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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme**

**United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fourth session**

Nairobi, 11–15 March 2019

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

**Report on the work of the Committee of Permanent
Representatives**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

Annex I to the present note sets out a compendium of the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of 20 February 2018, 10 May 2018, 28 September 2018 and 8 January 2019. The minutes cover a broad range of issues that emerged during the intersessional period and include summaries of the regular reports of the Executive Director to the Committee as well as the reports of the subcommittee to the Committee. The minutes provide an evaluation of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, which contributed to progress reports of the governing bodies of the United Nations Environment Programme, including the process for the development of the programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021 considered at the 144th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

The progress reports informed the way forward, in particular for the preparation of the joint meetings of the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the fourth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, the fifth meeting of the annual subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

The minutes highlight key achievements and milestones during the intersessional period, which include the early selection of the theme for the fourth session; the engagement of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly in regional and international forums, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and resource mobilization and enhanced synergies between different stakeholders. The present note represents a chronology of trends, drivers and events that ensured the success of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

Annex II to the present note, which is presented without formal editing, sets out a compilation of draft resolutions considered by the Committee at its meetings, including all the changes made prior to their consideration by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

* UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1.

Annex I

Compendium of the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of 20 February 2018, 10 May 2018, 28 September 2018 and 8 January 2019



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**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
145th meeting**
Nairobi, 19 February 2019

**Draft minutes of the 144th meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 8 January 2019**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 8 January 2019, by Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
2. The meeting was attended by 93 participants representing 65 members and 3 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Ms. Madina Ganou Diaby Kassamba (Burkina Faso); Ms. Lisa Stadelbauer (Canada); Ms. Constanza Gajaedo Benitez (Chile); Mr. Adam Pinos (Czechia); Mr. Ruben Armado Escalante (El Salvador); Mr. Sotirios Demestihias (Greece); Mr. Rahul Chhabra (India); Ms. Kirsten Hommes (Netherlands); Mr. Choi Yeongham (Republic of Korea); and Mr. Hatem Landoulsi (Tunisia).
4. She bade farewell to the following departing members: Ms. Sara Hradecky (Canada); Mr. Hernan Ivan Brantes Glavic and Mr. Gerardo Ampuero (Chile); Mr. David Pavlita (Czechia); Mr. Mahmoud Ali Talaat and Ms. Dina M. Sabry (Egypt); Mr. Charles D. Balvo (Holy See); Ms. Suchitra Durai (India); Ms. Stijn Janssen (Netherlands); Ms. Majella Cristy Pua-Diezmos (Philippines); and Mr. Kwon Young-dae (Republic of Korea).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/144/1).

Agenda item 3

**Adoption of the draft minutes of 143rd meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives**

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 143rd meeting, held on 28 September 2018, on the basis of the draft minutes (UNEP/CPR/144/2).

Agenda item 4

Election of officers to the Bureau of the Committee

7. The Chair announced that, following the departure of Mr. Kwon Young-dae, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, who had held the position of Vice-Chair of the Bureau for the Asia-Pacific States, the group had nominated Mr. Choi Yeonghan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, as the new Vice-Chair.

8. The Committee elected Mr. Choi Yeonghan as the new Vice-Chair of the Bureau for the Asia-Pacific States for the remainder of the term, expected to conclude on 30 June 2019.

Agenda item 5

Report of the Executive Director

9. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Quarterly report to the 144th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. August–October 2018”, which provided an update on key developments relevant to UNEP in the period August–October 2018.

10. In her oral briefing, the acting Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Joyce Msuya, provided an overview of the measures taken by management to address internal challenges, including steps taken to implement the recommendations of a 2018 audit report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of UNEP official travel and to fill senior-level positions; key accomplishments in the implementation of the programme of work during 2018; and priorities for 2019.

11. Regarding the OIOS audit report, the senior management of UNEP had taken specific steps to implement the 14 recommendations contained therein, including through repeated reminders to all staff that the United Nations travel rules were non-negotiable; the issuance of new and updated travel guidelines; and renewed efforts to recover outstanding travel advances, which thus far had led to the recovery of 80 per cent of the advances identified in the audit.

12. With regard to recruitment, a vacancy announcement for the post of Executive Director had been issued, inviting applications by 31 December 2018. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General was handling the process, and it was to be hoped that the Secretary-General would appoint a new Executive Director well before the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

13. During a retreat held from 11 to 13 November 2018, the senior management team had agreed to focus on strengthening the role of UNEP as a catalyst for action, and on the policy needs of member States. The team had further agreed that there was a need to focus on “Delivering as One”; to review and strengthen the financial management and mechanisms of UNEP; to mobilize resources; and to engage in human resources planning, staff training, and improved communication with staff so as to rebuild staff confidence in senior management. The team was also exploring the possibility of hiring a consultant to develop possible options for a private sector strategy for consideration by the new Executive Director.

14. The secretariat had developed, in close consultation with member States, an ambitious but pragmatic draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021 that reflected lessons learned, included a realistic budget envelope, and integrated the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly. The final draft of the document incorporated the feedback provided by member States, who would have a further opportunity to provide feedback on the document during the negotiations on the draft resolution by means of which it would be adopted.

15. As for key programmatic achievements in 2018, UNEP had been very successful in its efforts to raise awareness around, and inspire action on, pollution. From 30 October to 1 November 2018, UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO) had co-hosted the first Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health, which had called for scaling up the BreatheLife campaign to reach 500 cities in 20 countries by 2020. During World Environment Day and through its CleanSeas campaign, UNEP had raised awareness and catalysed government action on plastic pollution and marine litter. Notably, the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi, had pledged to phase out single-use plastics in his country by 2020, setting a high bar for the rest of the world, and more than 57 member States had made commitments to combat marine litter through the CleanSeas campaign, which was currently the largest global compact for combating marine plastic litter. In September 2018, UNEP had launched a new platform, the Global Plastics Platform, on the margins of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, to encourage new commitments to reduce plastic pollution. Lastly, in partnership with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, UNEP had launched a “New plastics economy global commitment” with

the aim of eliminating plastic waste at source and achieving a circular economy, which had been signed by over 250 organizations.

16. Other notable achievements in 2018 thanks to support provided by UNEP to partners included the development of electric mobility strategies by Argentina, Colombia and Panama; the expansion of the use of electric buses in Chile and Costa Rica; the creation of a new tropical landscapes fund to restore 80,000 hectares of land in Indonesia; the signing of the Brazzaville Declaration on 22 March 2018 by the Governments of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Indonesia with the aim of engaging in South-South cooperation for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands in the Congo Basin; and the launch of a financial mechanism to support the installation of solar power by small and medium-sized enterprises in Mexico.

17. In the field of environmental law, in 2018 UNEP had produced a flagship report, entitled *Legal limits on single-use plastics and microplastics*, to help member States regulate single-use plastics, which would be used to develop model regulations on marine litter and microplastics in 2019. The Programme had also continued efforts to support and build the capacities of countries to regulate the management of the environment, and had contributed to the signing of the Maputo Declaration on Greening Judiciaries in Africa, which reflected a commitment to develop and integrate environmental law into judicial programmes in Africa, and to the creation of the first environmental bar association in Pakistan. Lastly, the Programme had supported the negotiations leading to the adoption in March 2018 of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement).

18. In the field of financing, leading chief executive officers had launched global consultations to draft new principles for responsible banking, and \$513 million had been mobilized for the Global Environment Facility to address pressing environmental challenges over the next four years. At the country level, in collaboration with partners, UNEP had engaged in climate and sustainability-related initiatives in Mali, Mozambique and Rwanda and in post-conflict recovery efforts to remove rubble and waste in Iraq, and had been selected to lead a flagship initiative in the Congo Basin.

19. In 2018, UNEP had supported several important gatherings of governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, including the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, at which the parties had called for an ambitious post-2020 biodiversity framework aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals; the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, at which key technical and institutional decisions had been adopted; and the twenty-fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, during which parties had agreed on a rule book for the implementation of the Paris Agreement that would guide the work of the Programme in providing support to member States in the fields of technology transfer, finance, adaptation and transparency in implementation.. At the climate meeting, UNEP had presented its *Emissions Gap Report 2018*, complementing the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report entitled “Global Warming of 1.5 °C” and providing additional compelling scientific data on the urgent need for climate action.

20. Looking ahead, during 2019, UNEP would scale up its work on the circular economy; the mobilization of science and data to inform policy and green solutions; and the greening of cities, including by working more closely with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and other partners to encourage a shift toward renewable energy use. During the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, the theme of which was “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”, UNEP would seek to catalyse the ambitious government action that was required for global sustainability.

21. Lastly, the United Nations system-wide reform process was fully under way and would lay the foundation for a more effective, accountable and responsible organization. The reform would have significant implications for the ways in which UNEP planned, delivered and reported on results at all levels, and the secretariat was carefully assessing the financial implications of the reform.

22. The representative of the secretariat provided further details on the OIOS audit of UNEP official travel, which covered the period January 2016–March 2018. The audit report, which was publicly available, had found that there was a critical need for the Programme to enhance accountability and transparency in the management and utilization of travel funds. It contained 14 recommendations relating to the need to (a) set an appropriate tone at the top to ensure that all staff respected the applicable regulations and rules; (b) ensure that staff recorded leave taken during official travel; (c) establish and enforce an accountability mechanism so that managers and staff on mission prepared mission reports and promoted transparency; (d) ensure that managers and supervisors reviewed travel plans and the need for travel; (e) strengthen mechanisms to resolve outstanding travel

advances; (f) minimize costs and carbon footprint by developing policies and incentives to minimize travel; (g) ensure that managers and supervisors reviewed travel plans and clearly indicated how they were linked to results.

23. One month after the release of the audit report, five key actions had been implemented by the senior management, namely, repeated engagement with staff to communicate the need to respect the United Nations rules and regulations; a comprehensive update of internal travel guidelines; an in-depth review of individual travel plans and the linking of travel issues with other staff policies, such as flexible working arrangements; the introduction of new templates and new ways of assessing travel needs and results by managers; and the standardization of travel-related processes across the organization, including with regard to reporting and training. Next steps included training key staff in travel processes; the introduction of standardized templates and automated systems and dashboards; and the recovery of the remaining 20 per cent of outstanding advances identified in the audit report. In addition, the secretariat was using the lessons learned from the audit as an opportunity to develop more effective management mechanisms and processes beyond travel, including by focusing on prevention and early detection of problems and by increasing transparency across its operations.

24. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the acting Executive Director for her briefing and the secretariat for the quarterly report, which reflected continuous improvements in structure and content. One representative asked the secretariat to ensure that the reporting periods of quarterly reports coincided with the cycle of regular Committee meetings, stressing that activities undertaken in August 2018 should ideally not be discussed in January 2019.

25. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to include in future quarterly reports information on the internal reform of UNEP and its relationship with the wider United Nations system reform. One representative asked for additional information on internal challenges facing UNEP and steps being undertaken to retain staff and expertise. A third representative requested the secretariat to prepare without delay a document outlining the potential implications for UNEP of the main General Assembly resolutions on the United Nations system-wide reform, requesting that it also identify the specific policies or guidelines that the secretariat would need to draft or revise, in collaboration with member States, and present options for updating the new programme of work and budget in the light of the reform.

26. Several representatives thanked the secretariat and the acting Executive Director for their participation in key events or for support provided to environmental initiatives and activities undertaken in their respective countries or regions. One representative asked the secretariat to revise the quarterly report to include details on the risk reduction activities carried out in 11 countries to achieve expected accomplishment 2 (a) of the resilience to disasters and conflicts subprogramme. Another representative asked whether UNEP could play a role, perhaps through its regional and country offices, in enhancing public environmental education and information in specific countries to promote the sustainable use of natural resources by citizens.

27. Two representatives outlined efforts being undertaken by their Governments to tackle, respectively, biodiversity loss, climate change and land and ecosystems degradation; and plastic pollution. One representative drew attention to the outcomes of the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Sharm-el-Sheik, Egypt, in November 2018. Another announced that the 2019 Ministerial Conference on the Partnership for Action on Green Economy would be held on 10 and 11 January 2019 in Cape Town, South Africa, and expressed the hope that its outcome would be action-oriented and contribute to the discussions of the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

28. Several representatives welcomed the launch of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report *Global Warming of 1.5 °C* in October 2018. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the report showed the devastating impact that global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels would have on developing countries, and urged member States to support such countries, in line with their respective responsibilities.

29. Many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, stressed the importance of the negotiations on the summary for policymakers of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook report, and those related to a global pact for the environment, pledging to engage constructively with others in both processes. One representative asked the secretariat to set aside resources to publicize the summary for policymakers, which, she said, should convey clear messages on the status of the global environment and the kinds of transformational changes needed to address global environmental challenges. Another said that the negotiations related to the global pact, to be held in Nairobi from 14 to 18 January 2019, would provide an excellent opportunity for member

States to examine gaps in international environmental law before the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, whose outcome should strengthen UNEP.

30. Many representatives welcomed the steps taken by the secretariat to implement the recommendations contained in the OIOS report, and called for regular updates on such steps, including in the quarterly reports presented to the Committee. One representative requested regular updates on measures taken and planned to further improve accountability with respect to the official travel of senior staff.

31. On the issue of staff travel, one representative sought clarification regarding the class of staff air travel and suggested that, following the example of UN-Habitat, UNEP staff should only travel in economy class in order to minimize travel expenditure, reduce the organization's carbon footprint and demonstrate its commitment to tackling climate change.

32. With regard to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed progress achieved in the finalization of key pre-session documents and asked the secretariat to launch consultations with the Committee, ahead of the session, on both the new draft marine and coastal strategy of UNEP and on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.

33. One representative expressed the hope that the fourth session, and the negotiations related to a global pact for the environment, would be held in the spirit of consensus, lamenting a recent trend in international environmental negotiations to resort to voting and stressing that only consensus could ensure a successful implementation of the global environmental protection agenda. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called for the inclusion of the key messages of the seventh special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment in the main events of the fourth session, including the Science-Policy Business Forum, and offered to provide technical support to the secretariat to that end.

34. Drawing attention to the new UNEP global plastics platform, one representative expressed concern that the platform had been launched without the knowledge of the members or co-chairs of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics; would duplicate existing reporting requirements for member States on their pollution-related efforts under other platforms; and did not include information on how platform decisions would be taken.

35. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended South Africa for its plan to ban single-use plastics and related products, following the example of other African countries, and requested UNEP to provide technical assistance to countries that were seeking to follow suit.

36. Regarding South-South cooperation, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that such cooperation was recognized as a strategy for global development at the highest level of the United Nations system and that UNEP must embrace it to deliver on its mandate. Recalling that the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP at its twenty-third session, had requested UNEP to strengthen its South-South cooperation strategy, he asked the secretariat to ensure that South-South cooperation initiatives were effectively implemented in a spirit of accountability and transparency, and to provide regular updates to member States on UNEP South-South cooperation work.

37. Another representative expressed appreciation to UNEP for supporting the establishment of the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre. Emphasizing that the centre was an open, inclusive and transparent platform for all interested parties, he called on UNEP and all member States to support the centre in order to enhance the environmental capacities of African countries and facilitate green development and the implementation of Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa.

38. The acting Executive Director thanked representatives for their remarks and said that the secretariat had taken note of the various suggestions and requests. The secretariat was committed to providing member States with regular updates on the implementation of the OIOS audit recommendations, as well as the internal reform of UNEP and its links with the wider United Nations reform, including through its quarterly reports and a briefing on the reform process. As for the questions raised on the possible implications of the United Nations reform for UNEP and the possible provision of support to member States on environmental information and education, the secretariat would examine both issues and provide responses in due course. Regarding the global plastics platform, the secretariat would discuss the concerns expressed with the incoming Director of the Ecosystems Division and report back on the matter to the Committee.

39. With regard to human resources management, thanks to the efforts undertaken by the secretariat over the previous quarter to fill key vacancies, five new members had joined the senior management team, and two additional members, the directors of the Ecosystems Division and the Europe Office, were expected to join UNEP in January 2019. Senior managers were making significant efforts to become better leaders and to improve the management of the Programme.

40. On the question regarding staff travel, the representative of the secretariat said that UNEP was following to the letter the travel rules of the United Nations Secretariat, which used a combination of economy and business class travel depending on the length of the journey. The rules took into account the health and well-being of staff, and the need for staff preparedness for meetings. Nevertheless, the secretariat was exploring ways of reducing travel costs and carbon footprint, for instance by reducing the size of delegations, and would examine ways of increasing the use of economy class travel. The secretariat was also committed to strengthening travel-related mechanisms and to making travel-related reporting more formal and specific.

41. Responding to a question from an observer, the representative of the secretariat said that the private sector contributors of earmarked funds listed on page 29 of the quarterly report included both foundations and for-profit entities and that such funds had financed activities in the programme of work. He offered to provide further details on such activities upon request.

