

Inputs of the Russian Federation to the consultations on the timing and format of UNEA-5

Under current conditions of the global COVID-19 pandemic, limited international air travel and quarantine restrictions at UNON, we strongly believe that UNEA-5 has to be postponed.

Effective, equal and inclusive participation of all Member-States in the UNEA-5 has to be ensured. We can not agree to a virtual or hybrid meeting formats. The inevitable consequence of the online or semi-online meetings within UNEA is the weakening of the engagement of Member States delegations that are not physically present in Nairobi as well as quality participation of delegations due to constant technical shortfalls.

Any substantive negotiations on the UNEA-5 decisions should be held in person to produce action-oriented documents. We should not undermine the efficiency and the role of UNEP as the “leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment” by conducting UNEA session online.

There are also serious concerns in regard to compliance with Rules of Procedure of UNEA and efficiency of simultaneous interpretation into the 6 UN official languages.

Neither do we favor a “two part” UNEA that implies a procedural meeting in February followed by a resumed session later in 2021 or 2022. Having a UNEA session only every two years we should have single meaningful meeting that can deliver a real positive impact on the environment. In case of having UNEA online or hybrid we will not be able to work out practical resolutions without possibility of full-scale consultations.

In our view it is more prudent to hold UNEA-5 in 2022 and undertake required actions for environment than limit it procedural pattern and delay substantive decisions up to UNEA-6 in 2023. We should not have a session for the

sake of simply “keeping momentum”. In between the sessions CPR can take the leading role and in cooperation with the UNEA Bureau to adopt the necessary procedural decisions with their following approval during face-to-face UNEA-5 meeting.

Finally, we consider it reasonable to study a possibility of merging UNEA-5 with “Stockholm+50” meeting mandated by the UNGA resolution 73/333. This option would greatly simplify the organization of the meeting since all the rules of UNEA will automatically apply. We see UNEA-5 as a good, if not the best, opportunity to celebrate the 50th commemoration of the establishment of UNEP and confirm UNEA role as the principal decision making body in the global environmental cooperation.