

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Bureau Meeting
Thursday, 4 May 2017, 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi Gigiri,
Executive Office Boardroom

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania, chaired the meeting, in which the following participated:

Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau members

- H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Vice Chair, Asia-Pacific Group;
 - H.E. Ms. Marcela M. Nicodemos, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, Vice Chair, Group of Latin America and Caribbean States;
 - Mr. Toni Sandell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland, Rapporteur, Western European and Other States Group
2. The Secretariat was represented by:
 - Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, Executive Office (by video link);
 - Ms. Anne Le More, Chief of Staff (a.i.), Executive Office;
 - Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, Director, Governance Affairs Office;
 - Ms. Rosemary Mukasa, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies
 3. A member of the Bureau raised the issue of the agreement on participation of the representative of the President of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau in the meetings of the Bureau of Committee of Permanent Representatives as an ex-officio member. The Bureau agreed that the implementation of the agreement on her participation and on the participation of Chair of the Committee in UN Environment Assembly Bureau meetings, can be raised at the next Joint Bureaux meeting of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly, scheduled for 22 May 2017.
 4. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda.

2. Preparations for the 2017 Environment Assembly

a) Structure and organization of the 2017 Environment Assembly

5. The meeting was informed that the revised structure of the 2017 Environment Assembly had been approved during the last sub-committee meeting of the Committee held on 27 April 2017. The Sub-committee agreed that the structure would be approved by a Joint Bureau of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly to be held in May 2017. After a brief discussion, the Committee endorsed the revised structure and organization of the 2017 Environment Assembly.
6. The meeting discussed a number of issues relating to the preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly, including the modalities for the organization of the Leadership Dialogues, Side Events, Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and Committee of the Whole. Recalling a proposal made prior to the Second Session of the Environment Assembly for the Chair of the Committee of the Whole to be selected from the Eastern European Group, the Chair proposed that a letter initiating the nomination process be sent out and that this matter be addressed at the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat. The Deputy Executive Director was of the view that election of the Committee of the Whole should be initiated early as possible taking into account lessons learned from the second Environment Assembly.
7. The Secretary informed the meeting that the Sub-committee meeting would be rescheduled from 25 to 24 May 2017 to accommodate Africa Day celebrations. It would consider an update on the background report, the approach for the Leadership Dialogues and side events. Documentation for this meeting would be made available by 18 May 2017. He said that the Secretariat would consider convening a briefing on possible side events including media events.
8. Members requested the Secretariat to update member states on how the Dialogue would be organized interactively. The Deputy Executive Director reported that some options have been discussed internally and the Secretariat was coordinating with the UN Office at Nairobi on possible set ups for Davos style interactive dialogues with moderators. He also informed the meeting that an invitation letter to the 2017 Environment Assembly has been prepared for a limited number of world leaders.
9. The meeting discussed the proposed invitation to world leaders at length. Points raised included: discussion of themes of the Leadership Dialogues and composition of panels before invitation letters were sent out; clarity in the invitation on roles and expectations of leaders; identification of criteria for selection of leaders; appreciation of need to send out the invitations as early as possible so leaders could block their calendars; possible impact on the number of Ministers who would participate in interactive dialogues; proposal that the two Bureaux discuss the list of proposed leaders before the invitations

were sent out and; suggestion that feedback on the list of leaders be given on a non-objection basis.

10. In response, the Deputy Executive Director said that the criteria for invitation would be debatable but considerations included economic and geographical balance of different regions. He reiterated that invitations should be sent out early, adding that the Secretariat had to move ahead to address related protocol issues with the Government of Kenya. The Secretariat would share the list of proposed leaders. Possible options and panels could be discussed and confirmed at the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat.
 11. The Chair proposed that the Leadership Dialogue and side/media events be discussed in the following Sub-committee meeting and in the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat considering that the Leadership Dialogue was a critical element of the High-Level Segment.
 12. Following a brief discussion, the Deputy Executive Director suggested that the Secretariat share the list of proposed world leaders with the Bureaux of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly for their feedback by Tuesday, 9 May 2017 and thereafter invitations could be sent out.
 13. The meeting endorsed the structure of the 2017 Environment Assembly and agreed that the list of suggested world leaders should be shared with the Bureau of the Committee and the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly before the invitations were sent out.
 14. The Chair said that the structure would be submitted for the endorsement by the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly at the Joint Bureaux meeting of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly on 22 May 2017.
- b) Draft agenda for the 2017 Environment Assembly
15. The Chair informed the meeting that the draft agenda for the 2017 Environment Assembly would also be considered during the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat.
 16. In his introduction, the Secretary reported that the draft agenda for the 2017 Environment Assembly reflected the recommendations of the Committee of the Whole of the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly. The UN Environment Assembly Bureau had considered the draft agenda and made the following changes: i) agenda item 6, “Administrative and budgetary issues” was put after agenda item 5, “Budget and Programme Performance, including implementation of the Assembly’s resolution”; and ii) the word ‘venue’ of agenda item 11 was omitted. Final consideration would be take place during the next joint Bureaux meeting.

17. The Chair requested the Secretariat to prepare the provisional annotated agenda, for consideration and possible endorsement by the Joint Bureaux Meeting of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

c) Roadmap to the 2017 Environment Assembly

18. The Secretariat reported that the revised roadmap reflected upcoming and proposed meetings of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, Committee of Permanent Representatives, UN Environment Assembly Bureau and regional consultations as well as milestones and organizational aspects to be achieved.

19. He noted that the next Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly would take place on 22 May 2017 and the Sub-committee meeting would be rescheduled from 25 May 2017 to 24 May 2017. He informed the meeting that the Secretariat would provide updates on the status of background report, Leadership Dialogue and other matters at sub-committee meetings scheduled for 18 May 2017 and 24 May 2017.