42. At the request of the acting Executive Director, representatives of the secretariat provided details on the first substantive session of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277, Towards a Global Pact for the Environment, to be held in Nairobi from 14 to 19 January 2019, and the final intergovernmental review meeting of the summary for policymakers of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook, to be held in Nairobi from 21 to 24 January 2019.

Agenda item 6

Preparations for the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee and the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

(a) Introduction of the second draft of the ministerial declaration by the President of Assembly

43. The Special Envoy of Estonia, Mr. Ado Lõhmus, speaking on behalf of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, provided an outline of the revised draft of the ministerial declaration of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, noting that it would be distributed to member States by the end of the day, 8 January 2019.

44. The Presidency had produced the new draft taking into account the feedback received from member States, regional groups and stakeholders on the “zero draft” of the declaration, as well as the overall recommendation that the ministerial declaration should be attractive to policymakers and the wider public; be concise, action-oriented, aspirational and ambitious; use plain language; and reflect in a balanced manner the two components of the theme of the fourth session. It thus embraced the vision of moving towards prosperous and inclusive societies with sustainable consumption and production patterns that prevented and tackled environmental problems through innovative solutions.

45. In view of the feedback received, the Presidency had restructured and shortened the draft declaration, while retaining the efficient management of resources, access to data and engagement with stakeholders as the three key enablers for overcoming environmental challenges and implementing sustainable consumption and production patterns. The new draft strengthened references to supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, recognizing that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 would require achieving milestones in the medium term, it incorporated clear commitments by member States to set ambitious domestic targets by 2025 for the reduction of waste generation, the re-use and recycling of waste, and the use of sustainable public procurement, guided by Sustainable Development Goal targets 12.5 and 12.7. Bearing in mind that over 60 member States had taken initiatives to combat single-use plastic pollution, member States were also invited to take further action to reduce the most problematic single-use plastic products. Lastly, the new draft contained stronger language on means of implementation, capacity-building, partnerships and development, taking into account the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

46. As next steps, within the inclusive and transparent consultation process that has been followed to date, member States and stakeholders would be invited to provide written comments on the new draft by 31 January 2019, and the President would hold in-person consultations with regional groups and interested member States in Nairobi on 5 and 6 February 2019. On the basis of the feedback

received, a revised draft of the declaration would be produced and released on 15 February 2019, for consideration by the Committee at its next regular meeting on 19 February 2019.

(b) Draft resolutions for consideration by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session

47. In considering the sub-item, the Committee had before it a document entitled “Overview of draft resolutions for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly”.

48. The representative of the secretariat reported that, at a meeting held on 7 January 2019, the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly had agreed to call on all member States to respect the previously-agreed deadline of 21 January 2019 for the submission of draft resolutions to be considered by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session. The bureaux had further agreed to elect Mr. Fernando Coimbra (Brazil), as chair-designate of the committee of the whole to be established at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly and to request the secretariat, under the leadership of the Chair of the Committee and the chair-designate of the committee of the whole, to prepare and present for consideration by member States on 21 January 2019, a proposed organization of work for the negotiation of draft resolutions based on clusters of resolutions proposed by the secretariat in order to facilitate the consolidation of draft resolutions on similar topics.

49. The representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat had received some 36 initiatives for draft resolutions, which, apart from a few resolutions on housekeeping issues, had been submitted by member States. As shown in the overview of draft resolutions document, the secretariat had grouped the proposed resolutions into four thematic clusters, namely (a) innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production; (b) resource efficiency, chemicals and waste; (c) ecosystems and biodiversity management and protection; (d) environmental governance; and (e) programme of work and related issues. A coordinator had been appointed for each cluster, and a secretariat focal point had been assigned to all the initiatives presented thus far. Member State focal points had been appointed for most initiatives in order to facilitate consultations among member States, and the secretariat would assign meeting rooms over the following weeks to facilitate consultations on the resolutions under the leadership of the Chair of the Committee and the Chair-designate of the committee of the whole to be established at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

50. To date, 7 draft resolutions and 28 concept notes had been received, and there were six initiatives for which only a resolution title had been provided. Such initiatives related to innovative environmental solutions and mechanisms to reduce food waste in countries with hot climates; innovative environmental solutions and national and regional strategies for solid waste management; the environmental impacts of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic; implementation and follow-up of Environment Assembly resolutions; the action plan towards a pollution-free planet; and the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP. He urged the proponents of all resolution initiatives that had not yet done so to submit a concept note and/or a draft resolution as soon as possible, and to submit all draft resolutions by 21 January 2019. Prior to submitting new draft resolutions, he asked member States to consider the possibility of consolidating similar initiatives in order to facilitate the negotiating process.

51. In the ensuing discussion, one representative voiced her concern at the large number of draft resolutions proposed for consideration at the fourth session, stressing that time was limited and that it would be very difficult for small delegations to participate in the negotiations of all the draft resolutions that were of interest to them. She therefore urged the proponents of resolutions covering similar issues to consolidate them and suggested that it would be desirable for the Environment Assembly to adopt a limited number of robust resolutions related to the theme of its fourth session that would be widely owned by member States.

52. Another representative said that the large number of resolutions and the ongoing discussions between proponents of similar resolutions were encouraging signs, and proposed that the chair-designate of the committee of the whole consult with facilitators recommended by regional groups to obtain their input on how to cluster the resolutions and structure the negotiations.

53. One representative suggested that the subcommittee could negotiate housekeeping resolutions and asked the secretariat to present the draft resolution on the proposed programme of work and budget for consideration by the subcommittee at its next meeting. He further suggested that, since member States had shared their initial views on all the resolutions submitted to date, including through the resolution platform, they would not need to engage in line-by-line discussions on those resolutions.

54. In closing, the Chair urged all the regional groups to submit the names of facilitators by 21 January 2019, stressing that she and the Chair-designate of the committee of the whole would finalize the list and clustering of resolutions to facilitate the negotiating process.

(c) **Draft agenda and structure for the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives**

55. In considering the sub-item, the Committee had before it a document entitled “Draft provisional agenda and proposed structure of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, 4 to 8 March 2019” (UNEP/CPR/144/6c).

56. The representative of the secretariat said that, at their meeting of 7 January 2019, the bureaux had proposed no changes to the draft provisional agenda of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, but had voiced concerns about its proposed structure. The secretariat therefore proposed that the Committee endorse the draft provisional agenda and continue to discuss, through the Bureau of the Committee and in consultation with the Bureau of the Environment Assembly and the Chair-designate of the committee of the whole, the structure of the meeting, with a view to ensuring that it was fit-for-purpose, while addressing the concerns of small delegations.

57. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern that neither the provisional agenda nor the annotations thereto specified whether the open-ended Committee would consider the proposed programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, the implementation plan for the ministerial declaration entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet”, or the draft marine and coastal strategy. He sought clarification on whether the secretariat envisioned discussion of those issues, as well as on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, at the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee.

58. Two other representatives expressed support for discussing, respectively, the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and the draft Marine and coastal strategy. One representative drew attention to a sentence under agenda item 3 in the annotations to the provisional agenda, which provided for the establishment of a working group tasked with finalizing draft resolutions, and suggested that the word “finalization” be replaced with “negotiation”.

59. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that both the proposed programme of work and the draft marine and coastal strategy would be discussed under item 4 of the agenda for the meeting, and the secretariat would make the necessary changes to the annotations to the provisional agenda. The implementation plan of the ministerial declaration would be discussed under item 9, in the context of the proposed draft resolution on the plan. With regard to the future of the Global Programme of Action, given that the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 31 October to 1 November 2018, had called for follow-up work to be carried out in 2019, the secretariat had no mandate to formally bring the issue before the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives. As the governing body of the Global Programme of Action, the Intergovernmental Review Meeting was expected to continue its discussions, the outcome of which would be presented to the United Nations Environment Assembly.

60. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that he would consult on the outcome of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting, which he understood to have decided on follow-up actions to be completed before the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

61. On the structure of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that, should small groups be created to negotiate draft resolutions, no more than two such groups should convene in parallel, bearing in mind that most delegations to the meeting would be small.

62. Following the discussion, the Committee requested the secretariat to revise document UNEP/CPR/144/6c on the basis of the discussion at the current meeting and in the light of additional written comments submitted by member States by 11 January 2019, and to present the revised document for further consideration by the Committee.

(d) **Report by the Executive Director to the high-level segment of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

63. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to an advance version of a report by the Executive Director entitled “Innovative solutions to environmental challenges and sustainable

consumption and production” (UNEP/EA.4/17), which incorporated comments submitted by member States prior to 16 December 2018. He provided an overview of the report.

64. Responding to a query regarding the release date of the final version of the report, he said that the secretariat was striving to present all meeting documents six weeks in advance of the session.

(e) Draft programme of work and budget for 2020–2021

65. The representative of the secretariat drew attention to a document entitled “Proposed programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021” (UNEP/EA.4/4), which the subcommittee had discussed extensively and had been revised in the light of those discussions. The document was being translated and would form the basis of the discussions by the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives. In addition, the secretariat had presented a related draft resolution, which had been examined by the subcommittee at its meeting on 29 November 2018.

66. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that, without revising the finalized document, it was important that the secretariat provide additional information to member States on the rationale for the budget allocations across the different subprogrammes and the cost categories proposed in order to help member States to reach decisions on specific figures.

67. The representative of the secretariat requested all member States to submit their requests for information and clarification in writing well ahead of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, stressing that the secretariat would not amend the current version of the new programme of work and budget, but would work with interested delegations to address any questions member States may have and, if needed, disclose such information to all member States in the spirit of transparency.

(f) Draft implementation plan “Towards a pollution-free planet”

68. The representatives of Germany and Costa Rica, in their capacities as co-facilitators of draft of Implementation Plan ‘Towards a pollution-free planet’, drew attention to a document entitled “Final draft of the UNEA-3 implementation plan ‘Towards a pollution-free planet’” (UNEP/CPR/144/6f), which had been prepared by the secretariat in the light of comments made by member States during a subcommittee meeting held on 29 November 2018 and additional comments submitted by 4 December 2018, with guidance from the co-facilitators. The co-facilitators proposed that one or more member States submit a draft resolution on the draft plan before 21 January 2019.

69. Responding to a question, the representative of the secretariat said that the pollution-related pledges made during the third session of the Environment Assembly were included in the draft plan, and that the secretariat would follow up on such commitments and invite additional commitments at the fourth session and beyond.

(g) Information update on key events planned for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

70. In considering the sub-item, which covered six distinct issues (see UNEP/CPR/144/1/Add.1), the Committee considered the first issue, leadership dialogues, followed by the remaining five issues, namely, the multi-stakeholder dialogue; the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum; side events; the Sustainable Innovation Expo; and the Science-Policy Business Forum.

71. With regard to the leadership dialogues, the representative of the secretariat said that, at their 7 January 2019 meeting, the bureaux had provided substantive comments on a briefing note prepared by the secretariat entitled “Leadership dialogues and the multi-stakeholder dialogue” and had agreed that the three leadership dialogues, each of which focused on a topic related to the theme of the session, should be held during the session.

72. With regard to the approach and organization of the dialogues, the secretariat proposed that the three dialogues use as key sources of information the flagship science-policy interface reports to be presented during the fourth session; the draft ministerial declaration; and the report by the Executive Director on the theme of the session (UNEP/EA.4/17). With regard to the organization of the dialogues, the secretariat proposed that each dialogue be broken into three parallel round tables with balanced regional representation, in order to allow ministers to interact in smaller forums and to hold more productive discussions, and that a summary of the key messages of the three dialogues be presented during the closing plenary meeting. Due to resource constraints, the dialogues would be held in English only, but interpretation services would be provided to at least one of the round tables of each leadership dialogue.

73. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives expressed concern about dividing each dialogue into three parallel sessions, stressing that smaller sessions might not attract enough participants or attention to justify the attendance of ministers and high-level officials and could make the process chaotic. One of the representatives proposed that only one interactive session be held for each dialogue. The other suggested that the Committee examine the issue further.

74. Two other representatives said that holding parallel sessions would give participants the opportunity to interact more and was therefore a good idea. One sought clarification regarding the procedures for selecting the moderators and modes of operation for the sessions.

75. The representative of the secretariat asked member States to submit written comments, stressing that the issue would need to be decided within the following two to three weeks. Based on such comments, and on comments provided at the current meeting and at the bureaux meeting of 7 January 2019, the secretariat would revise the Leadership Dialogues concept note for consideration by the Joint Bureaux at their next meeting on 5 February 2019.

76. Moving to the other issues under the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat provided updates on the multi-stakeholder dialogue; the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum; side events; the Sustainable Innovation Expo; and the Science-Policy Business Forum, drawing attention to the documents entitled “The Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum prior to the 2019 session of the UN Environment Assembly” (UNEP/CPR/144/4/6g); “Note on the 2019 Sustainable Innovation Expo” (UNEP/CPR/144/9); “Note on Second Global Session of the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment” (UNEP/CPR/144/4/6g/Add.1); and “Leaders Passport to the UN Environment Assembly - Programme of events”.

77. The multi-stakeholder dialogue would be held on the afternoon of 14 March 2019, during the high-level segment of the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly. The secretariat was still working on the theme of the dialogue, bearing in mind the need to address social components and social innovations to enable the world to move toward more sustainable societies, and would welcome feedback from member States in that regard.

78. The 2019 meeting of the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum would take place on 7 and 8 March 2019, in the context of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives. Recalling that the Forum was self-organized and that it served both as a platform for stakeholders to share experiences and ideas, and as a space where such stakeholders could engage with member States and with the management and staff of UNEP, he encouraged all member States to attend the 2019 meeting, which was open to the public.

79. As for side events, the secretariat had received and carefully reviewed 129 applications for side events, and was recommending the selection of 14 by the Bureau of the Assembly. The review process had followed the applicable guidelines, including on regional balance and a balance of perspectives, and the secretariat expected to announce the selected side events within the following few days.

80. The Sustainable Innovation Expo, which had become a premium platform for the UN Environment Assembly to attract leaders from business, civil society and the research community, would showcase key technologies and experiences in connection with the theme of the fourth session and would feature discussions that all member States were encouraged to attend.

81. The Science-Policy-Business Forum had been the subject of a robust preparatory process that had included multi-stakeholder meetings in different countries, and an active network that was working on issues relevant to the outcomes of the fourth session, including digital solutions and the value of big data and robust monitoring systems to support sustainable development; sustainable food systems; and sustainable cities. Further information could be found on the UN Environment Assembly website and in the “Leaders Passport to the UN Environment Assembly - Programme of events” document.

82. In addition to the above-mentioned events, in partnership with UN-Habitat, UNEP would host a “Cities Summit” on 13 March 2019 to enable local actors to discuss and give feedback on the theme of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. The event would be held at the World Agroforestry Centre in Gigiri, and all member States were invited to participate.

83. Lastly, the One Planet Summit would hold its third meeting in Nairobi on 14 March 2019. Co-convened by the Governments of France and Kenya and the World Bank Group, the meeting would discuss solutions for climate adaptation, biodiversity protection and the energy transition in Africa, in line with the theme of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. It would feature a high-level segment that ministers of the environment and other high-level officials would be invited to attend.

The organizers had therefore requested that the opening of the high-level segment of the fourth session be delayed by one hour. The secretariat supported the request, but the final decision rested with the Bureau of the Assembly.

84. In the ensuing discussion, one representative asked whether the deadline to apply for an exhibition slot at the Sustainable Innovation Expo had been extended, given that the details of the event had just been provided, and sought clarification regarding ways in which member States could participate in the Science-Policy-Business Forum. She also requested the secretariat to provide more information on the leadership dialogues to enable ministers to prepare for them. Another representative requested additional information on the criteria for selecting side events and the time of announcement of the events chosen. Yet another asked the secretariat to provide to member States updated details on all the formal and side events described at the current meeting, including the programme, purpose and convener(s) of each event, so that they could share it with their capitals in preparation for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

85. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that the deadline to apply for an exhibition slot at the Sustainable Innovation Expo had been extended to 18 January 2019, stressing that any company that had an innovation to showcase would be able to do so free of charge. As for the side event selection process, as with past Environment Assembly sessions, the senior management team had carefully reviewed each side event application against the criteria defined by member States, including geographical balance and reflection of the thematic priorities of UNEP. The secretariat expected to announce the 14 events selected in the following days, once the President of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly had reviewed the list.

(h) Information update on the implementation of the secretariat communication strategy for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

86. The representative of the secretariat said that communications for the fourth session were well under way, raising awareness and anticipation about the session. The secretariat had developed a global public-facing advocacy campaign focused on the theme of the session, called “Solvedifferent”, which was encouraging people to make sustainable lifestyle and business choices through storytelling, using the concept of an individual’s ecological footprint as a means to showcase innovative solutions to address environmental challenges and achieve sustainable consumption and production. The secretariat had developed a #Solvedifferent campaign website, a new Environment Assembly website and a Sustainable Expo website, and had posted 25 stories from around the world on the campaign website, some of which had been reposted on the websites of other organizations or picked up by global media outlets. Some of the most popular stories focused on meat consumption and the practice of disposing of clothing shortly after buying it. Lastly, a number of social media infographics would be released over the following weeks.

