

Summary of the Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme

27 February 2018

On 27 February 2018, Bureaux members of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme met, via video-conference.

The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Siim V. Kiisler, President of the UN Environment Assembly and Minister of Environment of the Republic of Estonia and H.E. Ms. Elizabeth Taylor, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia.

The Joint Bureaux meeting addressed the following topics:

- (1) Lessons learned from the third session of the UN Environment Assembly;
- (2) Consideration of the theme of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly;
- (3) Preparations of the 1st Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
- (4) Preparation of contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;
- (5) Global Pact for the Environment;
- (6) Implementation of Programme of Work and Budget;

This summary highlights the main decisions, discussions and action points of the meeting.

Lessons learned from the third session of the UN Environment Assembly

1. The joint Bureaux meeting agreed that the note from the Secretariat on Lessons Learned from the third session of the UN Environment Assembly should be used as background document for the Joint Retreat in Nairobi 22-23 March 2018.

Consideration of the theme for the fourths session of the UN Environment Assembly

2. The joint Bureaux agreed that further discussions are needed on the theme of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, and expressed a preference for the thematic areas of: (i) Sustainable Consumption and Production; (ii) Promoting Innovative solutions to environmental challenges. No support was expressed for the third thematic area proposed by the Secretariat (Food and Nature).
3. The bureau also discussed the theme on the State of the Environment, proposed by a member of the JUSSCANNZ group, and considered that the matter should be addressed within the context of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), which is already an integral part of the Assembly's agenda.
4. The joint Bureaux agreed that further consultations by the Committee of Permanent Representatives would be useful, with a focus on the two remaining themes, and mandated the Assembly President to consult bilaterally. The President will propose a written President's compromise on the theme before the 1st Joint Preparatory Retreat on 22-23 March 2018, to prepare for a final decision to be taken by the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly before 31 March 2018 but preferably on the 23rd of March.

Preparations of the 1st Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

5. The joint Bureaux adopted the provisional agenda of the 1st Joint Preparatory Retreat Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, subject to clarifying the role of the Assembly Bureau in deciding on a theme for the Assembly, and the inclusion of a reference to the Global Pact on the Environment in the agenda.

Preparation of contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

6. Several members of the bureaux agreed to undertake mutual efforts by bureaux members and the Secretariat to engage with the Member States in New York to support the President of the Environment Assembly to present the Assembly's contribution to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development on 16-18 July 2018 in New York, in his capacity as the President of the Assembly. The President will also send a letter to the President of the Economic and Social Council in preparation of the Forum.
7. One bureau member indicated that in his region, several Member States may not support a special statement of the President of the UN Environment Assembly during the High-Level Segment of the High-level Political Forum, but expressed full support to other outreach activities, such as organizing a ministerial breakfast, to present the contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the Forum.
8. The Secretariat informed the meeting that it will prepare a draft document with inputs on the overarching environmental perspective by early March for consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, followed by a 2nd draft to be considered at the Joint Retreat. A final draft will be considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at their 142nd meeting scheduled for April/May 2018.

Global Pact for the Environment

9. The joint Bureau heard a presentation by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France, whereby the ambassador shared his vision about the role of the UN Environment Programme in the form of advocacy, secretariat support and gap analysis.
10. Bureaux members asked questions about possible budgetary consequences, value added, and transparency of the process, and requested the Secretariat to share additional information on the proceedings on the Global Pact debate in New York, to inform further discussion on the subject matter at the joint Retreat.

Implementation of Programme of Work and Budget

11. The joint Bureaux welcomed a proposal presented by the Secretariat on a new reporting tool to the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Dates of the Next Meeting

12. The joint Bureaux agreed to hold the next Joint Meeting of the Bureaux in conjunction with the joint preparatory retreat on 22-23 March 2018 in Nairobi, and suggested that the Secretariat would use online tools such as Doodle to find a suitable date for the meeting after the retreat, which is likely to be held around mid-June.
13. The President confirmed to the meeting that it intends to hold the 2nd Joint Preparatory Retreat in Tallinn, Estonia on 6-7 September, and that it will be preceded by an international conference on the 5th of September with links to the fourth Environment Assembly and other relevant global environmental processes, to which all bureau members are invited to attend.