20. The Chair requested the Secretariat to include a briefing from the Law Division in the sub-meeting on 18 May 2017 and reschedule the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives from 27 June 2017 to 20 June 2017 that to take account of Idd holidays.

21. On opening side events applications, the meeting was informed that the Secretariat would launch the online application once timeline was adjusted and spaces for side events available are identified.

22. The Rapporteur informed the meeting that he would not be available for the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to be held on 20 June 2017 and asked for clarification on whether his presence was necessary. The Legal Advisor clarified that the Rules of Procedure does not prevent the Committee from holding a meeting with the Rapporteur absent.

3. Preparation for the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and Committee of Permanent Representatives

23. The Chair suggested a number of adjustments of a draft agenda of the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat, which aimed at fitting it into one and a half days. First, the report of the Chair of the Committee on preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly should be the first sub-item of agenda item 2, “Stocktaking on preparations for UN Environment Assembly”. In addition, there should be a discussion on resolutions. Secondly, consultations on the Ministerial Declaration should focus on a zero draft and the way forward. Thirdly, Agenda item 6: Private Sector Engagement in the UN

Environment Assembly could be considered on Friday, 9 June 2017 in the evening. Lastly, agenda item 5, “Public outreach campaign for the UN Environment Assembly” could be considered on Saturday, 10 June 2017.

24. A member supported the proposal of the Chair and added that the outline of the Ministerial Declaration should be circulated in advance to allow for consultation within Regional Groups. He also requested that the Retreat concludes with a summary with recommendations and suggested the circulation of the draft of the background document on pollution as well as the preliminary information on the intentions of member states to submit draft resolutions, before the Retreat in order to facilitate consultations with regional groups and thus a results-oriented Retreat.
25. The meeting pointed out that there had been a mixed information flow and lack of clarity with respect to funding arrangements for the Second Joint Bureaux retreat. Members were not informed about the agreement that the costs for participation of some regional groups would not be supported by UN Environment. One member wondered why the Retreat had been scheduled without adequate funding.
26. On the suggestions and requests, the Secretary indicated that the proposed adjustments of the draft agenda would be discussed with the host country and addressed at the Joint Bureaux meeting of the Committee and the UN Environment Assembly to be held on 22 May 2017. With regard to outline of the Ministerial Declaration, the President of the UN Environment Assembly would send a follow-up letter to reflect messages of member states and Regional and Political Groups. Regarding draft resolutions, he said that the Secretariat would share a table indicating progress of submission of draft resolutions. Furthermore, he informed the meeting that a presentation on the outline of the background report would be made available on 18 May 2017 in advance of its briefing in the Sub-committee meeting to be held on 24 May 2017. On funding, as was the case at the last retreat, support would be provided for developing countries and countries with economies in transition.
27. In addition, the Deputy Executive Director expressed regret for lack of clarity on funding arrangements for participation in the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat. He indicated that the lessons had been learned and for the future, host country funding rules would be applied. On the background report on pollution, he said that the Secretariat would endeavor to share a draft by June recognizing the fact that there would be two regional meetings and the draft should be examined through a peer-review process.
28. The Chair concluded this agenda item with the following action points for the Secretariat: a) prepare the revised agenda of the Second Joint Preparatory Retreat; b) provide clear information on the funding arrangements; c) share update of background report on 18 May 2017 in readiness for further discussion during the following Sub-committee meeting on 24 May 2017.

4. Address by H.E. Peter Thompson, President of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly to the Committee of Permanent Representatives

29. The Chair informed the meeting that the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representative to UN Environment and H.E. Mr James Kimonyo, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representative to UN HABITAT, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Rwanda sent a joint letter inviting members of the Committees to an interactive dialogue with the President of the General Assembly on Monday, 8 May 2017 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:20 p.m. in Conference Room 1.

30. The Chair was of the view that Regional and Political groups should be given a chance to share ideas and thereafter the floor would be given to individual member states. In addition, the President would hold a private meeting with the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representative to UN HABITAT. She requested members to send her ideas and to make use of this meeting to increase visibility of the UN Environment Assembly.

5. Date of the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

31. The Secretary highlighted the fact that the 139th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was an important meeting during which the new members of the Bureau of the Committee would be elected. He also informed the meeting that due to the change in dates, the Executive Director would not be physically present at this meeting due to his mission to China.

32. The meeting was informed that the Executive Director would participate in the Subcommittee meeting to be held on 24 May 2017 and host a reception in honour of departing Bureau members, following this meeting.

6. Other matters

33. A member requested the Secretariat to update the meeting on the contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the High-Level Political Forum. In response, the Secretary informed the meeting that the President of the UN Environment Assembly had sent a letter to the President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) submitting the inputs of the UN Environment Assembly. This letter would be shared with all Member States in the coming hours.

34. The Chair requested the Secretariat to convene a briefing on the Private Sector Engagement in UN Environment in line with the request from the European Union and its Member States. She also reminded the Secretariat on the paper or briefing on the abbreviation of the UN Environment Programme as UN Environment. Some members raised the issue of the change of letter head. One member encouraged the Secretariat to

handle the issue and not allow it to become contentious at the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. The Secretary informed the meeting that the Secretariat was preparing a note and a briefing would be arranged as soon as it was ready.

35. The Chair proposed that the Bureau holds an informal meeting with interested members to identify concerns on the process of establishing group of technical experts on ascertaining and documenting the current status of knowledge of crimes that have serious impacts on the environment. After a brief discussion, the meeting agreed to the proposal.
36. The meeting closed at 1:43 p.m.