87. The secretariat had produced and shared with member States the communication strategy for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, as well as the 2019 Environment Programme Visual Identity Manual. The secretariat would soon release a communication toolkit to help member States raise awareness about the session. Stressing that the success of communication efforts depended on the cooperation and engagement of member States, he urged representatives to develop and share with the secretariat innovation stories from within their borders that could be posted on the UNEP websites and shared with the media.

Agenda item 7

Consideration of resolutions adopted at previous sessions of the United Nations Environment Assembly

88. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to four documents providing updates on the implementation of resolutions adopted by the UN Environment Assembly, entitled “Status of Implementation: UNEP/EA.3/Res. 6, Managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development” (UNEP/CPR/144/7a); “Status of Implementation: UNEP/EA.3/Res.9, Eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting the environmentally sound management of lead acid batteries” (UNEP/CPR/144/7b); “Status of Implementation: UNEP/EA.3/Res.10, Addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems” (UNEP/CPR/144/7c); and “Status of Implementation: UNEP/EA.2/Res.10, “Oceans and seas” - UN Environment Programme’s Marine and Coastal Strategy” (UNEP/CPR/144/7d), which was complemented by a note entitled “Comparison between the different versions of the draft marine and coastal strategy” (UNEP/CPR/144/7d/Add.1), and a note summarizing member State comments on the draft strategy and secretariat responses to them (UNEP/CPR/144/7d/Add.2)

89. With regard to resolution 3/6, on managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development, the acting Director of the Ecosystems Division, Ms. Monika MacDevette said that, in response to the resolution, and in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Global Soil Partnership and its Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, UNEP had been working in the areas of information and scientific data for sound policy recommendations; the identification of the main gaps in knowledge on soil pollution; the identification of the risks and impacts of soil pollution on human health, the environment and food security, including land degradation and the burden of disease resulting from exposure to contaminated soil; and the elaboration of technical guidelines for the prevention and minimization of soil pollution, including through nature-based solutions, to support the implementation of the 2016 Voluntary Guidelines for Sustainable Soil Management. She asked member States to continue to support that important work, including by providing vital national data on soil pollution, as requested in resolution 3/6.

90. The representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the activities outlined in document UNEP/CPR/144/7a, including the co-hosting of the Global Symposium on Soil Pollution in May 2018; the convening of a consultation workshop in June 2018 to advance the implementation of the pollution-related resolutions of the Environment Assembly, including resolution 3/6; the development of a draft broad outline of the soils pollution report called for by resolution 3/6, to be presented for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its fifth session; the development of a draft implementation plan and budget to facilitate resource mobilization for the implementation of resolution 3/6, which was being incorporated into a joint resource mobilization strategy proposal with FAO; and efforts to develop a joint framework for the implementation of resolution 3/6 and resolution 3/4, on environment and health, which also called for action on pesticides and fertilizers.

91. Turning to the implementation of resolution 3/9, on eliminating exposure to lead paint and promoting environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries, the representative of the secretariat highlighted activities to support the elimination of lead paint undertaken by the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead in Paint, including the publication in September 2018 of a report entitled *Update on the Global Status of Lead Limits in Paint*; the provision of support to countries in their efforts to adopt and implement laws to eliminate lead paint, including through the development of a guidance document entitled *Model Law and Guidance to Regulate Lead Paint*; and the launch of a new project, with financial support from the Global Environment Facility, to help 40 additional countries to develop lead paint laws.

92. With regard to waste lead-acid batteries, UNEP was working with industry and civil society partners to provide technical assistance and capacity-building to low-income and middle-income countries on the environmentally sound management of waste lead-acid batteries, and with WHO to increase awareness on how to prevent lead exposure from such waste. It had also developed a joint project with the Secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions to strengthen country capacities in the collection of waste lead-acid batteries and contaminated sites remediation.

93. Responding to a question from the floor on the incidence of use of lead in paints, including in countries where such paints were regulated, the representative of the secretariat said that the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint planned to conduct a study on the incidence of use of lead in paint and on compliance with existing lead paint laws, stressing that despite the existence of such laws, civil society actors had found high levels of lead in paint in some countries. Answering another question regarding key challenges related to the implementation of resolution 3/9, she said that obtaining sufficient resources and engaging with industry to demonstrate the feasibility of reformulating paints to make them lead-free were two such challenges.

94. Turning to resolution 3/10, on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems, the representative of the secretariat highlighted activities undertaken to implement the resolution, including efforts to expand and increase water quality monitoring country capacities; support data collection for the Sustainable Development Goals of which the Programme was a custodian, in particular Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation), including by developing methodologies for the collection of robust and comparable data for indicators 6.3.2 (ambient water quality), 6.5.1 (integrated water resources management) and 6.6.1 (water-related ecosystems); and creating an enabling environment to clean up polluted water bodies. Work had also been initiated for the development of the world water quality assessment called for in resolution 3/10, to be presented to the UN Environment Assembly at its fifth session, including through the holding of a workshop and fundraising.

95. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives thanked the secretariat for the information provided but requested a more comprehensive overview of the secretariat's activities, plans and resource mobilization needs pertaining to resolution 3/10 and efforts to implement it, stressing that the activities reported referred mostly to freshwater, whereas the resolution embraced an integrated approach to water management that also included coastal waters.

96. The representative of the secretariat said that, as part of its work on Goal 6, which included integrated water resource management (indicator 6.5.1), UNEP had produced a report for Africa identifying gaps and action needed, and planned to produce similar reports for other regions. UNEP also planned to hold national workshops on the Goal 6 indicators so that stakeholders could discuss data findings in a holistic way, identify gaps and develop partnerships to address those gaps. Lastly, the Programme was working on with partners such as Cap-Net, the Global Water Partnership and UN-Water integrated water resource management, and had shared experiences on freshwater resources and pollution monitoring, and on how such pollution moved to coastal waters.

97. Moving to resolution 2/10, on oceans and seas, the acting Director of the Ecosystems Division said that the secretariat had developed a new draft marine and coastal strategy pursuant to paragraph 17 of the resolution. The draft strategy aimed to set strategic directions for UNEP over the following 10 years, and was based on the medium-term strategy 2018–2021 and the programmes of work for 2018–2019 and 2021–2022. It was also linked to the thematic strategies of UNEP, including on freshwater, regional seas conventions and action plans, biodiversity and climate, and to the outcomes of the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA). At the request of the Intergovernmental Review Meeting, the secretariat was preparing a report on the legal, budgetary and administrative implications of the options for the future of the Global Programme of Action presented and discussed in Bali.

98. The representative of the secretariat said that the first version of the draft strategy had been developed by a consultant, following a workshop held by the Oceans Branch, and the secretariat had revised it in the light of comments provided by member States in December 2018, as well as staff input. She outlined some of the comments received from member States, which were summarized in document UNEP/CPR/144/7d/Add.2 and provided an outline of the draft strategy chapters. With regard to next steps, she invited member States to submit comments in writing by 15 January 2019, with a view to enabling the secretariat to finalize the draft strategy by 21 January 2019 and submit it as an information document for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

99. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives said that they would submit written comments on the revised strategy. One, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that there was a need to link the strategy's objectives and outputs to the programme of work; reinsert references to ocean-related initiatives that had been removed from the text; and clarify the roles of partnerships and of the Global Programme of Action in the strategy. Another representative said that, in addition to identifying key objectives, the strategy must clearly articulate the strategic approach of UNEP for achieving such objectives, based on its comparative advantages.

100. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that there was a need to discuss the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) during the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives. Joined by another representative who expressed frustration that the Intergovernmental Review Meeting had decided at its fourth meeting to consider further the issue of the future of the Global Programme of Action, he asked the secretariat to clarify what the next steps would be.

101. The representative of the secretariat thanked member States for their feedback and invited them to submit comments in writing by 15 January to enable the secretariat to finalize the draft strategy by 21 January 2019. With regard to the Global Programme of Action, the report on the legal, budgetary and administrative implications of the options considered in Bali would be finalized within the following four to six weeks, and the secretariat intended to have a substantive discussion on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA) during the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

102. Another representative of the secretariat suggested that the secretariat could convene an in-depth consultation with member States to obtain clarification on the type of information and documentation that would be most useful for them in the context of the Global Programme of Action and other matters to advance the oceans agenda, with a view to building a broad consensus on the way forward by 19 January 2019.

103. Following the discussion, the Committee agreed to submit written comments on the draft strategy to the secretariat by 15 January 2019, and to ask the secretariat to hold the release of the finalized draft strategy, pending consultations between the secretariat and interested delegations regarding their expectations for documentation on the draft Marine and Coastal Strategy by 19 January 2019.

Agenda item 8

Briefing on South-South cooperation

104. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to three notes by the secretariat, entitled “Briefing note on South-South and Triangular Cooperation Activities” (UNEP/CPR/144/8); “Response to EU questions on South-South Cooperation Presentation at CPR of 8th November 2018”(UNEP/CPR/144/8/Add.1); and “Response from the secretariat: Questions received in writing from the Delegation of the United States of America addressing Agenda Item 4 entitled “Briefing from the secretariat on the Interim Secretariat for China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre” at the subcommittee meeting on 4 October 2018” (UNEP/CPR/144/8/Add.2)

105. The Director of the Programme and Policy Division, Mr. Gary Lewis, provided an overview of recent South-South cooperation activities involving UNEP. He noted that on 8 November 2018 the secretariat had briefed the subcommittee on the Programme’s South-South cooperation mandate and project portfolio, which was funded primarily by the Global Environment Facility and the Environment Fund. Recent activities included the holding of a South-South cooperation workshop on 10 and 11 December 2018 to begin consultations for the development of a new UNEP South-South cooperation strategy; the hosting of a forum on the role of youth and women in South-South cooperation to promote sustainable development during the Global South-South Cooperation Expo, held in New York from 28 to 30 November 2018; involvement in inter-agency processes tasked with developing a United Nations system-wide strategy for South-South and triangular cooperation, which would form the basis of the new UNEP strategy, and the outcome document of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action Conference, to be held in Argentina in March 2019; and progress made on key initiatives, including the establishment of the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre, and the ongoing development of terms of reference for the nine thematic partnerships under the Greening the Belt and Road Initiative.

106. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed support for the mandate of UNEP in promoting South-South cooperation to pursue global environmental objectives and the environmental dimension of sustainable development. One representative stressed that South-South cooperation empowered countries to share home-grown, local responses and complemented other forms of international cooperation. One representative said that there was a need for UNEP to balance its South-South cooperation mandate, which was shared by all United Nations entities, with its core mandate.

107. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that there was an urgent need for the secretariat to improve its communication and engagement with member States, especially with regard to existing and new strategic initiatives. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries lamented the lack of participatory and inclusive consultations with member States on the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre and the Greening the Belt and Road Initiative, and urged the secretariat to urgently begin such consultations. He expressed appreciation to the Government of China for its decision to place the China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre under the umbrella of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, while leaving open the possible involvement of UNEP, and said that such involvement should be discussed further with member States. The other representative voiced concerns about the secretariat’s plan to produce and then share with member States a new South-South cooperation strategy and asked about specific steps to engage with member States on the strategy prior to its adoption, stressing that UNEP was an intergovernmental organization and that major initiatives should be discussed and subjected to extensive consultations with all member States before being undertaken.

108. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to ensure that South-South cooperation initiatives were implemented in a spirit of accountability and transparency, and to provide regular updates on such initiatives to member States.

109. Responding to comments, the acting Executive Director thanked representative for their feedback, assuring them that the secretariat had taken note of their calls for greater transparency, consultation and open communication with member States, as well as their interest in the issue of South-South cooperation, and would respond to their requests in a transparent manner.

Agenda item 9**Report of the Subcommittee**

110. The Committee took note of a document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/144/9).

Agenda item 10**Other matters**

111. No other matters were raised.

Agenda item 11**Closure of the meeting**

112. The meeting was declared closed at 5.40 p.m. on Tuesday, 8 January 2019.



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**United Nations Environment Assembly of
the United Nations Environment
Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United
Nations Environment Programme**
144th meeting
Nairobi, 8 January 2019

**Draft minutes of the 143rd meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 28 September 2018**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Friday, 28 September 2018, by Ms. Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations Environment Programme and Vice-Chair Committee of Permanent Representatives, on behalf of Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. At the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee observed a minute of silence in memory of Ms. Edna Molewa, Vice-President of the United Nations Environment Assembly and Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa.
3. The meeting was attended by 114 participants representing 67 member States and 2 observer missions.
4. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Christian Fellner, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Michael Kassal, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Ivan Feys, Deputy Head of Mission of Belgium; Ms. Ilse Lauwen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Marcus Davies, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada; Ms. Sun Baohong, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China; Mr. Erik Lundberg, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland; Ms. Aline Kuster-Ménager, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Ms. Annett Günther, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany; Ms. Unnur Orradóttir Ramette, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iceland; Mr. Mohammad Ichsan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia; Mr. Ziyad Tariq Kafi Ali-Midlij, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. David Eyal, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Abdullah Obaidat, Deputy Permanent Representative of Jordan; Mr. Changgyu Lee, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Mr. Lino Leopold Santacruz Moctezuma, Alternate Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Slaoui Mohamed, Deputy Head of Mission of Morocco; Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. Saif Omran Marrash Al Amri, Deputy Head of Mission/Minister Plenipotentiary of Oman; Mr. Dmitry Maksimychev, Ambassador and Representative of the Russian Federation; Ms. Frida Jangsten, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden; Ms. Sawsan Alani, Ambassador and Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic; and Mr. Daniel J. Carl, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America.

5. She then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Vincent Willekens, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana; Mr. Jamie Pennell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada; Ms. Tarja Fernandez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland; Mr. Antoine Sivan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Ms. Jutta Gisela Frasc, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany; Mr. Yoshi Iskandar, Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia; Mr. M. Husham Al-Fityan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Michael Baruch Baro, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Park Ryun Min, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Mr. Eduardo Alcibiades Sanchez, Alternate Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Abderrahim Cherrah, Deputy Head of Mission of Morocco; Mr. Victor Conrad Ronneberg, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. Saleh Mohamed Alsuqri, Deputy Head of Mission/Minister Plenipotentiary of Oman; Mr. Alexander Makarenko, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation; Mr. Elsadig Abdalla Elias Diab, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sudan; Ms. Ulrica Reuterwall, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden; Mr. Abdulmonem Annan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic; and Mr. Joel B. Hansen, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

6. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/143/1 and UNEP/CPR/143/1/Add.1).

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of 142nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

7. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 142nd meeting, held on 10 May 2018, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/143/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

8. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Quarterly report to the 143rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives”, which summarized activities carried out by the secretariat since the previous meeting of the Committee.

9. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, began by drawing attention to a letter that he had sent to Committee members addressing unwelcome media articles on the preliminary findings of an ongoing audit of the official travel of the United Nations Environment Programme by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The secretariat expected the audit to be finalized within the following four to six weeks, at which time the matter would be discussed further with member States. He said that, as noted in his letter, the management team was taking proactive steps to correct and prevent the reoccurrence of any mistakes that had been made and to ensure that proper systems were in place to secure complete accountability in the management of resources.

10. He stressed that travelling to member States was an essential part of his work and that all the trips he had undertaken had been at the invitation of member States. In the spirit of full transparency, all his trips in 2018 would be listed on the website of the United Nations Environment Programme, together with the outcomes of each trip, as would his future travel. Travel undertaken by the Executive Director prior to 2018 would also be made available if so requested by member States. The travel control framework of the Programme would be revised to tighten compliance and accountability, and would move from a system based on self-audit to one overseen by the office of the Secretary-General. In addition, the secretariat would examine ways of reducing travel costs, including by increasing the use of alternative means of discussion and communication, such as video messages and Skype, and reducing the size of its delegations to meetings, and of strengthening financial controls and accountability under the leadership of the Deputy Executive Director. The Executive Director had decided to reduce travel for the remainder of 2018 in order to spend more time with staff and representatives of member States in Nairobi.

11. The Secretariat was also examining ways of strengthening its human resources policies, including those related to flexible working arrangements, to ensure that they were fully in line with the rules of the United Nations Secretariat. Staff would still be encouraged to use flexible working arrangements and to focus on delivering results. Offering flexible working arrangements was a significant factor in attracting the interest of and recruiting the most competent women.

12. A new Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Joyce Msuya, had recently joined the senior management team and would focus on exploring ways of delivering results throughout the organization and improving the generation of income from middle-income countries, foundations and the private sector, as well as traditional donors. The heads of the New York office and the Corporate Services Division had also been recruited, and it was to be hoped that the posts of the directors of the ecosystems and science divisions and the Europe office would be filled within the following few weeks. A leadership team retreat would be held in November 2018, and a system would be put in place to enable staff to convey their comments and wishes to the leadership team for consideration at the retreat.

