent Representatives in preparation to this and future UNEAs. The work carried out this way, previous to the OECPR and UNEA, would allow delegations to concentrate in the toughest and most challenging discussions and negotiations, and not in all of them if we leave that work until the end. We also strongly support involving delegations during the intersessional period by virtual means.

Finally, GRULAC would like to express its will to constructively engage in this Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives. A successful UNEA is our aim. A successful UNEA strengthens multilateralism, protects the environment and its governance. We are looking forward to continuing this discussion.

Thank you.

Final version

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