

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 24 May 2018
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri
Conference Room 4

SECRETARIAT NOTES

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting

1. H.E. Ms. Tarja Fernandez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland and Vice-Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, welcomed members to the meeting. The meeting agenda was adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Update on the UN Environment Programme's private sector engagement.

2. Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, provided an update of the meeting on UN Environment Programme's engagement with the private sector, based on a report made available in advance to member States. It was brought to the attention of member States that private sector engagement is grounded in Governing Council Decision 27/2, UN General Assembly resolution 70/244 and UN Environment Assembly resolution 2/5, and that the UN Environment Programme has intensified its engagement in the past year. This has been done through simplified internal procedures and new policy guidelines, development of a web-based Partnership Portal, establishment of a Private Sector Unit in the Governance Affairs Office as of January 2018, and putting in place effective systems for improved accountability and risk management.
3. Mr. Laguna-Celis informed the meeting of efforts to simplify, coordinate and streamline the private sector engagement process, including through the development of dedicated guidelines, a new risk management process, and putting in place structures to ensure that private sector partnerships contribute to the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget.
4. Member States welcomed the report on private sector engagement, and raised several questions and comments, including by highlighting the importance of:
 - more clarity on how cooperation with the private sector contributes to the Programme of Work;
 - information-sharing and consultation with member States on the development of policies and guidelines for private sector engagement;
 - strengthened capability to measure and monitor progress stemming from the cooperation with the private sector;
 - regional balance, including by reaching out to the private sector in Africa;
 - further clarity on the total number of partnership agreements with the private sector.

5. In responding, Mr. Laguna-Celis welcomed the interest demonstrated by member States, and noted that:
 - while initial evidence suggests that the private sector engagement effectively contributes to the implementation of the Programme of Work, a baseline and indicators has been put in place to facilitate future evaluation;
 - activities are designed to increase the engagement with the private sector and to scale up uptake of sustainable business models or to move away from unsustainable business models, not to provide funds;
 - the activities are based on the mandate given to the Secretary-General by the UN General Assembly to develop guidelines for the private sector, which is still work in progress;
 - the UN Environment Programme's guidelines for engagement with the private sector will be shared with member States as soon as possible;
 - there is a clear distinction between private sector companies engaging through direct partnerships, and industry associations accredited to the UN Environment Programme for the purpose of engaging with its governing bodies;
 - since January 2018, 27 partnerships with the private sector have been approved;
 - work is still ongoing to provide a full picture of all existing partnerships and this information will be included in the next report to the Committee .

Agenda Item 3: Update on the implementation of paragraph 88 (a)-(h) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”.

6. Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, Director of the Law Division, presented a draft outline of the report on UN Environment Assembly resolution 3/11 on the implementation of paragraph 88(a)-(h) of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20), entitled “The Future we Want”.
7. The meeting appreciated the consultative approach and considered the current outline as a good basis for further development of the anticipated report, with several member States providing detailed comments on the outline.
8. One member State expressed concern about the lack of information on the implementation of paragraph 88 of the Outcome Document, in particular with regard to the consolidation of Headquarters functions and the strengthening of regional presence.
9. The Chair, in conclusion, invited member States to submit further comments in writing to the Secretariat by 7 June 2018, with a view to support and contribute to the development of a full draft report by August 2018.

Agenda Item 4: Update on the roadmap of the development of Programme of Work and Budget 2020-2021.

10. Mr. Gary Lewis, acting Director. of the Policy and Programme division, updated the meeting on the roadmap of the development of Programme of Work 2020-2021. His presentation was supplemented by Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, in her capacity as the acting Director of Corporate Services Division.
11. Ms. Mrema presented a first draft projection of the overall budget envelope for the Programme of Work 2020-2021, reflecting three major budget scenarios based on past trends. She underlined need to streamline the budgets cycles with General Assembly resolution on annual budget cycles.
12. The meeting welcomed the roadmap for the development of a new Programme of Work, and the opportunity to consider the proposed options for the budget envelope. Several member States underlined the need to take into account budget implications following the adoption of UN Environment Assembly resolutions and the implications of the ongoing UN Reforms, and reference was made to the recommendations in the Evaluation Synthesis report. Some member States advised against adopting a Programme of Work that would require a revision of the existing Medium-Term Strategy.
13. The meeting underlined the need for clarity on how the budget options were calculated, and called for detailed information on expenditures as an important factor to consider for future budgetary considerations. Other comments focused on how to align the UN Environment Assembly budget cycle to the new requirement of the General Assembly's recent resolutions on budget timelines , the need to develop a flexible budget that allows for income fluctuations, and the importance of integrating strategic focus areas into the sub-programmes.
14. Ms. Mrema underlined the importance of member States's ownership in this process and committed to take into account the comments from member States for further development of draft budget and committed to include an expenditure report in the next draft. It was noted that the transition to annual budgeting cycle is scheduled to begin in 2020, and that while some Assembly resolutions are implemented through the Programme of Work, some are relying entirely on earmarked contributions, or lack funding altogether. Therefore, it will be up to member States to decide whether the Environment Assembly should approve one or two annual budgets.
15. In conclusion, the Chair invited member States to send in substantive comments in writing, and announced that the subject matter will once again be on the agenda of the next meeting scheduled for 14 June 2018.

Agenda Item 5: Consideration of a draft agenda for the Fifth Annual Subcommittee Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

16. The Secretariat presented the draft agenda for the Fifth Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
17. One member State advocated for an in-depth consideration of the implementation of each of the sub-programmes under the existing Programme of Work.

18. Another member State suggested an additional agenda item on Preparations for the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly. This proposal was contested by another member, who referred to the mandate of the Annual Subcommittee meeting under Governing Council resolution 27/2, whereby the primary task for the Annual Subcommittee is to focus on matters related to the Programme of Work and Budget and to UN Environment Assembly resolutions.

Agenda Item 6: Other Matters

19. The Secretariat reminded the meeting about the need to nominate national experts to review the draft report of the Sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), with a deadline of 1 June 2018, for submission to geohead@un.org.
20. The meeting was informed of the upcoming World Environment Day celebrations in Kenya and member States were invited by the Permanent Mission of Kenya to join in a tree planting exercise and cleaning-up activities in Kibera the following day on 25 May 2018.
21. The meeting closed at 12:00 p.m.