13. The United Nations Environment Programme had achieved gender parity in the top four positions and lower level positions, but not at the levels of D-1 and P-5 management posts, where only 38 per cent of staff members were women. Further efforts would be needed to achieve gender parity within the following few years. Achieving geographical balance would require even more work, since 55 per cent of staff came from Europe and North America, compared to, for instance, only 16 per cent from Asia. Given that the United Nations websites used to announce vacancies tended to be used by those already working in the system, ways were being explored of obtaining a wider range of applicants from developing countries.

14. Significant progress had been achieved with regard to plastics and oceans. In India, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, had committed to phasing out single-use plastics by 2022, and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific and Africa were trying to find ways of drastically curbing the use of plastics. The European Union had prohibited a number of plastic products and, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, it planned to establish a global plastics platform that would enable all countries to share their experiences and best practices and to connect with companies and other stakeholders interested in turning plastic problems into business opportunities. Canada had hosted a Group of Seven meeting of ministers responsible for the environment, energy and oceans, which had focused on ocean and plastic pollution issues, and both France, as the President of the Group of Seven, and Japan, as the President of the Group of Twenty, would address the issue of plastics within each Group. On the related issue of waste management, the United Nations Environment Programme planned to partner with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to set up a new global platform for the sharing of experiences in waste management. With the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Governments of Kenya and Canada would be co-hosting an oceans conference entitled the “Sustainable Blue Economy Conference” in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November 2018.

15. Progress had also been made in the area of innovation. During the Global Climate Action Summit, held in San Francisco, United States, from 12 to 14 September 2018, the United Nations Environment Programme had discussed the possibility of partnering with Google to use satellite imagery as part of an innovative environmental monitoring tool that would help Governments to enforce environmental legislation, including on deforestation, fisheries and protected areas. At the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Nairobi from 17 to 21 September 2018, member States had adopted a declaration on innovation and voiced a strong desire to develop an African platform for the environment under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme. Following his visit to five West African countries in June 2018, the Programme was exploring ways of supporting the countries in priority areas, namely, waste management, coastal erosion, protection of forests and wildlife, renewable energy and clean city transportation.

16. In 2020, a new greenhouse gas emissions compensation system for airlines would be launched. The resources collected through the system would be used to finance forest conservation and other environmental programmes, and the United Nations Environment Programme planned to set up a global clearing-house mechanism with a view to ensuring that those resources were well spent.

17. The first discussions on the global pact for the environment process would be held in Nairobi from 14 to 18 January 2019 and would be co-chaired by the permanent representatives of Lebanon and Portugal to the United Nations in New York. The United Nations Environment Programme would release a Secretary-General’s report in November providing an overview of existing international environmental mechanisms and programmes in order to contribute to those discussions.

18. In April 2019, the United Nations Environment Programme would launch the “Last game at the North Pole”, an international hockey game that would draw attention to the rapid deterioration of the

Arctic environment. Major sports leaders, including legendary Russian hockey player, Mr. Viacheslav Fetisov, who had been appointed as Patron for the Polar regions by the United Nations Environment Programme, would participate in the game, which both the Pope and the patriarch of the Orthodox Church were supporting.

19. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the Executive Director for his oral briefing and the Secretariat for the quarterly report. They also extended a warm welcome to the new Deputy Executive Director and expressed satisfaction regarding her planned role in facilitating reforms to improve the financial accountability and transparency of the United Nations Environment Programme.

20. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, called for more systematic references to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly in the quarterly reports. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, reiterated his earlier request that the Secretariat provide implementation updates and implementation plans for all the resolutions of the Environment Assembly, thereby contributing to their implementation and follow-up. Another representative said that the importance of setting up a robust mechanism to review and monitor the implementation of all the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions could not be overemphasized.

21. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the Executive Director to provide details regarding the greening the belt and road initiative, the proposed China-Africa environmental cooperation centre, and the proposed world environment forum, including the role envisaged for the United Nations Environment Programme therein.

22. Another representative asked the Executive Director to comment on the opportunities that the reform of the United Nations development system presented to the United Nations Environment Programme and requested that future quarterly reports provide updates on the internal reform efforts to make the Programme more effective and efficient.

23. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called for greater transparency around partnerships with private sector entities, including the due diligence process to assess potential partners and a list of all the agreements recently concluded with private sector entities and those projected for the near future. They suggested that while partnerships were important to the success of the Programme, they should be entered into in a careful manner and in consultation with member States in order to safeguard the reputation and work of the Programme and build trust between management and member States. One representative requested that the scope of the quarterly reports be widened to include partnerships, not only with the private sector but also with non-profit entities, stressing that all partners were important and could help the United Nations Environment Programme to deliver on its mandate.

24. The same representative said that his Government had repeatedly voiced its concerns regarding private sector partnerships and had requested the Secretariat to provide a list of all the memorandums of understanding concluded over the previous 18 months. The Secretariat had provided an unsatisfactory explanation for its failure to produce such a list, namely that no central register existed for all such memorandums. He said that he had expressed concern about the due diligence process used to assess potential partners, since available documents showed that a number of important changes had been made to the process, including the relocation of the private sector unit from the Corporate Services Division to the Governance Affairs Office, major changes to the workflows of partnerships with private sector entities, the use of different policies for different kinds of partners, and the replacement of the Partnership Committee with a fast-track process for the swift approval of memorandums of understanding with private sector entities. He requested the secretariat to provide a list of all the memorandums of understanding concluded over the previous 18 months; to add the issue of partnerships, including the due diligence processes to evaluate potential partners, to the agenda of the fifth annual subcommittee meeting; and to produce a single, comprehensive document describing the due diligence processes, guidelines and workflows applicable to partnerships with both non-profit and for-profit entities for consideration and possible approval by the Committee. By providing that information, he said, the secretariat could demonstrate its commitment to transparency and allow member States to review the current system and determine whether further guidance or follow-up actions were needed.

25. Another representative said that it was important to respond to member State requests without delay and to assess the benefits of memorandums of understanding signed in the past as well as addressing any concerns arising from specific memorandums. He also expressed the view that the due diligence process to assess potential partners should be expeditious.

26. On the subject of the ongoing audit of the official travel of the United Nations Environment Programme, many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, lamented the fact that a preliminary draft of the audit report had been leaked, which, said one, had the potential to cause undue damage to the Programme. One representative suggested that it would be beneficial to look at past audits of the Programme and how the organization had responded to them, noting that leaks tended to emerge when there was an impression of past inaction.
27. Many representatives said that they would wait for the release of the final audit report to discuss its findings and recommendations. Several representatives expressed concern about the preliminary findings and the fact that some member States were withholding funding as a result of those findings. One representative said that his Government's contributions to the United Nations Environment Programme had come with the highest expectation of professionalism, accountability and the exercise of prudence on the part of the secretariat in discharging its functions and in managing resources. Another representative said that her Government had decided to withhold its contribution to the Environment Fund when questions had first arisen about the use of funds in the United Nations Environment Programme, stressing that when an organization was being audited it was standard practice to await the results of the audit and to consider the measures that the audited organization had taken in response thereto.
28. Many representatives welcomed the proactive steps taken by the Programme's management towards ensuring greater transparency and management accountability and conveyed their expectation that appropriate corrective action, including all the steps set out by the Executive Director in his letter to the Committee, would be taken, and that member States would be consulted and kept fully apprised of the situation. One representative said that it was crucial that the Programme demonstrate that it provided donors with good value for money by improving its financial management and by placing a strong focus on delivering the results foreseen in its programme of work.
29. One representative said that there was a need to build trust between management and member States and stressed that many of the corrective steps proposed by the Executive Director in his letter had been requested by member States at past Committee meetings. He recommended that the secretariat consistently summarize, circulate and include in management action plans, and in the quarterly reports to the Committee, the inputs and recommendations of member States, particularly those relating to management, in order to show how they were being addressed and demonstrate to member States that management was responsive to their requests.
30. Another representative commended the secretariat for its improved communication with the public, but said that it must improve its communication with member States, which was crucial to being more transparent and inclusive and to engaging with, and getting feedback from, the membership of the Environment Assembly. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, reiterated his proposal for creating an interactive platform to enable member States to pose questions and make suggestions to the secretariat in advance of Committee meetings and enable the secretariat to prepare answers and identify relevant speakers for such meetings.
31. With regard to travel, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to explain how the trips of the Executive Director described in the quarterly report had contributed to achieving the expected accomplishments set out in the approved programme of work and budget. Another representative queried whether the Executive Director had been given adequate advice by his team about travel-related costs or excessive travelling, suggesting that internal changes would be needed if that had not been the case. Cautioning against excessively restricting the freedom of the Executive Director to travel, he stressed nonetheless that the travel rules of the United Nations were fixed and, while creative solutions could be found to lower travel costs, it was important to examine how other United Nations entities handled such matters.
32. Concerning financial resources, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the secretariat for providing information on income and allocation of funds. Together with another representative, he expressed serious concern that, despite the universal membership of the Environment Assembly, only one-third of member States were contributing to the Environment Fund. He urged the Executive Director to engage more with member States and take all the necessary steps to persuade current and potential contributors that supporting the Programme was a good use of taxpayer money, which would require ensuring that contributions were invested in highly relevant activities linked to its programme of work and were managed carefully and responsibly.
33. Another representative said that ensuring accountability and transparency of secretariat activities was critical for attracting private and public sector partners.

34. One representative expressed concern that the United Nations Environment Programme currently lacked adequate financial resources to implement the activities set out in its programme of work for the period 2018–2019 related to sand and dust storms, which was a serious international environmental problem affecting millions of people. Another representative said that the implementation of the activities set out in the programme of work should be the uppermost priority of the United Nations Environment Programme.
35. With regard to human resources, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern about the very lengthy recruitment process for management personnel, which led to prolonged post vacancies or ad interim arrangements in key managerial positions that were critical for the organization and its delivery of results. He said that, while some recruitment issues were system-wide, the United Nations Environment Programme should take steps to avoid recurrent delays in recruitment and the re-advertisement of posts. Together with several other representatives, he called on senior management to engage more and consult with staff, which, said one representative, was crucial for improving the working environment of the organization. One representative said that it was especially important that inclusive, open and transparent consultations be held with all staff members throughout the internal reform process. Another representative expressed the hope that the improvements resulting from the internal reform would be reflected in the United Nations global staff satisfaction survey in the following years.
36. Two representatives asked the secretariat to engage more with specific regions, including by supporting worthwhile projects. Several representatives highlighted activities described in the report.
37. A number of representatives welcomed the holding of the negotiations on the global pact for the environment at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme, with one expressing the view that the negotiations would only succeed if they were properly inclusive. To that end, her Government had contributed €500,000 to facilitate the participation of developing countries in the process. She also expressed her full support for bolstering the role of the United Nations Office at Nairobi within the United Nations system.
38. Two representatives drew attention to their recent financial and in-kind contributions to the United Nations Environment Programme and said that they would continue to support the Programme in the future. Another representative reported that his Government planned to expand its donor contributions to international development, including in the field of the environment.
39. The representative of China expressed an interest in holding the 2019 World Environment Day celebrations in China.
40. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of the Latin American and Caribbean States urged the secretariat to revise the quarterly report and to consistently use the term “Latin America and the Caribbean”, rather than only “Latin America”, when referring to that region.
41. The representative of Ukraine, requesting that his statement be reflected in the present report, asked the secretariat to correct a mistake on page 35 of the report, which implied that two regions of Ukraine were regions of the Russian Federation, and to avoid such mistakes in the future. He further requested the Russian Federation not to politicize the work of the United Nations Environment Programme.
42. The representative of the Russian Federation said that his Government was against any such politicization and expressed the view that the constitutional setup of the Russian Federation was not a subject to be discussed in the context of the United Nations Environment Programme.
43. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director said that the secretariat would revise the quarterly report to refer correctly to the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and to describe its partnership with Russian Fairs LLC in a neutral way that satisfied both parties.
44. Responding to the other issues raised by representatives, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme would continue to facilitate the establishment of the China-Africa environmental cooperation centre, which would be set up in Nairobi and would be a clear example of South-South cooperation, and to examine means of further engagement in certain regions, including the Balkans. He also offered to respond in writing, or informally, to specific questions posed regarding financial matters; the coalition for the greening the belt and road initiative, which was expected to be launched in Beijing in May 2019; and the World Environment Forum, which was an initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Governments of Canada and China that would involve holding a major conference in China in June 2019.

45. The Executive Director agreed that the length of the recruitment process was frustrating and he invited interested member States to share their ideas on possible measures to resolve that problem. He noted that it had been necessary to re-advertise the position of director of the Europe Office owing to a complaint raised by a staff member. As for the questions related to his past travel, he said that information on all his trips and how they had contributed to the outcomes of the organization was available on the website of the Programme.

46. He said that he would find a suitable format to provide information on engagement with the private sector, stressing that the secretariat was moving step by step towards full transparency in every area, which, he believed, was crucial for the Programme to succeed. Member States should be able to scrutinize all partnerships. He assured the Committee that the United Nations Environment Programme was working not only with the private sector, but also with major non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations to develop joint activities and partnerships.

47. With regard to member State contributions, the Executive Director thanked those Governments that had made or increased their contributions to the Programme and expressed the hope that more middle-income countries would start to contribute to the Programme. Stressing the importance of unearmarked contributions to the Environment Fund, he expressed the view that most contributions would be earmarked in the future, so, in addition to consolidating non-earmarked funding, there was a need to create partnerships in order to attract resources. He also suggested that the only way of obtaining resources was to deserve them, and he emphasized that the Deputy Executive Director, with his full support, would be in charge of ensuring accountability and full transparency in the management of resources.

48. Despite the enormous progress made in the area of communications, the Executive Director said that the Programme must further improve its internal and external communications and, noting that communications required considerable resources, including for staff and equipment, he asked member States to support such efforts.

49. Emphasizing the importance of the ongoing intergovernmental work on marine litter and microplastics, he said that that work must be supplemented with efforts to reach out to the private sector in order to obtain its support for concrete action; he invited Committee members to nominate possible ambassadors and patrons of the environment to that end. As for sand and dust storms, he said that the issue had been addressed as a priority at a recent meeting of the Environment Management Group. Consideration was being given to actions to tackle that grave environmental problem, including ways of establishing better early warning systems.

50. With regard to the internal reform of the United Nations Environment Programme, he said that the secretariat would dedicate additional time to staff issues and ensure that all staff were brought into the reform process, including through improved communication, with a view to minimizing the tensions that inevitably arose from reforms. As for the reform of the United Nations development system, one of the key opportunities that it presented to the United Nations Environment Programme was the ability to expand its presence in different regions and countries by appointing staff members to join the teams of United Nations resident coordinators, rather than by creating new offices, which would save the organization considerable resources. All the regional directors had been asked to develop plans for responding to the reform.

51. Lastly, with regard to the ongoing audit and travel-related issues, the Executive Director said that the Secretariat would continue to act on the preliminary findings of the audit and address all the issues raised in the final audit report, and that it would do so in an open and transparent manner and in consultation with member States. The travel expenses of the United Nations Environment Programme were actually lower than those of sister entities, but he would ensure that all travel was in full compliance with the regulations and rules of the United Nations. He also noted that he would strive to improve the balance between his time in Nairobi and in other locations.

52. Following the discussion, at the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee requested the Executive Director to include, in his next report to the Committee, the findings of the final audit report and any action taken in response to those findings.

Agenda item 5

Outcomes of the second joint retreat of the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives

53. The Chair drew attention to a document entitled “2nd Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 6-7 Sept. 2018 Tallinn, Estonia: Chair’s Summary”, which summarized the outcomes of the second joint retreat of the

bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held in Tallinn on 6 and 7 September 2018. She said that the retreat had been a milestone in the preparations for a successful fourth session of the Environment Assembly and had, in a collaborative and transparent manner, resulted in a number of concrete decisions and guidance to member States and the secretariat. Among the key outcomes of the retreat was a guidance note endorsed by the Bureaux on the submission of resolutions to be considered at the fourth session. The note recommended that member States inform the Secretariat of their intention to submit resolutions, either through the submission of a finalized draft resolution or a concept note explaining the rationale and content of the draft resolution, by 15 November 2018; and the submission of all draft resolutions to the secretariat by 21 January 2019. She encouraged representatives to ensure that those deadlines were duly respected, without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly.

