

United States Input
UNEP 2020-2021 Preliminary Draft Programme of Work and Budget (PWB)
General Comments and Executive Office

- The United States appreciates the responsiveness to Member States request for an expanded opportunity to consult and comment on the PWB.
- The United States also appreciates the recognition expressed at the October 22 meeting and in PWB paragraph 26 of the fact that earmarked and global trust fund income can create imbalances among subprogrammes. Further, we are pleased to see UNEP's commitment to manage that imbalance by guiding its decision-making according to principles including prioritizing "areas related to its core mandate such as the science-policy interface and environmental governance."
- In accordance with that commitment, and the broad consensus expressed on October 22, we urge UNEP to fully fund the Environment under Review subprogramme.
- The United States understands that the reason the budgets for some subprogrammes are slated to increase and others, including Environment under Review, to decrease is that every subprogram's allotment of the Environment Fund was reduced by the same percentage. We disagree with this approach, and prefer the approach reflected in PWB paragraph 26: rather than arbitrary percentage reductions, we urge UNEP to fully fund areas related to its core mandate, including Environment under Review.
- We note the expected increase in earmarked funding and would like confirmation that cost recovery be applied to all of the earmarked funding. If there are earmarked funds UNEP currently receives or anticipates receiving in which cost recovery is not applied, we would like to see those identified.
- The United States supports a budget grounded in reality, including an Environment Fund budget based on recent levels and trends. We urge UNEP to allocate resources according to mutually-agreed existing mandates, with priority given to core mandates, and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- We appreciate UNEP's commitment to improve to travel policies. We are concerned about the reputational impact of large travel costs, as well as the impact on UNEP resources. Projecting the likely totals for 2018 based on the figures UNEP provided through May, 2018 raises some concern. While some subprogrammes show modest increases or even decreases in travel costs, the Executive office is on track for nearly a one-third increase from 2017 to 2018. Governance Affairs, if it continues on its current course, will generate an increase over 79%, and the Communications and Science Divisions may have increases of 57% and 60% respectively. We request additional information on those very substantial increases.
- The United States requests more detail on the components and scope of work planned under the cross-cutting south-south cooperation area. We remain deeply concerned about the lack of details available for UNEP's South-South cooperation work despite

assurances of transparency. In particular we do not support allocating regular budget or Environment Fund resources to activities which specifically support BRI or China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Center activities given our belief this work as proposed is inconsistent with UNEP mandates.

- The United States is concerned with the budget increase proposed for the Executive Office given that funding for important subprogrammes is proposed to be significantly cut and a UN Reform pillar calls for more focus on mandate delivery/people in the field.
- PWB Table 1b on page 8 shows a staffing increase by number of posts from 875 (2018-19) to 1,133 (2020-21). We request UNEP provide a staffing chart showing all staff that indicates to which subprogram (and including the Executive Office) they are attributed, as well as the proposed changes in staff by subprogram for 2020-2021. We appreciate the staffing information by funding source, but would also like to see staffing by subprogram.
- PWB Table 5b on page 26 shows an increase of 12 Environment Fund-funded positions under Executive direction and management. Page 25 indicates this budget will increase by \$200,000 for the two year period. The United States would like this clarified, since it seems unlikely \$200,000 is sufficient to pay for 12 new positions.
- The United States would also appreciate additional clarity on the proposal to add 17 net new positions under Executive direction and management, where total posts increase from 33 to 50. We believe with less anticipated through the Environment Fund, it is critical to be sensitive to increases in executive administration/management costs.