

Open meeting with Member States and Stakeholders

Thursday 22 March 2018,

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri

Conference Room 1

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Opening of the meeting

1. H.E. Mr. Siim Valmar Kiisler, President of the UN Environment Assembly and Minister of the Environment of Estonia opened the meeting.
2. Short introductory remarks were presented by H.E. Mr. John Moreti, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana, Ms. Juliet Grace Luwedde, representing Children and Youth Major Group, making a statement on behalf of Major Groups and Stakeholders, and Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, representing Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme.

2. Follow-up on the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

3. This session was moderated by Mr. Rodrigo Furtado Messias, representing the Local Authorities Major Group.
4. Ms. Ligia Noronha, Director of Economy Division, UN Environment Programme, delivered a presentation on a process for designing an implementation plan "Towards a Pollution-free Planet" as a response to Para 14 of the Ministerial Declaration based on the outcomes arrived at the third session of the UN Environment Assembly that took place in Nairobi on 4-6 December 2017.
5. Introductory remarks were made from the following panelists:
 - 1) H.E. Mr. Kaveh Madani, Vice Minister of the Environmental Department of the Islamic Republic of Iran;
 - 2) H.E. Mr. Vladislav Smrž, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic;
 - 3) H.E. Ms. Makena Muchiri, Ambassador to the Kenya Permanent Mission to UN Environment Programme; and
 - 4) Ms. Leida Rijnhout, representative of Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group (Netherlands); and
 - 5) Ms. Neth Dano, representative of Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group (Philippines).

6. Some of the key points from the panelists included the importance of incentivizing; understanding the baseline to measure progress; to have action on the ground; to have a clear implementation plan linked to national action plans; implementation through strengthening the organization and synchronizing plans.
7. Following the presentation and the introductory statements, the moderator opened the floor for an interactive dialogue between Member States and Stakeholders.
8. In summary, the following key messages emerged from the discussion:
 - Welcomed the proposal for an implementation plan and its comprehensiveness and early engagement with key stakeholders;
 - The implementation plan should support the acceleration of concrete actions on the ground to beat pollution at regional, national and local levels;
 - The plan should promote and support a transformation to the dominant economic models to reduce pollution worldwide;
 - The plan should show clear pollution actions which can contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
 - The plan should make full use of existing mechanisms at regional level, such as regional ministerial fora and the UN Environment Programme regional offices to raise the ambition of actions;
 - The plan should focus on incentivizing and enhancing political will;
 - The plan should include an effective online monitoring platform to facilitate the measurement of progress at global, regional and national level;
 - The plan should assist in mobilizing adequate resources for implementation as well as for capacity-building and institutional strengthening;
 - The plan should stimulate stronger partnerships with major groups and stakeholders, including the private sector, non-governmental organizations and local authorities, among others;
 - The plan should also be designed to raise environmental awareness of the public for example through promoting environmental education and dissemination of new knowledge.
9. The meeting also was presented with an advanced proposal on a multi-year programme for the future themes of the Environment Assembly, which received some support.

3. Preparations for the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly

10. This session was moderated by H.E. Ms. Elizabeth Ines Taylor Jay, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Republic of Colombia.
11. Introductory remarks were made from the following panelists:
 - 1) H.E. Mr. Fernando Estellita Lins de Salvo Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil
 - 2) H.E. Mr. Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of the Environment, Energy and Housing of Finland
 - 3) H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar (UNEA Rapporteur), High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN Environment Programme;
 - 4) Ms. Janice H. Cox, representative of Non-Governmental Organizations Major Group (South Africa); and
 - 5) Ms. Yugratna Srivastava, representative of Children and Youth Major Group (India).
12. Participants agreed that there should be a strong link between the themes of past sessions of the UN Environment Assembly and the theme of the fourth session of the Assembly, to maintain momentum and promote synergies.
13. There was also broad agreement that the theme for the fourth session should be appealing, inspiring and easily communicable to the general public as well as to political leaders, while at the same time leaving room to address emerging issues, such as food security and renewable energy.
14. Many participants considered that the choice theme should reflect an integrated approach which addresses all three dimensions of sustainable development (social, economic and environmental), and that it should support the development and uptake of concrete solutions, both technical and societal, at local levels.
15. The meeting underlined the importance of continued strong engagement of key Major Groups and Stakeholders to ensure that their views and positions are heard throughout the process, including with support from the UN Environment Programme Regional Offices.
16. Some participants advocated for a theme focusing on innovative solutions for environmental challenges, underscoring that innovation could be applied to many different areas, emphasizing the importance of taking into account social, local and indigenous knowledge in identifying concrete solutions.
17. Other participants expressed a preference for a theme focusing on sustainable consumption and production, underlining the need to make concrete progress in this area and the close connection to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

18. In conclusion, the meeting noted that more consultations would be needed to reach consensus on the theme of the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly.

4. Closing of the meeting

19. The President closed the meeting at 1:15 p.m.