54. The representative of the Secretariat thanked the participants in the retreat and expressed appreciation for the comments provided by the Bureaux on the documents presented at the retreat, including the communications strategy for the Environment Assembly. Providing an update on the preparations for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, he said that the Secretariat had shared with member States a note on the outline of the Executive Director's report to the Environment Assembly at its fourth session, and he invited members to submit their comments thereon by 5 October 2018. A first draft of the report, which he said would be succinct, action-oriented and anchored in the major global assessments to be presented at the fourth session, would be made available on the platform for draft resolutions on 29 October 2018. Member States would be afforded an opportunity to submit comments through the platform. The Secretariat would convene a subcommittee meeting to further discuss the draft report on 8 November 2018 and, in order to meet the deadlines for the submission of documents, it would present an advance version of the report during the first week of December and seek its final endorsement by member States at the regular Committee meeting to be held on 8 January 2019.

55. With regard to the regional preparations for the fourth session, a robust process had been put in place. A very successful seventh special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment had recently concluded in Nairobi with the adoption of a ministerial declaration on theme of the fourth session and a document on Africa's contributions to the session. Similar ministerial meetings would be held in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean from 9 to 12 October 2018; South-eastern and Southern Europe on 4 and 5 December 2018; and the Asia-Pacific region from 23 to 26 January 2019.

56. Lastly, concerning the proposed action plan towards a pollution-free planet as one of the potential outcomes of the fourth session, he said the Secretariat would hold a dedicated session on the plan on 4 October 2018.

57. The Special Envoy of Estonia, Mr. Ado Lõhmus, speaking on behalf of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, thanked all the participants in the joint Bureaux retreat for their constructive engagement. He highlighted some of the retreat's outcomes and post-retreat developments, including the provision of guidance to the Secretariat in the preparation of the concept note on the theme of the fourth session, guidelines for the preparation of draft resolutions and a draft outline of a ministerial declaration for consideration and possible adoption at the session. The Bureaux had also mandated the Secretariat to start developing a vision for the long-term environmental agenda of the Environment Assembly, taking into account that the year 2022 would mark 50 years since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which had led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme, and was therefore an important milestone in its history.

58. With regard to the draft outline of the ministerial declaration, he said that the valuable comments received during the retreat would be incorporated into the draft outline, assisting the President in the preparation of a zero draft of the declaration, which would be released on 15 October 2018. All the member States would have an opportunity to provide comments on the document in the period up until the beginning of December 2018.

59. Expressing the hope that member States would respect the voluntary guidelines for the preparation of resolutions endorsed by the Bureaux, in particular the deadline of 21 January 2019 for the submission of all draft resolutions, he said that the guidelines would enable the production of comparable documents that would facilitate substantive discussions on, and the building of strong alliances around, all the resolutions. In addition to holding consultations on the draft resolutions, it was essential that member States hold extensive consultations on the programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021 and on the draft action plan for a pollution-free planet. In closing, he said that the President had received valuable input from the major groups and stakeholders, who were seeking to be more involved in the preparatory process for sessions of the Environment Assembly.

60. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation to the Secretariat and to the Government of Estonia for a very successful joint retreat of the Bureaux, which had been highly inclusive and had resulted in fruitful outcomes based on consensus, as set out in the detailed Chair's summary on the matter. One representative emphasized the importance of abiding by the deadlines endorsed by the Bureaux, and called on the Secretariat and the Presidency of the Environment Assembly to consider the proceedings of regional meetings of ministers of the environment when drafting the Executive Director's report to, and the draft ministerial declaration for consideration at, the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

61. One representative requested the Secretariat to ensure that regional groups were equally represented in future joint retreats of the bureaux, stressing that not all the regional groups had been equally represented at the first and second retreats. She also suggested that the summaries of future joint retreats should be produced by both co-Chairs.

62. In response to a comment from the floor, the Special Envoy of Estonia confirmed that his Government would produce and share with member States, in October 2018, the summary of a one-day conference on environmental solutions that had been held in Tallinn immediately before the joint Bureaux retreat.

63. Responding to questions raised by another representative, the representative of the Secretariat reported that the secretariat had not yet drafted the concept note for the leadership dialogues to be held at the Environment Assembly session. A subcommittee meeting would be held to consult with member States on the dialogue themes with a view to ensuring that all member States were fully satisfied with the themes selected. Confirming that the Bureaux had agreed to the concept note produced by the secretariat on the theme of the fourth session at their joint retreat, he noted that the secretariat's approach to innovation and to the third focus area proposed in the concept note, namely "Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change", was extremely broad and encompassed a wide range of actors, including scientists, academics and non-governmental organizations, and not only the private sector. He noted that the secretariat had presented the focus areas without prejudice to issues or solutions that member States might wish to raise.

Agenda item 6

Preparations for the fifth meeting of the annual subcommittee

64. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Proposed structure of the 5th annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme", which outlined the proposed structure of the meeting, to be held in Nairobi from 22 to 26 October 2018, as well as the draft provisional agenda and draft annotated provisional agenda for the meeting (UNEP/CPR/SC/2018/1 and UNEP/CPR/SC/2018/Add.1).

65. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries highlighted as the key objectives of the fifth annual subcommittee meeting the review of the implementation and impacts of the current programme of work and budget for the period 2018–2019 and the drafting of the new programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021. They stressed that the latter should build on lessons learned from the implementation of the former and that consideration of programme performance reports was therefore crucial. One representative sought additional information on progress achieved in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly, while another suggested that programme performance reporting should show more clearly the link between implemented activities and concrete results achieved.

66. With regard to the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, one representative reiterated his request that the Secretariat clarify the implications of the different options proposed for the budget, stressing that there was a need to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option and how the proposed budget related to anticipated resources and proposed activities. He suggested that it would be useful to discuss how to find a balance between realistic estimates and more ambitious resource mobilization projections. He emphasized the need to understand the impact of the target set for the Environment Fund on the motivation of contributors and on the voluntary indicative scale of contributions mechanism; to include a prioritization plan in the new programme of work and budget in case resources did not meet expectations and pledges; and to ensure that the special initiatives proposed by the Executive Director contributed fully to the objectives of the programme of work and budget. He further suggested that, when drafting the programme of work for the period 2020–2021, consideration should be given to ways of strengthening South-South cooperation and engagement with the private sector.

67. One representative, noting that it was during subcommittee meetings that the Committee best assumed its governance and oversight role of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular

with regard to budgetary matters, urged the secretariat and the Bureau of the Committee to consider allotting sufficient time during the fifth annual subcommittee meeting to discuss cross-cutting issues, such as the role of partnerships as a tool for implementing the programme of work; ensuring that the subcommittee was given an overall bird's eye view of the proposed budget and was able to understand the underlying assumptions of the secretariat and assess the validity of the proposed budget options; ensuring that, in meetings dedicated to reviewing each subprogramme, updates on the implementation of the current programme of work and the implementation of resolutions of the Environment Assembly were as succinct as possible so that sufficient time was allotted to the new programme of work and the links between its narrative part and its proposed budget; and ensuring that the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, including its narrative part and a detailed budget, was published at the beginning of October 2018.

68. The representative of the Secretariat said that the Secretariat would discuss with the Bureau the requests and suggestions presented by representatives and urged Committee members to provide as soon as possible any additional comments on the proposed structure of the upcoming meeting. With regard to the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, he said that member States had been invited to provide comments on the draft document by 28 September 2018, and that the secretariat would produce, by 4 October 2018, a revised version of the document on the basis of comments received in order to enable member States to consult with their capitals in advance of the fifth annual subcommittee meeting.

69. Responding to a question on the secretariat's expectations for the meeting, the representative of the secretariat said that member States were expected to provide as much guidance as possible on the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, with a view to enabling the secretariat to finalize the document for consideration by the Committee at its 144th regular meeting, in December 2018, after which time there would be limited opportunity to make changes to the document, in view of the need to meet document translation requirements by 21 January 2019.

Agenda item 7

Implementation of United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/8, entitled "Sustainable consumption and production"

70. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the Secretariat entitled "Progress made pursuant to UN Environment Assembly resolution 2/8, entitled 'Sustainable consumption and production'". She said that the update on the implementation of resolution 2/8 was very timely, in the light of the discussions on Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) by the High-level Political Forum at its meeting in July 2018, and in view of the related theme of the upcoming fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

71. Mr. Charles Arden-Clarke, Head of the Secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme, delivered a presentation on progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 2/8 under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, noting that the Framework directly supported Sustainable Development Goal 12 and resolution 2/8. He drew attention to the adoption of a total of 303 policies on sustainable consumption and production by 71 countries and the European Union to date, and the One Planet Network, a multi-stakeholder partnership comprising over 600 partners, which had been established in 2013 for the implementation of the 10-Year Framework. The partnership had developed and in some cases piloted more than 1,800 tools and resources to achieve sustainable consumption and production patterns and included civil society; national Governments; business, scientific and technical organizations; and United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations. Its work was focused around six programmes for action, namely public procurement, buildings and construction, tourism, food systems, consumer information, and lifestyles and education.

72. One of the tools being developed under the partnership was a hotspot analysis tool that would help Governments and other stakeholders to identify unsustainable consumption and production hotspots, which was critical to prioritizing action. The tool would enable users to enter their own data and, by incorporating key metrics such as resource depletion, greenhouse gases, climate change, water use and impacts, land use and biodiversity. The tool would show that achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns was key to achieving 50 out of the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns was therefore very much a transversal Goal. Despite the existence of numerous policies, tools and resources on sustainable consumption and production, the implementation of such policies and tools remained very weak. Existing activities were small in scale and fragmented, and funding for the implementation of projects

was grossly inadequate. In fact, despite its importance to other goals, a 2017 report by the Secretary-General showed that Sustainable Development Goal 12 was the least-resourced of all the Goals. There was a need, therefore, to better coordinate and scale up the delivery of activities on sustainable consumption and production, and to secure large-scale funding for the implementation of Goal 12.

73. In an effort to promote coordination and secure greater resources for the implementation of Goal 12, five United Nations partners in the One Planet Network, namely the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, had established the One Planet multi-partner trust fund for Sustainable Development Goal 12. The primary objective of the fund was the delivery by the five entities and their partners of coordinated and comprehensive projects at scale that could be integrated into United Nations country teams for the implementation of the network's "One Plan for One Planet" strategy for the period 2018–2022 in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 12. Both the strategy and the multi-partner trust fund were aligned with the medium-term strategy 2018–2021 and the programme of work 2018–2019 of the United Nations Environment Programme, and contributed directly to achieving expected accomplishments under the organization's resource efficiency subprogramme. He expressed the hope that, with the creation of the new trust fund, further progress would be achieved in the implementation of resolution 2/18, on the relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats, including with regard to funding, by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

74. In the ensuing discussion, all the representatives who spoke thanked Mr. Arden-Clarke for his presentation and expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 2/8, stressing the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 12 and the achievement of sustainable consumption and production patterns.

75. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, drew attention to a circular economy action plan implemented in his region and in the countries of the region in making the transition from a linear and wasteful economy to a low-carbon, resource efficient and circular one. A similar transition was required at the global level in order to achieve sustainable development, as reflected in resolution 2/8. He expressed his commitment to global-level action on sustainable consumption and production and cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme to support a global transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy premised on more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Stressing the need for greater synergies between the 10-Year Framework and other initiatives led by the United Nations Environment Programme, such as the International Resource Panel and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, he called on the Executive Director to ensure that the findings of the International Resource Panel's first global assessment of natural resource use and management, to be launched during the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, were duly considered and reflected in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme.

76. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, advocated raising the profile of the One Planet Network partnership within the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and, expressing concern that Sustainable Development Goal 12 was one of the least resourced Goals, recommended that the Secretariat do its utmost to obtain financial resources to accelerate progress towards its implementation. Another representative, stressing that sustainable consumption and production was a tool for development and poverty eradication, expressed the hope that the fourth session of the Environment Assembly would increase the visibility of sustainable consumption and production and lead to increased funding for Goal 12.

77. Two representatives reiterated a request, made at a previous Committee meeting and in other forums, that the secretariat provide similar implementation plans and updates for all the resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly.

78. Responding to the comment, the representative of the secretariat noted that updates on as many resolutions as possible were provided at Committee meetings and said that the secretariat would endeavour to provide updates on three resolutions at the latest by the next meeting.

79. Responding to a question about specific actions that member States could take to advance sustainable consumption and production, Mr. Arden-Clarke said that member States could strengthen the implementation of existing sustainable consumption and production policies, including by mobilizing domestic financial and human resources for that purpose; join the One Planet Network's programmes and activities; ensure that appropriate interministerial coordination mechanisms for

sustainable consumption and production were in place; and make financial contributions to the One Planet multi-partner trust fund for Sustainable Development Goal 12.

80. The Executive Director said that, in addition to supporting the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production, in striving to achieve such sustainability Governments should ensure the adoption of appropriate policies in areas such as public procurement and the regulation of markets. He also stressed the importance of moving away from end-of-pipe solutions and designing products that could be recycled and whose components could be reused. In closing, he noted that the issue of making the transition to a circular economy would be considered at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

Agenda item 8

Discussion on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities

81. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the Secretariat entitled “Future direction of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities” (UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/3/Rev.1), which summarized recent global developments that had serious implications for the future direction of the Global Programme of Action and identified possible policy approaches for consideration by Governments during the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 31 October to 1 November 2018. The outcome of the meeting in Bali would feed into the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, to be held in March 2019.

82. Ms. Lisa Svensson, Oceans Director, United Nations Environment Programme, delivered a presentation on the Global Programme of Action and its possible future direction. Recalling that the Programme, whose secretariat was provided by the United Nations Environment Programme, had been established in 1995 to protect the marine environment from land-based pollution, she said that the current focus of the Programme was on addressing three major sources of marine pollution, namely nutrients, marine litter and wastewater, through three multi-stakeholder partnerships.

83. Much had changed, she said, since 1995, including the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the adoption of a number of marine pollution-related resolutions and declarations by the United Nations Environment Assembly. She drew attention to multiple developments and activities in the international oceans agenda since 2017 and emphasized the importance of member States discussing the challenges facing the Global Programme of Action, including limited country involvement in the Programme; difficulty maintaining the momentum in the light of five-yearly meetings of its governing body, the Intergovernmental Review Meeting; weak inter-agency cooperation; limited political awareness of the Programme and its goals, including in the context of many of the multiple recent initiatives on oceans; and a complete lack of member State contributions to its trust fund since 2011.

84. In order to facilitate a discussion by member States on the future of the Global Programme of Action, the secretariat had prepared a paper presenting three options for their consideration. The first option, business as usual, entailed strengthening the Programme and continuing to hold Intergovernmental Review Meetings every five years to review progress in the implementation of declarations and work plans approved by member States. The main challenge under this option would be resource mobilization. Under the second option, the three partnerships of the Global Programme of Action would be integrated into the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme. Thus, the United Nations Environment Assembly would govern the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on marine pollution, guiding activities by means of its resolutions and ministerial outcomes on oceans as well as the national action plans developed to meet Sustainable Development Goal targets 14.1, on oceans, and 6.3, on land-based pollution. The capacities and actions of the regional seas programmes would be strengthened and further integrated into such work. Option 3 represented a combination of the first two options, preserving the Intergovernmental Review Meeting but holding its meetings either back-to-back with sessions of the Environment Assembly or, in any case, more frequently than every five years. Work on oceans would be guided by the resolutions of the Environment Assembly and implemented through the United Nations Environment Programme. As for option 1, the main challenge under option 3 would be obtaining financial resources.

85. In closing, she suggested that, in considering the three options, member States should take into account developments in the wider oceans and marine pollution agenda, including the ongoing work of the ad hoc open ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, and reflect on what would constitute the most effective governing body for oceans, ways of exploiting interlinkages and synergies

between the oceans agenda and the 2030 Agenda, and ways of creating and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships to tackle marine pollution.

86. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the secretariat for the information provided, stressing the key role played by the Global Programme of Action in mobilizing efforts to address land-based sources of marine pollution. There was general agreement that, given the proliferation of initiatives on oceans and marine pollution, the time was right to reflect on the Programme's future role and formulate a recommendation in that regard.

87. Referring to the three options set out in the note by the secretariat (UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/3/Rev.1), two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that they could support option B, which provided for the integration of the work of the Global Programme of Action into the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the holding of Intergovernmental Review Meetings back-to-back with sessions of the Environment Assembly. Both representatives said that clarification was needed regarding the implications of option B, including on the activities proposed thereunder. One representative said that she could also support option C, under which the Global Programme of Action would be disbanded, but she asked the secretariat to explain whether the activities proposed under option B could be absorbed into the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme should option C be chosen. She also expressed support for changing and shortening the name of the Global Programme of Action, and said that her Government, which had played a leading role in making oceans a major issue within the Group of Seven, was actively looking into making contributions to the Global Programme of Action trust fund.

88. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, sought clarification on all the proposed options with regard to how duplication of effort would be avoided, the advantages, disadvantages and costs of each option, the roles of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Environment Assembly under each option, and the consequences of each option for the continuation of the activities of the Global Programme of Action. Irrespective of the preferred option, the secretariat should also describe activities and pollution areas that needed to be covered in the future, taking into account the need to ensure the most efficient use of resources. He suggested that, pending the outcome of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting should take a decision on its future set-up and its possible relationship with the Environment Assembly, recognizing that the Environment Assembly, including the United Nations Environment Programme, might be the appropriate forum for addressing land-based pollution.

89. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed a commitment to actively participating in the regional seas conventions and to assessing ways of better aligning regional goals with national goals in order to combat environmental pollution and achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

90. One representative said that there was a need to be realistic and to reflect on what was and should be covered by other instruments, and what should be the future focus of the Global Programme of Action. Stressing that the three partnerships developed under the Global Programme of Action provided a practical mechanism for action, she said that they should be more closely linked to the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as each other, and suggested that the way forward was to give a mandate to the United Nations Environment Programme through the Environment Assembly to continue the work of the three partnerships and to require the partnerships to report to the Environment Assembly at its future sessions. She also suggested exploring whether the Global Programme of Action could be transformed into a platform for the three partnerships, bringing donors and recipients together to cooperate on capacity-building activities, guided by scientific advice and by the relevant priorities and recommendations set by the Environment Assembly.

91. Another representative asked the secretariat to clarify whether the Global Programme of Action had been funded by the Environment Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme; what the administrative and financial implications were of options A and B set out in the note by the secretariat (UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/3/Rev.1), including whether option B would require additional contributions from member States; the cost of the staffing support provided by the United Nations Environment Programme to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action, including the number of staff members and staff hours dedicated to the Programme; whether other options would be provided to member States; and possible next steps following the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting to be held in October 2018.

Agenda item 9

Report of the subcommittee

92. The Committee took note of the document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/143/10).

Agenda item 10

Other matters

93. The representative of Indonesia delivered a presentation on the fifth “Our Ocean” Conference, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, on 29 and 30 October 2018, describing the main on focus action areas, namely marine pollution, marine protected areas, maritime security, climate change, sustainable fisheries and the sustainable blue economy.

Agenda item 11

Closure of the meeting

94. The meeting was declared closed at 5.25 p.m. on Friday, 28 September 2018.



**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
143rd meeting**
Nairobi, 18 September 2018

**Draft minutes of the 142nd meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 10 May 2018**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 10 May 2018, by Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. The meeting was attended by 92 participants representing 61 members and 4 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Sianga Abilio, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Angola; Mr. Hannes Passler, Chargé d'affaires ad interim and Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Yacin Elmi Bouh, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Djibouti; Mr. Burhan Namik Salim Al-Jaf, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Mohamed Salim Hafsi, Chargé d'affaires ad interim and Permanent Representative of Tunisia; and Mr. Abdusalam Alawi Alawadhi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Yemen.
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Virgilio Marques Faria, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Angola; Mr. Harald Gunther, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Liu Xianfa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China; Ms. Mariam Ahmed Goumaneh, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Djibouti; and Mr. Saleh Abady Hasan Al-Marday, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/142/1 and UNEP/CPR/142/1/Add.1).

Agenda item 3

**Adoption of the draft minutes of 141st meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives**

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 141st meeting, held on 20 February 2018, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/142/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

7. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, drew attention to a document entitled “Quarterly report to the 142nd Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/142/4). Stressing that the format of the report was intended to address member States’ requests for greater transparency, he invited the Committee to provide feedback on the format to enable the secretariat to improve its future quarterly reports.

8. The Executive Director highlighted a number of recent events of relevance to the United Nations Environment Programme and activities undertaken by the secretariat since the previous Committee meeting. Recent events included the adoption by the government of the State of California in the United States of America of a mandatory requirement to install solar panels in new buildings, which, he said, he hoped would inspire others to adopt similar measures, and the holding of a historic summit by the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 27 April 2018. Expressing the hope that the summit would lead to positive results, he said that the United Nations Environment Programme was ready to support the two countries on environmental issues.

9. Turning to recent activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme, he said that on 5 April 2018 the Programme had released the annual report of the Finance Initiative on global investments in renewable energy (<http://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/banking-sunshine-world-added-far-more-solar-fossil-fuel-power>). The report showed that in 2017 more electricity had been generated from solar energy across the globe than from coal, oil, gas and nuclear energy combined, in part thanks to the efforts of China and India to actively promote solar energy in order to make it more competitive. Aside from the health and other benefits of solar energy, in most parts of world it was now cheaper to produce energy from solar power than from coal.

10. The United Nations Environment Programme had focused significant efforts on the issue of plastics, which, thanks in great part to the United Nations Environment Assembly, had gained momentum and was now at the centre of political agendas and the focus of business and government activities across the world, including in India, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. Consideration was being given to ways in which the Programme could reorganize its work to more effectively support Governments and businesses to combat the menace of plastic pollution, including through the CleanSeas campaign. In April 2018, United Nations Environment Programme staff had visited Zhejiang Province in China, which had previously been one of the most polluted areas in the country. The province had been able to achieve dramatic results in combating river pollution over the previous five years, most notably by means of its “River Chief” system, which targeted transboundary water pollution from industry. Although the United Nations Environment Programme had not previously been directly involved in that initiative, the Programme was exploring cooperation modalities in the framework of a memorandum of understanding to be signed with the provincial government with a view to scaling up and replicating those successful interventions. The success of the interventions resulted from a combination of efforts, including the highest level of political will, public awareness and participation, and the application of technology and innovation.

11. With regard to conflicts, following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2408 (2018) on Somalia, in which the central role played by climate change in conflict resolution was recognized, the United Nations Environment Programme had offered to help the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to more effectively address climate change, energy and other environmental issues. The Programme was also working with respective member States under a memorandum of understanding to conduct an assessment of the environmental situation in the State of Palestine with the collaboration of Palestine and other Arab States, as well as Israel, and thereby deliver on the agreement to conduct the field-based and post-crisis environmental assessment in line with resolution 3/1 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session. [He commended the efforts of the Group of Arab States, which had shown flexibility and good faith in general, and noted that while the process had been slow, progress had been made and would continue to be made with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme.

12. The Executive Director noted that the United Nations Environment Programme had set up a system to assist and protect individuals who defended the environment, known as “environmental defenders”, and commended the efforts of Latin American and Caribbean States to adopt a regional legal instrument based on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which sought to ensure that every individual had access to information and justice in environmental

matters and could participate in decision-making processes. He expressed the hope that such efforts would inspire other regions to adopt similar instruments.

13. With the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, on 22 March 2018 the Governments of Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo had signed a political declaration entitled the “Brazzaville Declaration”, which was intended to protect peatlands in the Congo basin. The instrument represented an excellent example of South-South cooperation since, through it, Indonesia would share with the two neighbour countries its ample experience in peatland restoration. Given that peatlands were the largest natural terrestrial carbon store, it was vital that they be protected and preserved.

14. With regard to wildlife, the United Nations Environment Programme had partnered with the African Union to examine ways of stepping up efforts to protect Africa’s wildlife that obtained the support of local populations. The idea of the partnership had first been mooted at a meeting held between the President of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame, in his capacity as the current Chair of the African Union, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, on the margins of the International Solar Alliance Summit held in India in March 2018. A conference organized jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme and the African Union to discuss the details of the partnership would be held in Kigali to coincide with the African Union summit to be held in Addis Ababa in January 2019.

15. African Head of States, representatives of local communities and of the private sector, including commercial airlines, would be invited to the conference, the main objective of which was to share the experiences of countries that had succeeded in developing their tourism industry and protecting their wildlife while improving the livelihoods of local communities, as exemplified by Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda and South Africa. The conference would also provide an opportunity for business and the private sector to scope out relevant future investments in Africa.

16. In terms of oceans, the United Nations Environment Programme had launched the International Year of the Reef and was discussing a potential partnership with the Government of Australia, which had contributed five million Australian dollars for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, and to enable other countries to learn from Australia’s experience in the management and recovery of reefs.

17. On 5 June 2018, the celebration of World Environment Day would be led by India under the leadership of Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, and with the participation of ministers and industry leaders across Indian states, focusing on the menace of plastic pollution. The Executive Director asked Committee members to invite their respective Governments to develop communication materials for the celebration of World Environment Day in their countries to enable the United Nations Environment Programme to share ideas and initiatives that were underway to tackle the menace of plastic pollution.

18. The United Nations Environment Programme had stepped up efforts to engage with the private sector and, in the last few weeks, had signed agreements with companies across the globe, including the Coca-Cola Company, a major Chinese car-sharing company “Build Your Dreams”, commonly known by the acronym “BYD”, that managed about one million electric cars, and Ethiopian Airlines, as a result of which the company would plant a tree for every passenger flown and agreement had been reached to green the airline’s business practice.

19. On the same day as the present meeting, 10 May 2018, the Government of France was to present a draft resolution on negotiating a global pact for the environment at the ongoing seventy-second session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Given that the great majority of Member States supported such an initiative, the resolution was expected to be adopted and, if that was the case, the United Nations Environment Programme would ramp up efforts to support the process both in New York and in Nairobi.

20. With regard to the reform of the United Nations, the Executive Director said that he had participated in a meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination that had focused on ways in which the United Nations could improve through innovation. Stressing that innovation was central to the reform agenda of the Secretary-General, he said that the United Nations Environment Programme would set up a process to innovate that would include seeking changes to those rules that needed to be changed at the General Assembly and interpreting in flexible ways those rules that could simply be reinterpreted.

21. On 31 May 2018, the General Assembly was expected to adopt a resolution on the reform of the United Nations development system, under which United Nations resident coordinators would report directly to the Deputy Secretary-General and would no longer be rooted in the United Nations

Development Programme. This would mean that, instead of having to set up new country offices, the United Nations Environment Programme would be able to recruit staff to be integrated into the resident coordinators' offices in different countries, thereby saving resources.

22. In closing, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme had sent the details of the candidates for the positions of Deputy Executive Director and Chief of the New York Office to the Secretary-General. The positions of Director of the Division of Corporate Services, Director of the Ecosystems Division and Director of the Europe Office, as well as that of Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, would soon be filled, and member States were invited to submit nominations for candidates for positions that remained open.

23. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the Executive Director for his oral briefing and the secretariat for the quarterly report (UNEP/CPR/142/4), as well as a complementary report entitled "Report by the Secretariat on UN Environment Programme's Private Sector Engagement". Several representatives said that the quarterly report represented a significant improvement on previous reports and addressed member State requests for increased transparency, accountability, clarity and simplicity. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to submit future quarterly reports well ahead of Committee meetings in order to enable member States to review them in detail prior to such meetings.

24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the quarterly report rightly focused on the implementation of the programme of work and budget and the expected accomplishments contained therein, while providing references to key global developments. He expressed appreciation for the information provided in the report on resource and management issues. Stressing that he would provide additional feedback in writing, he said that future quarterly reports should address the implementation of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions in a more consistent manner, for instance by including an annex with brief implementation updates, including financial allocations, for each of the resolutions that included active mandates for the United Nations Environment Programme; discuss opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of all the sub-programmes; provide information on all financial allocations to all sub-programmes, including earmarked contributions and contributions from the Environment Fund and the regular budget of the United Nations; provide information on the funding of all campaigns, cross-cutting areas and special initiatives; provide a link to comprehensive information on the current status of financial contributions to the United Nations Environment Programme from all sources; and provide updates on the managerial recruitment process at the level of D-1 and above. He further requested information on the resource mobilization strategy of the Programme with a view to informing the drafting of the new programme of work and budget.

25. Another representative suggested that future quarterly reports should include only those events and activities that had a minimum level of significance to the United Nations Environment Programme; establish clearer links between programmatic updates and the programme of work and medium-term strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme and the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly; and include additional financial information, since figures alone did not provide the full picture of the Programme's financial situation.

26. Two representatives said that they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the quarterly report in a less formal setting and to hold subcommittee discussions on specific areas of interest that could help to inform the drafting of the new programme of work and budget. One of the representatives asked the secretariat to explain how budget allocations reflected the programme of work and priority areas of work of the organization, including, if possible, by means of historical figures, and to provide additional information on staffing, including the nationalities and general responsibilities of incumbents, especially with regard to vacant and filled senior positions at the D-1 and D-2 levels.

27. With regard to engagement with the private sector, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the United Nations Environment Programme's efforts to harness the capacity and expertise of the private sector for environmental protection, but sought clarification of how activities pertaining to engagements with the private sector, as well as those related to campaigns and special initiatives, translated into tangible impacts linked to the organization's programme of work. Another representative said that the United Nations Environment Programme could lead the way within the United Nations system in engaging with the private sector through experimentation, provided that the risks were identified and properly managed. It was also important, he said, that the Programme redouble its efforts to engage with civil society, which remained an indispensable partner of the Programme.

28. One representative encouraged the United Nations Environment Programme to be cautious about the private entities with which it chose to partner, stressing that dubious actors could seek to enter into partnerships with the Programme with no intention of delivering on their commitments and that this could pose risks to the Programme's reputation. Another representative said that partnerships must be mutually beneficial and involve the private sector, governments, civil society and affected communities in order to be productive. He encouraged the Executive Director to increase engagement with the private sector in Africa and to link up with local financial institutions operating on the continent through multilateral partnerships.

29. Stressing that private sector entities could be powerful actors for change, one representative encouraged the United Nations Environment Programme to develop broad and common platforms for the science, business and policy interface, similar to those developed for the financial sector. Expressing support for the efforts undertaken to make the Programme more proactive and to achieve results in the field through partnerships, he said that it was essential that member States be more involved in, and that there be increased transparency around, such efforts. He then requested information on the implications of, and the criteria for, joining the international coalition on Greening the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the financial implications of that engagement and other efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme.

30. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries, urged the secretariat to maintain a balance between the activities carried out with and for member States and those carried out to strengthen the involvement of the private sector in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme. Stressing that the involvement of the private sector was key to complementing member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, he noted the need to always bear in mind that the United Nations Environment Assembly was an intergovernmental body.

31. With regard to the "Report by the Secretariat on UN Environment Programme's Private Sector Engagement", one representative sought clarification regarding the legal basis for the multiple partnership agreements concluded in the first quarter of 2018, highlighting that two different sections of the report made reference to two different sets of guidelines on private sector engagement and suggesting that the United Nations Environment Assembly discuss the issue at its fourth session. He further requested the secretariat to clarify the nature, scope and magnitude of the different kinds of private sector partnerships concluded and to include in future reports information on the scope and potential environmental benefits of each partnership, including its relevance to the programme of work, the financial and in-kind contributions made under it, its anticipated duration and its expected outcomes and results. Another representative said that the report should clarify the link between the commitments made by private sector entities and the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme.

32. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recalled that at the previous Committee meeting he had requested the secretariat to produce implementation updates and plans for all the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly and asked the secretariat to update the Committee on the implementation of that request.

33. Several representatives suggested that the three United Nations entities headquartered in Nairobi, namely, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi, could be doing more in support of United Nations reform with one offering to work with the three entities and interested member States to advance the reform. Another of the representatives noted that although the efforts of the Executive Director to raise global awareness, adopt a more positive outlook, draw on the creativity of the private sector and identify the socioeconomic benefits of environmental improvements were all valuable, it was important that the three Nairobi-based entities work together in developing a holistic approach that linked them more clearly to the New York reform agenda, for instance with regard to the discussions on strengthening the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Kenya. The representative further queried how the enhanced role of the United Nations Environment Programme and the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the United Nations system might affect the Programme's core funding.

34. One representative suggested that there was a need to create a single mechanism within the United Nations Environment Programme to coordinate, and to seek the Committee's inputs on, the reform of the United Nations. Regarding the suggestion by the Executive Director that certain rules of the United Nations could be reinterpreted by the Programme, he cautioned against a liberal interpretation of the rules and stressed the need to strike a balance between efficiency on the one hand and oversight and financial propriety on the other.

35. Another representative suggested that the United Nations Environment Programme refine its theory of environmental change, which should enable the Programme to work within the framework of existing multilateral environmental agreements and other commitments and invoke its mandate of identifying emerging issues and organizing joint responses to them. In response, the Executive Director said that the meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, to be held in Nairobi from 29 to 31 May 2018, reflected that mandate, and he encouraged all member States to send their experts to the meeting, noting that funding was still available for those in need of support.

36. With regard to the draft resolution on a global pact for the environment currently under consideration by the General Assembly, the representative of Kenya, supported by two other representatives, said that member States had not agreed at any time that representatives of member States both in New York and in Nairobi should be involved in the discussions on the proposed pact. In that regard, the Kenyan Government would be requesting a vote on the resolution to ensure that all substantive meetings on the proposed pact would be held in Nairobi, where the United Nations Environment Programme, which managed most of the multilateral environmental agreements and to which the pact must be anchored, was based. Another representative said that a key role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the proposed global pact would be to identify gaps in international environmental laws.

