

Meeting of the Bureau of UN Environment Assembly
Tuesday, 18 April 2017,
4:30 p.m. – 6:10 p.m.
Office of Director-General Boardroom
(Block R, Level 3)
United Nations Office at Nairobi

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Edgar Gutierrez, President of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau and Minister of Environment and Energy of the Republic of Costa Rica. It was attended by the following members of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly:

1. H.E. Mr. Vladislav Smrž, Deputy Minister, Ministry of the Environment, Vice President, Eastern European Group (Czech Republic) via video-conference.
2. Mr. Ahmad Salihijo representing H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Usman Jibril, Minister of Environment, Vice President, Africa Group (Nigeria) via video-conference.
3. H.E. Mr. Ramon J.P. Paje, Senior Advisor to the Climate Change Commission, Vice President, Asia-Pacific Group (Philippines) via video-conference.
4. Mr. John Matuszak, Senior Advisor, Office of Environmental Quality and Transboundary Issues, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Department of State, Vice President, Western European and Others Group (United States of America) via video-conference.
5. H.E. Ms. Roxane de Bilderling, Ambassador and Permanent Representative, Rapporteur, Western European and Others Group (Belgium).

Other representatives:

6. H.E. Ms. Marta E. Juarez Ruiz, Ambassador on Special Mission of Costa Rica, Nairobi.
7. Mr. Vincent Willekens, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium, Nairobi.
8. H.E. Mr. Pavel Řezáč, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Czech Republic.
9. Mr. Filip Vrilič, UN Environment Assembly Focal Point, Ministry of the Environment, Czech Republic via video-conference.
10. Mr. Mohammed Husham Malik Al-Fityan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq, Nairobi.
11. Mr. Friday O. Okai, Acting High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Nigeria, Nairobi.
12. UN Environment Ms. Majella Cristy U Pua-Diezmos, Deputy Permanent Representative of Philippines, Nairobi.
13. H.E. Ms. Lori Peterson Dando, Permanent Representative of United States of America, Nairobi.

14. Mr. Joel B. Hansen Deputy Permanent Representative of United States of America, Nairobi.

The UN Environment Programme Secretariat was represented by:

15. Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, Executive Office.
16. Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, Director, Governance Affairs Office.
17. Ms. Rosemary Semafumu Mukasa, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies.

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda.

2. Preparations for the 2017 Environment Assembly

- 2.1. The President informed the meeting that with the support of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives sent a letter to member states requesting that they signal their intent to submit draft resolutions. He also reminded the meeting that it would be highly beneficial to the work of the Assembly, if member states linked their resolution proposals to the theme of the pollution and consulted widely with their regional and political groupings.

a) Ministerial Outcome Document

- 2.2. The President informed the meeting that he sent a letter to Ministers of Environment on 7 April 2017, requesting their initial inputs for a Ministerial Outcome Document. He further informed the meeting that he would send out a second letter by the end of April 2017, on consultations on the structure of the Ministerial Outcome Document.

b) Roadmap to the 2017 Environment Assembly

- 2.3. The Secretary of Governing Bodies, presented the document entitled, “Roadmap to the Third Session of the Environment Assembly.” The Roadmap indicated upcoming and proposed meetings of Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Committee of Permanent Representatives, UN Environment Assembly Bureau and regional consultations as well as milestones and organizational aspects to be achieved.
- 2.4. One member suggested that the meeting consider scheduling a physical meeting of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau after June and before the Open Ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The President informed the meeting that the possibility of a physical Bureau meeting would be considered in light of available financial resources. Furthermore, the Deputy Executive Director suggested that should there be such a meeting, it would best held in November 2017 after the Regional Ministerial Fora.
- 2.5. It was noted that the meeting of AMCEN be added to the roadmap.

