

Joint Meeting of the Bureaux of UN Environment Assembly
and Committee of Permanent Representatives Thursday 14
September 2017
5:30 pm to 6:45 pm,
Executive Office Boardroom
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri
Agenda item 5.d

Preparations for the Inter-sessional meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (11-13 October 2017)

Background

After a year and a half of the XX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Latin America and the Caribbean (Cartagena, Colombia, 28-31 March 2016) and on the eve of the Third United Nations Environment Assembly to be held in December 2017, the High-Level Intersessional Meeting and the Regional Consultation for the United Nations Environment Assembly, are going to be held 11 - 13 October 2017, in Bogota, Colombia.

The objectives of the meeting include:

- To follow-up on the decisions adopted at the XX Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of Environment, and prepare the recommendations to be considered by the Ministers at the next meeting on how to make progress in their implementation or on any other emerging priority issues for the region. To this end, the Secretariat has provided document UNEP/LAC-IC.2017/3 with a brief description of activities implemented in the intersessional period.
- Make recommendations regarding the convening of upcoming meetings of the Forum of Ministers, including the transfer and exercise of the Presidency of the Forum for the intersessional period and the celebration of the XXI Meeting of the Forum.
- To hold a regional dialogue in preparation to the United Nations Environment Assembly, which will be attended by the Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica, Edgar Gutiérrez Espeleta, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations Environment Assembly. We have also invited Ambassador Elizabeth Taylor, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Colombia to the United Nations Environment Programme, who currently represents the Latin American and the Caribbean Group within the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi and, in addition, coordinates the Latin American and the Caribbean Group in Nairobi.

Preparations for the Meeting

- Invitations were sent to all Ministers of Environment of the region on 11 August, kindly asking them to assign priority to this meeting through their personal participation or a Vice-Ministerial and/or High Level designation. As of 6 September, nominations from 10 countries have been received, including 2 Vice ministers (Panama and El Salvador).
- A teleconference with the focal points of the Bureau of the Forum was held on 23 August, to discuss on the draft annotated provisional agenda and to initiate exchange of views with regard to the exercise of the Chair of the Forum. Next teleconference with the Bureau's focal point is to be held on 8 September.
- Provisional agenda and Annotated Provisional Agenda have been uploaded and is available in the following link: <http://www.pnuma.org/forodeministros/21-reunion-intersesional/documentos.htm>
- Countries were invited to contribute to the report on the status of implementation of the Decisions adopted at the XX Meeting.
- In case of countries of the region wishing to present proposals of resolutions for consideration of the UN Environment Assembly, the Secretariat has offered to receive and circulate them in advance, in order to facilitate their consideration in the Regional Consultation. To that end, 1 October has been indicated as the deadline for the submission of proposals to the Secretariat, so that they can be considered by the countries prior to the presentation of the proposals at the meeting.

Expected results

- The expected results of the Intersessional Meeting of the Forum of Ministers is to have information on the actions implemented on the decisions; recommendations for the following Meeting of the Forum, and, a specific recommendation to change the cycle of the meetings of the forum to align it with the UN Environment Assembly.
- The expected result of the Regional Consultation, is to produce a regional political declaration; a regional statement which would be presented at the UN Environment Assembly, and discuss commitments that may be presented by the region.

Sensitivities to be aware of

- The Chair of the Assembly, Mr. Gutierrez Espeleta, has mentioned that Argentina and Brazil have suggested text on "common but differentiated responsibilities" for the UN Environment Assembly political declaration. This issue which causes difficulties for other countries may come up during the regional consultation in October. A possible way out is to avoid the use of negotiated terminology such as "common but differentiated responsibilities" but to use common terminology to refer to countries' responsibilities, in line with the "simple and accessible for all language approach" that is being promoted for the meeting.

- The Chair of the Assembly has also indicated his expectation for other Ministers to participate in the regional consultation. This was brought up to the Chair of the Forum to explore his interest in contacting some key ministers to promote their participation for the meeting in Bogota. However, this may be challenging in terms of funding for the meeting, as funds are only available for the participation of one person per country.
- It is also important to note that countries of the region have expressed concern on the funding available for participation in the UN Environment Assembly. As UN Environment is only financing least developed countries, the only financed country from the region would be Haiti.

Logistic arrangements

- The Meeting will take place in the premises of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bogotá, Colombia.
- The meeting will be conducted in English and Spanish and documentation will also be available in both languages.

UN Environment has offered to fund one participant per country.