37. The representative of France said that the French Government attached great importance to the role of United Nations Environment Programme and the Nairobi location in the negotiations on the proposed global pact and expressed regret that the Government of Kenya was to call for a vote on the resolution under consideration, stressing that there had been a lot of compromise in the draft resolution with regard to the venue of the negotiations and that the French Government had done the utmost possible on the issue by making a clear reference to Nairobi as the preferred venue. She cautioned against preempting the mandate of the negotiating group, which should be free to decide on the venue of the negotiations.

38. Two representatives welcomed the partnership for the implementation of the East African Community development strategy to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which, said one, would help countries in establishing mechanisms to combat poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife. The United Nations Environment Programme was part of the partnership under the broader auspices of the African Union, which would convene a conference on the matter on the margins of the African Union Summit in January 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Issues raised by individual representatives included examples of assistance and support provided to their countries by the United Nations Environment; the signing of memorandums of understanding between their governments and the Programme; and various environmental initiatives at the national level, including efforts towards energy diversification. One representative highlighted the enormous challenge of managing peatlands in the Congo basin and its implications for climate change, while another drew attention to work to protect rainforests, including peatlands. Yet another representative stressed the importance of training people in countries affected by war and conflict to address environmental challenges. He said that there was a need for increased representation of experts from developing countries, who had a clear understanding of the challenges facing their countries, in managerial positions at the United Nations Environment Programme.

39. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed his appreciation to Mr. Solheim for his support for the inter-Korean summit of 27 April 2018, which, he said, could lead to cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on environmental issues, including in the biodiversity-rich demilitarized zone along the border of the two countries. He stressed that the two countries looked forward to receiving support from the United Nations Environment Programme in their common efforts to tackle environmental issues.

40. A number of representatives lamented that the fact-finding mission of the United Nations Environment Programme tasked with assessing the environmental situation in the State of Palestine had not yet commenced its work and called for efforts to be intensified in that regard. One of the representatives urged member States to exert pressure on the Israeli authorities to allow the work to be undertaken and expressed the hope that the assessment findings would be submitted for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.

41. Several representatives expressed their condolences to the Government and people of Kenya for the loss of life and property caused by recent floods as a result of a dam collapsing in Nakuru county, with one calling on the United Nations Environment Programme to assist Kenya in its efforts to deal with emergencies caused by such floods.

42. Responding to comments from the floor, the Executive Director expressed appreciation to the Committee for the positive feedback on, and suggestions for the improvement of, the quarterly report and other reports prepared by the secretariat under the item. With regard to requests to discuss the quarterly report in a more informal setting, he said that the secretariat would gladly attend, and respond to any Committee member requests to convene, informal events to discuss the quarterly reports.
43. With regard to the specific information requested, he said that the secretariat would provide to the Committee information on the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly; the nationality and gender of incumbents of managerial positions at the D-1 level and above, which would reveal gender and geographic imbalances that member States might have ideas on how to address; additional information on South-South cooperation, which was growing significantly, with countries such as China and India sharing their resources, technology and experience with other developing countries; and the greening of the Belt and Road Initiative partnership, which was open to all member States, environmental groups and businesses, was being co-chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Government of China, and was operating with complete transparency and would continue to do so.
44. The Executive Director said that the secretariat would brief the Committee on the resource mobilization strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme, which encompassed maintaining and increasing contributions from current supporters; increasing support from middle-income countries, where substantial success had been achieved; and reaching out to private sector entities and foundations to develop partnerships and encourage financial and in-kind contributions from them.
45. In addition, the secretariat would endeavour to provide additional information on the results of private sector engagement in future reports to the Committee. As for the risks associated with partnering with private sector entities that did not deliver on their commitments, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme could terminate such partnerships and denounce non-compliant partners, suggesting that reputational risks were higher for them than for the Programme. He noted that the organization was focused on developing win-win partnerships and would continue to expand its engagement with companies in Africa and in the Arab and Latin American and Caribbean regions, and explore how international and regional financial institutions might be involved in such partnerships.
46. The Executive Director highlighted that the Programme was working with leaders of all faiths to address environmental challenges, including the menace of plastic pollution and forest protection. Such partnerships had great potential for a positive impact given the enormous power and outreach of faith leaders.
47. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Kenya and others for their efforts to place Nairobi at the centre of the process to develop a global pact for the environment and said that the Government of France and the French President, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, also deserved praise for their leadership and the proactive and positive part they had played in ensuring a role for Nairobi in the pact. He expressed the hope that member States would reach a compromise on the draft resolution and the location of the negotiations on the pact and said that the United Nations Environment Programme stood ready to support member States in their discussions.¹ The Programme would also contribute to the process by providing an analysis of gaps in international environmental law.
48. Turning to the assessment of the environmental situation of the State of Palestine, he said that the United Nations Environment Programme shared the frustration of member States that the assessment work had not yet commenced and said that his staff would visit Israel in the coming weeks to see how the process to produce the assessment could be fast-tracked.

¹ On 10 May 2018, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/277 entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment.” By that resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-third session, in 2018, a technical and evidence-based report that identified and assessed possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation. The General Assembly also decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to consider the report and discuss possible options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, with a view to making recommendations, which may include the convening of an intergovernmental conference to adopt an international instrument and to report to the Assembly during the first half of 2019. In accordance with the resolution, the organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group will convene in New York and all the substantive sessions will subsequently be convened in Nairobi.

49. He stressed that the United Nations Environment Programme would look at better ways of working and influencing the discussions on United Nations reform in New York. Many elements of the reform were cultural in nature and involved, for instance, working in a less hierarchical manner and welcoming the inputs of all staff, regardless of their level or age, and speaking in plain language that laypersons could understand.

50. With regard to ways in which the United Nations Environment Programme could improve its collaborative relationship with the United Nations Office at Nairobi and UN-Habitat, the Executive Director noted that the Programme's relationship with the Office had improved significantly, as had the services that the Office provided to the Programme. He intended to meet with the Executive Director of UN-Habitat in the coming weeks to discuss closer collaboration between the two programmes in areas of common interest, inviting support and ideas from member States on the matter.

51. In closing, the Executive Director said the United Nations Environment Programme stood ready to assist the Government of Kenya, upon request, in its efforts to deal with the recent floods in the country.

Agenda item 5

Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

52. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: Responses to the questions raised by the President of the Economic and Social Council", which, he said, had been sent to the President of the Economic and Social Council as the submission of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018. He invited the Committee to endorse the document as the submission of the Assembly to the Forum.

53. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation to the secretariat for preparing and submitting the document, which, said one, was succinct and substantive, providing an overview of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2018.

54. One representative sought clarification regarding the results of the interaction with the high-level political forum in order to improve the review of contributions from the United Nations Environment Assembly to the Forum. He also invited the President of the Assembly to continue to endeavour to ensure that he was given the opportunity to address the Forum in plenary during the July 2018 meeting in order to deliver a message on the environmental dimension of sustainable development from the third session of the Assembly.

55. The Committee endorsed the submission of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum at its 2018 meeting.

Agenda item 6

Organization of the intersessional period for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

56. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Subcommittee and the Fourth Open-ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/CPR/142/6), presenting options for the organization of the period leading up to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The note included proposed dates for the fifth annual meeting of the subcommittee and the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, and had been discussed by the subcommittee. The Chair also drew attention to a document entitled "Draft road map on developing a new programme of work and budget 2020–2021", which had been considered by the subcommittee at a meeting held on 24 April 2018.

57. The Committee agreed to hold the fifth annual meeting of the subcommittee from 22 to 26 October 2018. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that while he had no objection to the proposed date, he would need to confirm that the dates were practical.

58. With regard to the date of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, the Chair recalled that at the last meeting of the subcommittee most of the regional groups had expressed support for

holding the meeting back-to-back with the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. Others, however, preferred the usual practice of holding the meeting earlier.

59. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted a preference for holding the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee back-to-back with the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. He suggested that, in order to enable member States to prepare adequately for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, the Executive Director should submit all his reports for consideration at the session by 11 January 2019 and member States should submit all their draft resolutions by 17 January 2019. Member States were reminded to bear in mind the option of addressing specific issues in the new programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme, rather than by means of the adoption of resolutions, which would facilitate a reduction in the volume of draft resolutions presented to the Environment Assembly for its consideration.

60. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a different group of countries, said that in view of the limited time available they were open to holding the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee and the fourth session of the Environment Assembly back-to-back, but stressed that this should not set a precedent for the future. One of the representatives said that the decision to hold the two meetings back-to-back should only be made on an exceptional basis and provided that sufficient time was allocated in the lead-up to the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee for consideration of all the draft resolutions and the draft outcome to be considered by the Environment Assembly. She underlined the need for the Assembly to adopt a final decision at its fourth session on the timing of future open-ended Committee meetings.

61. The other representative asked the secretariat to provide periodic reports on the financial situation with regard to the fourth session of the Environment Assembly and expressed the hope that the secretariat would make financial provision for future sessions in the next programme of work and budget.

62. Two representatives suggested that the Committee should decide at the current meeting that, starting with the fifth session of the governing body, there should be a gap between the meetings of the open-ended Committee and the Assembly sessions, with one expressing the view that while holding the two meetings back-to-back could save money, it would compromise the quality of the work produced and put undue pressure on small delegations.

63. Another representative suggested that there was a need to reflect on the role of the open-ended Committee, specifically whether its purpose was to serve as a preparatory meeting for Environment Assembly sessions or whether it should also afford member States an opportunity to discuss substantive issues in the period between Assembly sessions.

64. The legal adviser of the secretariat said that the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly did not provide precise guidance on whether the meetings of the open-ended Committee and the sessions of the Assembly should be held back-to-back, while Environment Assembly resolution 2/22, which provided that the cycle of Assembly sessions should also apply to open-ended Committee meetings, only required that the meetings of both bodies be held in the same year. In resolution 3/2, the Environment Assembly had requested the Committee to decide on the date of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee only. The Environment Assembly should decide on the timing of future meetings of the open-ended Committee, should it wish to do so.

65. The Committee agreed that the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee would be held from 4 to 8 March 2019, back-to-back with the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Committee further agreed to request the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to examine further, for subsequent consideration by the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the issue of whether, at its fourth session, the Environment Assembly should adopt a decision on the timing of open-ended Committee meetings.

66. In response to a request on the matter, the representative of the secretariat undertook to share with the Committee a budget for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, confirming that in view of the decision taken by the Committee regarding the timing of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, the secretariat was now in a position to finalize that budget and would start working on resource mobilization efforts for the session.

67. With regard to the draft road map on developing a new programme of work and budget 2020–2021, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat was preparing a note to respond to questions raised by members on the draft road map during the subcommittee meeting of

24 April 2018. He suggested that the Committee defer consideration of the draft road map to a subcommittee meeting to be held once the secretariat had finalized the said note.

68. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the draft road map to a subsequent subcommittee meeting.

Agenda item 7

Preparations for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

69. Introducing the item, the Chair said that it included four sub-items, which the Committee addressed in the following order: outcome of the joint bureau retreat, held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March; structure of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; information updates from the secretariat on a concept note and a communication strategy for the theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; information updates from the secretariat on the implementation plan for the outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

(a) Outcome of the joint bureaux retreat, held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March 2018

70. Introducing the sub-item, the chair drew attention to a report entitled "Report of the Bureaux Retreat held in Nairobi on 22-23 March 2018" together with a summary of the first joint preparatory retreat of the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, stressing that during their joint retreat the bureaux had agreed that the theme of the fourth session of the Assembly would be "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production".

71. The Committee took note of the report.

(b) Structure of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly

72. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to a note by the secretariat entitled "Proposed structure of the 2019 Environment Assembly" (UNEP/CPR/142/9), noting that the secretariat had revised the note in the light of comments made by member States, including at the last subcommittee meeting, and would welcome additional feedback on the proposed structure at the current meeting with a view to finalizing the note for consideration and endorsement by the joint bureaux during their retreat to be held in Tallinn, Estonia, on 6 and 7 September 2018.

73. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the secretariat for the proposed structure and made a number of suggestions thereon.

74. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it was essential to start the negotiations on the draft resolutions for consideration by the Assembly as early as possible. The representative suggested that the chair of any committee of the whole to be established at the session should be elected on the first day of the session and that the drafting groups tasked with negotiating the draft resolutions of the Environment Assembly should start their work immediately on the first day. The representative further reiterated the oft-expressed position that no more than two meetings should be held in parallel during sessions of the Assembly. Speaking on behalf of her own country, the representative suggested that adequate time should be allocated to the negotiation of the programme of work and budget 2020–2021.

75. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that adjustments should be made to the proposed structure to ensure that adequate time was allocated to the consideration of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook report and to last-minute negotiations to resolve outstanding issues pertaining to the draft resolutions and the draft ministerial declaration of the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

76. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to include the outcomes of the session's multi-stakeholder dialogue as one of the items for consideration at the closing plenary meeting of the session.

77. Another representative asked the secretariat to promptly disseminate information on all the substantive side events to be held during the fourth session, stressing that such events provided member States and stakeholders with an opportunity to share best practices and ideas, and to develop partnerships. It would be beneficial, therefore, if they were able to prepare for such events.

78. One representative suggested that the secretariat reach out to civil society and business stakeholders, including through the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme, to get a better sense of their expectations for the session.

79. The representative of Kenya requested that time be allocated on the evening of one of the days of the high-level segment for a host country ministerial reception.

80. Closing the sub-item, the chair said that the secretariat would revise the structure (UNEP/CPR/142/9) in the light of members' comments and forward the document for consideration by the joint bureaux in September 2018.

(c) **Information updates from the secretariat on a concept note and a communication strategy for the theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

81. Introducing the sub-item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Draft concept note for the theme of the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly", which, he said, had been prepared by the secretariat at the request of the joint bureaux. The joint bureaux had requested the secretariat to seek input from member States on the concept note in order to develop it further. The Chair requested that member States provide feedback on the note at the current meeting or in writing by 16 May 2018.

82. Introducing the concept note, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat had adopted a pragmatic approach, working to combine and narrow down the two components of the theme of the fourth session, namely sustainable production and consumption and innovative solutions, into a single theme that would ensure a valuable and relevant session.

83. Another representative of the secretariat said that the draft concept note proposed defining key environmental challenges on the basis of two scientific reports that would be launched during the fourth session, namely, the sixth edition of the *Global Environment Outlook* report and the International Resource Panel's report entitled "Global assessment of natural resource use and management"; forging a link with past sessions of the Assembly, including voluntary commitments made during the third session; and building on the integrated action framework adopted at the second session to address the nexus between human health and the environment and advance the goals of decarbonization, detoxification, the decoupling of economic growth from resource use, and enhanced ecosystem resilience; focusing on innovative solutions to develop and to scale up actions; promoting innovation within the United Nations Environment Programme and strengthening its internal capacity to identify and implement innovative solutions; developing partnerships; establishing mechanisms to scale up the implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns; and creating a repository of innovative solutions for use by member States.

84. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the draft concept note. Several representatives said that the note required further revision, with some undertaking to send feedback to the secretariat in writing.

85. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the draft concept note appeared to be unbalanced, since it implied that the theme of the fourth session was primarily related to Sustainable Development Goal 12, when in fact the concept of innovative solutions also related to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, and gave undue prominence to Goal 12 as key to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The representative highlighted that the concept note appeared to replace the concept of "innovative solutions" with that of "innovation"; focused on pollution and sustainable consumption and production and overlooked other environmental challenges, such as energy and food security, biodiversity loss, waste management, microbial resistance, and sand and dust storms; and missed the point behind the theme which had been chosen for a more synergistic implementation of the two components of the theme in order to address social, environmental and economic challenges through innovative policies and markets and partnership solutions.

86. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to revise the note to place the issues of innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production on an equal and balanced footing; to strengthen and move up the section on sustainable consumption and production and not to limit that issue to the 10-Year Framework of Programmes, but also to address chemicals and waste, marine litter and microplastics, production and product issues; to list sustainable consumption and production as a separate item in the section entitled "Possible outline"; and to better explain the relationship of each item listed in that section with the theme of the fourth session. Expressing support for the definition of innovation in the concept note as encompassing both science and technology and knowledge-based assets, the representative suggested consideration of innovative education and awareness-raising approaches aimed at changing mentalities and behaviour as part of innovation, while emphasizing that innovative solutions should not be presented as the only answer to environmental degradation, and that it was very important to implement and to scale-up

existing solutions to environmental challenges, including for the delivery of the voluntary commitments made during the third session of the Environment Assembly.

87. One representative suggested that the concept note should provide specific examples of best practices; clarify that innovative solutions included indigenous knowledge; examine innovative solutions to the challenges posed by unsustainable consumption and production patterns; and address emerging environmental challenges.