2.6. The President thanked Bureau members for signing up to attend and raise visibility of the 2017 Environment Assembly at various global and regional fora.

c) Draft agenda for the 2017 Environment Assembly

2.7. The Secretary of Governing Bodies, presented the draft agenda for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly to the Bureau, outlining its components and pointing out that the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, would contain the outcome of the Open Ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives as agreed upon by member states at the Fourth Annual Sub-Committee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

2.8. The meeting suggested that the Secretariat move agenda item 8, “Administrative and budgetary issues” to become new agenda item 6, after “Budget and Programme Performance, including implementation of the Assembly’s resolutions”. It was agreed that the word ‘venue’ be omitted from agenda item 11, “Date, venue and provisional agenda for the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly.” The President requested members to forward their comments on the draft agenda to the Secretariat.

d) Structure and organization of the 2017 Environment Assembly

2.9. The President informed the meeting that the Sub-Committee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives had discussed the structure on 13 April 2017 and pointed out that the Sub-Committee needed more time for its deliberations. He hoped it would close this matter at its upcoming Subcommittee meeting on 27 April 2017. Thereafter, the structure would be submitted to the Bureau for its endorsement, after which the Secretariat would further elaborate on details of the sessions.

2.10. A member proposed that the Secretariat, highlight 5 and 6 December 2017 as the dates of the High-Level Segment of the Assembly. Another member reminded the Secretariat to delete the word ‘venue’ from the structure under the final plenary session dated Wednesday 6 December 2017 (15:00-18:00). He advised that contingency arrangements be made in case the Committee of the Whole did not complete work in time by allotting time for a contingency session on Tuesday, 5 December 2017. The Secretariat was also requested to reflect an earlier proposal on early adoption of decisions at the Assembly.

3. Contribution to the High Level Political Forum

3.1. The Deputy Executive Director, informed the meeting that the “Revised note on the Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development” had been shared with the Bureau of the Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives for comments and that the President’s statement to the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) would be prepared at a later stage.

3.2. On her part, Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Director, Law Division, presented the revised note and informed the meeting that the responses to the six guidance questions were drafted so as to reflect input provided by Member States during the Fourth Annual Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The inputs built on the Medium Term Strategy and the UN Environment Frontiers report.

3.3. The Deputy Executive Director indicated that comments from Member States should be provided by 25 April 2017 to allow the Secretariat to submit the document to the UN Economic and Social Council by 28 April 2017 deadline.

3.4. A member pointed out that the modalities of the President's participation at the High Level Political Forum need to be determined prior to his attendance. The Deputy Executive Director informed the meeting that the Secretariat had formally requested for a slot at the plenary session of the High Level Political Forum on behalf of the President and a response was awaited.

4. Update on preparation of 2017 Environment Assembly Second Joint Preparatory Retreat (10-11 June 2017)

4.1. The Secretary of Governing Bodies presented an initial draft agenda of the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat to be held from 10 to 11 June 2017 in Puntarenas, Costa Rica for comments by members; after which it would be shared with the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

4.2. A member requested that the new dates of the second joint preparatory retreat (10 to 11 June) be harmonized across all documents to avoid confusion. Some members had scheduled their travel based on the earlier agreed dates of 9 to 10 June 2017.

4.3. Another member was of the view that the output of the retreat should be maximized and that all efforts should draw attention to the theme of the Environment Assembly.

4.4. The President proposed the inclusion of an additional item on private sector engagement to the agenda of the Joint Bureaux Retreat.

5. Date for the next meeting of the Bureau

5.1. The meeting agreed to hold its next meeting on 22 May 2017 via Video Conference.

6. Other Matters

6.1. The meeting expressed great interest in the participation and engagement of the private sector in the form of interactive dialogues with Ministers as well as participation in side-events. A member registered disappointment with UN Environment's response to the business led initiative to create a business coalition for UN Environment.

- 6.2. In response, the Secretary informed the meeting that the Secretariat was fully committed to private sector engagement and would follow up on the feedback provided. He added that the Secretariat continued to make progressive steps towards the engagement of private sector and was working on a list of companies to invite to the Environment Assembly. The Secretary requested Member States to forward names of suggested companies.
- 6.3. Bureau members were encouraged to accede to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS) of Wild Flora and Fauna which would have its next Conference of the Parties from 23 to 28 October 2017 in Manila, Philippines. It was suggested that this meeting could serve as the venue for the physical Bureau meeting proposed for later in the year.

7. Closing of the Meeting

- 7.1. The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 pm.