

151st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Written inputs from the Republic of Costa Rica
14 September 2020

Chair, Madam Executive Director, distinguished colleagues; it is a privilege to speak on behalf of Costa Rica.

First, allow Costa Rica to welcome the newly arrived Representatives of Member States. Regarding agenda item number four, Costa Rica, considers that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, we will jointly fulfil our responsibility to prepare a meaningful, ambitious UNEA-5 meeting.

As we are facing unprecedented uncertainties, we appreciate the timely discussions held by the Bureaus of UNEA and the CPR on the options for organizing the UNEA-5 meeting. We encourage the Bureaus and leadership of UNEP to provide maximum clarity on the way forward without delay.

This crisis calls us to urgently rethink the relationship with nature and the failed socio-environmental pact with nature which is why Costa Rica strongly believes the meeting should maintain despite COVID-19 and to look for ambitious environmental outcomes but to remain realistic regarding the methods of work to achieve so. UNEA-5 must be a space for sharing scientific knowledge of the true role the environment plays for our wellbeing, safety and livelihoods.

Costa Rica considers of high importance the review of UNEP regarding gender mainstreaming and looks forward to engaging medium-term strategy to adhere to gender, youth and geographical representation in the composition of the staff, as a clear example of multiculturalism, inclusiveness and human rights-in action within UNEP.

Regarding agenda item number five, Costa Rica supports the position of GRULAC regarding the necessity for the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) to strengthen UNEP's ability to assist the Member States, in particular developing ones, in the implementation of their national environmental policies and international agreed-upon commitments, especially the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, Costa Rica considers that the Member States should also make extraordinary efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development within their capacity.

Costa Rica considers the term "Nature-based solutions" is a concept that still lacks a universally agreed-upon definition. However, Costa Rica strongly supports exploring and/or promoting the work with the concept in order to create an intergovernmental definition as a result of UNEA-5. Hence, we respectfully ask the Secretariat to present us with a conceptual paper in order to open the much-needed space for this discussion towards UNEA-5. 4

Costa Rica strongly agrees with GRULAC on the statement the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Any involvement by UNEP in the Security Council's activities, including peace operations, should only happen when invited or mandated by the Council itself, and not on the initiative of UNEP. For this reason, including this issue in UNEP's strategy seems to be inadequate. Costa Rica also supports the G77 and China statement to avoid duplication of work on what has been done or covered before on the Medium-Term strategy.

Regarding agenda item number six, Costa Rica considers that a political declaration should aim to be ambitious and progressive, which can only be achieved by living up to obligations and commitments under existing environmental conventions and agreements but particularly towards the actual means of implementation, including finance, technology transfer and capacity building as fundamental prerequisites.

Costa Rica emphasizes the importance of a science-policy interface focused on promoting policy coherence across environmental instruments; this approach does not scape the creation of the so mentioned political declaration. This is a political declaration that should strengthen the role of UNEP, and focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in line with the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on

Sustainable Development carried out in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, entitled “The future we want”, including paragraphs 88 and 89 thereof.

It is the context of COVID-19, there is an indispensable need for additional means of implementation in support of the efforts undertaken by developing countries and all the principles of Rio and, among them, the common but differentiated responsibilities.

Costa Rica considers that UNEP, should work creatively and progressively without interfering in the independent nature of the environmental conventions nor encroaching in their respective mandates and governance mechanisms in order to coordinate the environmental work better and identify spaces for synergies to take place among the environmental agreements.

Finally, Costa Rica considers it critical to encourage member states to mainstream the environment into sectoral policies and programmes at all levels, recognizing the national circumstances but in any way diminishing the national approach to environmental protection.

Regarding agenda item number seven, Costa Rica recognizes the urgency and more significant commitment to face the current climate and biodiversity crisis. Transformative change is required. To promote not change but transformation, reconstruction, sharing new models and not continuing to support the same detrimental practices from the past.

The crisis calls us to urgently rethink the relationship with nature and the failed socio-environmental pact with nature. We now have an opportunity to build a better model of consumption, to promote sustainable reconstruction based on clean energy and circular economy.

Around these challenges, and complying with the international commitments, Costa Rica aspires to be the first modern, green and decarbonized economy in 2050. This will be done through the National Decarbonization Plan and the Adaptation to Climate Change National Policy, two tools used to improve resilience in critical areas such as infrastructure, productive systems, tourism, water resources management, biodiversity and health.

Sustainable rebuilding is not only ideal but smarter as it offers higher returns; hence: a profitable business. Now is the political momentum for a new and ambitious global agreement addressing the full lifecycle of plastics.

Being ambitious implies having a high commitment towards transforming our current development model, but it does not mean an economic setback. Costa Rica has adopted a series of measures to reduce plastic pollution and protect marine resources.

Our country established norms to ascertain whether the plastic materials and products are renewable and compostable. Such standards allow taking measures to ensure the sustainable consumption of plastic products, such as certification schemes, as well as possible measures to ban or reduce certain materials and products that are not suitable for sale and consumption.

Costa Rica is developing national and regional action plans towards achieving the reduction of marine litter. The agreements will be an essential tool that would respond to country contexts and address the problems.

Finally, Costa Rica is committed to contributing to the ambitious goal of protecting at least 30 percent of the world land and sea by 2030. Also, avoid biodiversity loss and restore marine and water ecosystems.

Thank you Chair.