

SINGAPORE'S COMMENTS TO AGENDA ITEM 5 (PREPARATIONS FOR UNEA-3) AT THE 4th ANNUAL CPR SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING, 6-9 MAR 2017

(i) Outline of Background Document of UNEA-3 on Pollution

- Singapore is generally supportive of the outline of the background document of UNEA-3 on pollution. We think it serves as a good basis for further discussion.
- We are pleased to see air, marine and fresh water pollution highlighted as these are pertinent areas to be addressed in working towards a pollution free planet.
- We would like to share some initial broad comments:
 - First, the reason we are all here is the basic recognition that pollution, like many environmental challenges, knows no boundaries, and which requires our collective efforts to address.
 - In this regard, my delegation would like to reiterate that given the transboundary nature of pollution, UNEA, as the collective voice for the environment, has an important role to play in drawing focus on and addressing transboundary pollution issues.
 - Therefore, we believe it is important for UNEA to address transboundary forms of pollution, especially with a view to come up with actionable outcomes.
 - Second, we would like to express strong support to point one of section 3 on “a framework of guidance principles and transformative actions” with regard to the importance of addressing pollution at source.
 - It is a given that it is the responsibility of each one of us to address pollution at source.
 - In this regard, we gladly welcome the approach to encourage national pledges and commitments as this would be a step towards for UNEA achieving actionable outcome.
 - On this note, we would be interested to find out more how this would be operationalised.
 - Third, we would like to flag that we believe it is important to also include coastal pollution together with marine pollution.
 - This is given that most ocean pollution begins on land, makes its way to the coast and then to the seas/oceans.
 - To give an example of a possible concrete outcome with regard to marine and coastal pollution that UNEA-3 could work towards is to explore ways to strengthen coastal water quality, such as addressing discharges from land-based sources of pollution including from industrial and commercial activities.
- We look forward to the Secretariat circulating the advance draft background note as soon as possible for further discussion.

(ii) Organisation and Structure of UNEA-3

- We join other voices in welcoming the Secretariat's note on organisation and structure of UNEA-3. The note serves as a good basis for further discussion.
- With regard to the two proposed scenarios, we are attracted to scenario one for a few reasons:
 - One, scenario one allows officials to conclude negotiations before the Ministers arrive. This way, more focus can be given to the Ministerial discussions. We also understand that once the Ministers arrive, officials like us tend to get distracted given the need to support our Ministers.
 - That said, we are aware that if we were to aim to finish official-level negotiations early and before the Ministers arrive, we would need more time to conclude our official-level negotiations.
 - Two, scenario one has less parallel sessions. As we had seen from the High Level Segment (HLS) of UNEA-2, too many sessions that took place concurrently would get us nowhere.
 - Third, we like the flow of scenario one where it allows Ministers and relevant stakeholders, including the private sector to pledge commitment. We think this is a good idea and are broadly supportive of the principle.
 - Furthermore, this segment next continues to a session on Ministerial outcome of the HLS of UNEA-3. Such a flow reflects an attractive narrative of political commitments in working towards a pollution free planet that Ministers could showcase. It also makes it clear on what Ministers need to deliver for UNEA-3, which would also make good news feed to the media.
- We are strongly supportive of strict time management at OECPR-3 and UNEA-3.
- This is particularly important for countries with small delegations.
- Better time management and planning for OECPR-3 and UNEA-3 would help Member States, especially with small delegations, to allocate their resources more effectively.
- To give an illustration, last year prior to UNEA-3, draft resolutions were clustered into categories. At the 11th hour, they were all re-clustered into different groupings.
- This had caused much confusion and inconvenience to many delegations, particularly those with small delegations.
- We hope that there will not be a repeat of such a scenario at OECPR-3 and UNEA-3.
- We are broadly supportive of the idea of an interactive and Davos-style leadership dialogue.
- However, we would like greater clarity on how the Secretariat envisions such a leadership dialogue to take place.

(iii) Communication Strategy

- Singapore gladly welcomes the strategic thrust of the communication strategy.
- We are pleased to start this important discussion early.
- Given our common interest to raise the visibility of UNEA and UN Environment, it is critical to have a sound outreach strategy plan.
- We strongly believe that the good work that UNEA and UN Environment are doing should be communicated effectively to the public.
- This would also help strengthen the public's perception of UNEA being the leading global environmental authority.

- In this regard, we would like to share some quick comments and suggestions to help support Member States' respective outreach efforts in promoting UNEA-3 to our domestic audience.
 - First, we suggest that it would be useful for Secretariat to prepare in advance a set of draft media talking points or background note that Member States can use to help raise awareness about UNEA-3 back home.
 - It would be useful for these pointers to be circulated to Member States for comments, given that all of us have a stake in the UNEA process.
 - Second, we suggest that the Secretariat shares with Member States a tentative timeline of UNEA-3's communication strategy.
 - Third, given the strong interest to help strengthen the social buzz in the lead-up to UNEA-3, we suggest that it would be useful for the Secretariat to set up the relevant UNEA-3 digital platforms as early as possible, and keep Member States posted once the digital platforms go live.

- Singapore looks forward to riding on UNEA-3's communications strategy to help raise public awareness in Singapore about UNEA-3 and the work of UN Environment.