88. Another representative queried the mandate to produce the concept note and said that if the note was released solely at the discretion of the Executive Director it should not be referenced in the resolutions or the outcome document of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session. The concept note read as if the purpose of the Assembly session was to implement the 2030 Agenda, which was not the case. He expressed the view that it also focused unduly on Sustainable Development Goal 12; should not use a framework for action premised on the environment and health nexus, since the only area where that nexus was clear was detoxification; should emphasize the potential of innovation and resource efficiency for enhancing economic growth; and should include examples of innovative solutions to tackle environmental challenges, including food waste and other issues addressed at previous Assembly sessions.

89. One representative suggested that the concept note should be revised to list the *Global Chemicals Outlook* as one of the key assessments used to identify environmental challenges and to mention and give prominence to the resolutions and political outcomes of all Assembly sessions, in addition to the voluntary commitments made during the third session.

90. Two representatives suggested that there was a need for greater clarity among member States on the theme chosen for the fourth Assembly session, with one suggesting that member States must discuss their objectives in selecting a theme, such as whether they were trying to change the current economic model and to replace dirty industries with green ones, and have clear and modest expectations about what the fourth session could achieve, what the costs of action emerging from the session would be, and who would bear such costs.

91. One representative suggested that the concept note should discuss the links between biodiversity and the two components of the theme, as well as the links between technological change and sustainable development.

92. Another representative highlighted the need to narrow down, and to identify a clear narrative for, the theme and to examine how it related to the agreement reflected in paragraph 4 of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “The future we want”, that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development were the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development. The representative suggested that the concept note should be revised to acknowledge the work undertaken on the theme for the session by the United Nations Environment Programme and by the international community, which he asked the secretariat to examine. The representative also proposed including food waste as one of environmental priorities that must be addressed at the fourth session; addressing lifestyles and the focus areas of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes; and focusing on innovative solutions rather than innovation, as well as existing solutions that were working.

93. The Chair thanked representatives for their comments and requested that any written submissions reach the secretariat by 16 May 2018 in order to enable the secretariat to revise the concept note for possible consideration by the subcommittee on 24 May 2018.

(d) Information updates from the secretariat on the implementation plan for the outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

94. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat introduced a document entitled “Note by the Secretariat on the development of the UNEA3 implementation plan ‘Towards a pollution-free planet’”, which, she said, was a work in progress and reflected feedback provided by member States. The draft plan was built on the outcomes of previous sessions of the Environment Assembly and sought to create links between them and the upcoming fourth session. She provided an overview of the plan and, in closing, drew attention to a meeting to be held in Paris on 13 and 14 May 2018 to discuss the draft plan, inviting senior representatives from regional groups to attend the meeting.

95. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the secretariat for the draft plan and said that he looked forward to reviewing it and providing further comments on the next version of the plan.

96. Responding to a request for further information on the Paris meeting, the representative of the secretariat said that some 30 to 35 participants were expected to attend the meeting, whose main purpose was to obtain feedback on the draft plan and to examine how stakeholders might be mobilized to support its implementation, for instance by investing in infrastructure for pollution prevention and control.

Agenda item 8

Programme performance report 2016–2017

97. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to a document entitled “Programme performance report 2016–2017”, which, she said, had been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 25/7, in which the Governing Council had requested the Executive Director to continue to strengthen results-based management in the United Nations Environment Programme, and she outlined the results of the work undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme relating to the second half of the medium-term strategy.

98. Another representative of the secretariat presented the main elements of the report, providing an overview of the achievements of the United Nations Environment Programme in the implementation of its programme of work 2016–2017, the results achieved under each of the seven subprogrammes, and organization and programmatic improvements achieved during the 2016–2017 biennium. In closing, he suggested that it would be beneficial to set up a working group under the next programme of work to focus on the development of the programme of work and budget 2020–2021, stressing the need to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

99. In the discussion that followed, representatives thanked the secretariat for the presentation and for the report.

100. Welcoming the information presented, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the report was very good in both content and form. It suggested that overall progress had been satisfactory. There was a need to continue the discussion on project performance with a view to better assessing and guiding the United Nations Environment Programme. In that regard, he encouraged the secretariat to identify and discuss with member States the specific reasons for a lag in performance in some areas, so as to inform the implementation of the current programme of work and the negotiations on the next one.

101. With regard to financial performance, he expressed concern over the gap between projected and actual contributions to the Environment Fund and said that there was a need to consider how earmarked and unearmarked funds were being allocated across the various subprogrammes of the Programme. The *Global Environment Outlook* process had suffered from insufficient funding because the secretariat had relied excessively on unearmarked funds. Lastly, the representative drew attention to the document entitled “Evaluation synthesis report 2016–2017”, containing important lessons that should be considered in the discussions on the new programme of work.

102. One representative highlighted a number of gaps in the information provided in the report, including a lack of discussion of the programmatic and financial challenges facing each subprogramme and of the regional and local impacts of the work undertaken under the environmental governance subprogramme, and the omission of the efforts by Latin American and Caribbean countries on ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in the presentation, to which another representative also alluded. It was important that a greater number of Governments and private sector entities in the Latin American and the Caribbean region benefit from the global projects and programmes being implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme.

103. Drawing attention to difficulties experienced downloading the report and following the various graphics and pie charts contained in the presentation delivered at the current meeting, one representative urged the secretariat to break down the report into smaller file segments to make the downloading process easier and ensure that future presentations were as simple as possible.

104. Following the discussion, the representative of the secretariat provided details on the income, expenditures and funding gaps of each of the seven subprogrammes during the 2016–2017 biennium, which complemented the information provided in the programme performance report 2016–2017.

105. She also provided financial projections for 2018, stressing that four months into the year, pledges had amounted to about \$41 million, which represented 30 per cent of the approved budget of

\$135.5 million. Some 40 member States, representing approximately 21 per cent of the total membership of the Environment Assembly, had provided their contributions, thereby enabling the implementation of the programme of work in 2018. Further and substantial financial contributions would be required if member States were to fulfil their commitment to providing secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources for the Programme, as reflected in paragraph 88 of “The future we want”. In order to reach the approved projections and to achieve full universality in financial terms, the Programme expected to receive an additional \$94.3 million from 153 member States during 2018. In closing, she asked member States to provide their contributions for 2018, expressing the hope that the Environment Fund would reach \$75 million and that at least 70 additional member States would contribute to the Fund in 2018.

106. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that member States would have the opportunity to discuss the programme performance report 2016–2017, which would be printed for ease of reference, the evaluation synthesis report 2016–2017, financial projections, and the issues of resource mobilization and partnerships, at a subcommittee meeting on 14 June 2018, in the context of the discussions on the next programme of work and budget.

107. The Committee took note with appreciation of the programme performance report 2016–2017 and agreed to consider it further at a future meeting of the subcommittee.

Agenda item 9

Report of the Subcommittee

108. The Committee took note of a document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/142/9).

Agenda item 10

Other matters

109. The representative of Romania, speaking on behalf of the Eastern European States, requested that two members of each regional group be invited to future joint bureaux retreats in order to ensure an equal and balanced number of participants from all the regional groups. The Committee took note of the request.

Agenda item 11

Closure of the meeting

110. The meeting was declared closed at 5.40 p.m. on Thursday, 10 May 2018.



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**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
142nd meeting
Nairobi, 10 May 2018**

**Draft minutes of the 141st meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 20 February 2018**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 20 February 2018, by Mr. John Moreti, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. The meeting was attended by 104 participants representing 75 members and two observer missions. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, participated via videoconference from New Delhi.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Rajesh Swami, Deputy High Commissioner and Deputy Permanent Representative of India; Jamal Abdullah Dulaimi, First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Ahmad Hafizuddin Zainal Abidin, Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Mr. Jabr bin Ali Hussein Al Hawashela Al Dosari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar; Ms. Amanda Mkhwanazi, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa; Ms. Pornprom Petklai Nihon, Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand; and Ms. Phibby Awere Otaala, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uganda.
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Ms. Marcela Nicodemos, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil; Mr. Zaid Noori, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Mohammed Husham Malik Al-Fityan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Ahmad Fuad, Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Mr. Johan Nel, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa; and Mr. Nippon Rachawej, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1).
6. At the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee agreed to consider agenda item 4 immediately after agenda item 1, and to take up agenda item 3 after consideration of agenda item 8.

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft report of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

7. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the draft report of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, held from 29 November to 1 December 2017 (UNEP/CPR/141/2).
8. One representative asked whether in the future the reports of the Committee and Open-ended Committee meetings could be issued shortly after such meetings had been held, and whether there was a justification for the practice of referring to all speakers as “representatives”, without identifying the country or group on whose behalf they were speaking.
9. With regard to the first question, the Chair said that time was needed to produce and clear meeting reports. With regard to the second question, he said that the issue required further discussion.
10. The Committee adopted the report on the basis of the draft report (UNEP/CPR/141/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

11. In his oral briefing, which he delivered via videoconference, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme drew attention to the document entitled “Executive Director’s progress update report to the Committee of Permanent Representatives”, available on the website of the Committee. He then outlined a number of key activities undertaken by the secretariat since the previous meeting of the Committee.
12. The third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held from 4 to 6 December 2017, had been a major success thanks in part to the selection by member States of an agenda focused on achieving a pollution-free planet, an issue on which all countries agreed on the need to take action. In order to ensure that the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019, was even more successful than the third, the secretariat planned to engage with the bureaux of the Committee and the Assembly and to hold formal and informal consultations with member States to discuss lessons learned from the third session and to shape the agenda of the fourth session.
13. In the spirit of the “One United Nations” approach, the United Nations Environment Programme had signed agreements with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to help to move the climate agenda forward by engaging in advocacy work; with the World Trade Organization to address the links between the environment and trade, to save resources and to make environmental solutions more efficient; and with the World Health Organization to launch the most successful campaign possible to fight pollution, which was a major environmental and health issue.
14. The United Nations Environment Programme had also worked hard to engage with the private sector. Through its Finance Initiative, the organization had been working on the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative and was on the verge of releasing global guidelines on sustainable banking developed in collaboration with a number of large banks. The organization was also partnering with The Coca-Cola Company, which had promised to become a “zero waste” company worldwide; with BNP Paribas, which had promised to invest \$10 billion in greening agriculture in India and Indonesia; with Rabobank, which aimed to make investments in green agriculture in Brazil and possibly elsewhere; with One97 Communications Limited, India’s largest digital finance company, which had agreed to invest in public outreach and practical actions to fight pollution; and with Nornickel, which had large-scale mining operations in Norway and the Russian Federation, with the aim of helping the company to green its operations.
15. The organization had also been working with the Government of France and other member States in New York on the Global Pact for the Environment, proposed by French President, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, and for which it was expected to provide the secretariat for the pact negotiations. All the stakeholders agreed that the negotiating process should take place both in New York and Nairobi, bearing in mind that all countries had missions in New York, but not all were represented in Nairobi. The Executive Director encouraged representatives in Nairobi to convey their views on the proposed pact to their colleagues in New York.

16. The United Nations Environment Programme had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of India to hold the 2018 World Environment Day celebrations in India, and in December 2017, the Executive Director had attended a meeting in China on the country's Belt and Road Initiative, which, he said, was the largest investment initiative of its time, covering vast areas of the planet. The organization was part of a new global coalition called the Greening the Belt and Road Initiative, which would be launched in China in 2018 and sought to ensure that the Belt and Road Initiative supported investments in solar and wind energy and green infrastructure projects. A number of member States, as well as coalition partners such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the World Resources Institute, would be invited to the launch event.

17. The organization had started consultations regarding a paper entitled *Understanding Circular Economy in Africa*, which sets out its strategy to improve its work in Africa, focusing on issues discussed by the African Union, such as how to use the environment as a beacon for job creation; how to assist Africa in successfully moving towards a circular economy; how to fight pollution in a rapidly urbanizing context, for instance through better mass transit systems and planning; how to protect wildlife and nature without hindering economic growth; and environmental security.

18. During the fifty-fourth Munich Security Conference, held from 16 to 18 February 2018, in response to an earlier request from the Conference, the United Nations Environment Programme had made a presentation on the role of climate change and environmental degradation in amplifying and multiplying conflicts, and it expected to continue to work with the Conference in the future. He noted that the United Nations Environment Programme had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Munich Security Conference on the environmental aspects of security.

19. In closing, the Executive Director invited member States to submit nominations for the positions of Deputy Executive Director and Director of the organization's New York office, which were now open as a result of the regular rotation of staff, and for other positions that would soon become available, including those of Director of the Europe Office, Director of the Ecosystems Division and Director of the Corporate Services Division. He then announced the appointments of Mr. Sami Dimassi, current acting Director of the Corporate Services Division, as Director of the West Asia Office; Mr. Gary Lewis as acting Director of the Programme and Policy Division; Mr. Iyad Abumoghli, former Director of the West Asia Office, as special adviser on faith-based initiatives; and Mr. Jan Dusík, current acting Director of the Europe Office, as principal adviser on Arctic and Antarctic issues.

20. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the Executive Director for his report and oral briefing and for participating in the current meeting via videoconference. One representative expressed the hope that the secretariat would schedule future Committee meetings in a way that enabled the Executive Director to attend them in person thereby engaging more fully with the Committee.

21. Expressing appreciation for the transparent manner in which information was being transmitted to the Committee, one representative encouraged the Executive Director to continue that approach. Another representative said that the report and the activities described therein showed that the global dialogue on the role of the environment in achieving common goals was shifting, signalling that there was no need to be motivated by the environment in order to want to protect it.

22. Two representatives requested the Executive Director to provide information on ways in which the various global initiatives of the United Nations Environment Programme described in his report were being integrated into, and supported the implementation of, the organization's programme of work and management theories.

23. Regarding the third session of the Environment Assembly, all those who spoke said that it had been a success. They highlighted the political determination shown by member States, which, combined with the hard work of the secretariat and the leadership of the Environment Assembly President and Bureau and of the Committee Bureau, had led to the adoption of a ministerial declaration and eleven resolutions with the aim of achieving a pollution-free planet. Several representatives said that member States must engage constructively in the preparations for the fourth session of the Assembly, including by selecting a theme for the session.

24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, offered to support the Executive Director in developing a plan for the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted by the Environment Assembly at its third session, which the Assembly had requested the Executive Director to develop in consultation with the Committee, as well as the programme of work and budget for 2020–2021. The programme of work would be the first to be developed under the leadership of the

Executive Director and would present an opportunity for him to reflect in it his vision for the United Nations Environment Programme under the guidance of member States.

25. Drawing attention to a note by the secretariat under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1) on the implementation plan for Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to produce similar implementation updates and plans for all the resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its third session, expressing the view that such updates and plans would help the United Nations Environment Programme to improve the implementation of, and follow-up on, the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly.

26. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern that very limited information on the involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme in the wider United Nations reform process had been provided in the Executive Director's report and requested that additional information on that issue be transmitted to the Committee to enable member States to provide inputs to the process. Another representative asked about the role of the organization in the reform of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Yet another requested the secretariat to brief the Committee on how the organization and management reform of the organization fitted into the wider reform of the United Nations.

27. With regard to the financial performance of the United Nations Environment Programme, one representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that additional information was needed to help member States to understand how different sources of revenue were being used to implement the resolutions and decisions of the governing body of the organization. The same representative commended the Executive Director on the launch of the new United Nations Environment Programme website, but asked him to reinstate the previous address for the site, www.unep.org, which he said was shorter and easier to memorize than the new address.

28. Regarding the proposed Global Pact for the Environment, one representative asked about the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the negotiations on the pact and the meaning of several terms and phrases contained in a draft resolution on the pact. Another representative expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts to enable the Committee to participate in the negotiations, but said that the United Nations Environment Programme should play a significant role in the negotiations given that the organization had initiated and serviced most of the existing multilateral environmental agreements.

29. With regard to staffing issues, one representative encouraged the secretariat to consider recruiting a permanent legal adviser specializing in the rules and regulations of the United Nations. Drawing attention to the second United Nations staff survey, which she said had not been flattering for the United Nations, she asked the Executive Director to share his plans for improving work satisfaction among the staff of the United Nations Environment Programme.

30. Several representatives expressed appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme for activities undertaken in their countries. The representative of India said that the World Environment Day celebrations in his country would not be merely symbolic but would focus on India's mission to address environmental challenges, including plastic pollution, on which the celebrations would focus.

31. Responding to questions from representatives, the Executive Director offered to provide information on how the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme fitted into its programme of work. As for the programme of work for 2020–2021, he said that the secretariat would provide an update to the Committee on the drafting process in the coming weeks.

32. Concerning the dissatisfaction of staff reported in the United Nations staff survey, the Executive Director said that the solution lay in reforming the United Nations so that it was much simpler, more efficient and less bureaucratic and became a place where people were proud to work.

33. With regard to the proposed Global Pact for the Environment, he said that the decision regarding the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the pact negotiations would not be taken in Nairobi, so he encouraged Committee members to engage with their colleagues in New York to ensure that Nairobi would play a major role in the negotiating process.

34. Lastly, with regard to the comment that the tone of the global conversation on the role of the environment in achieving common goals was changing, he said that the key to effecting such a change and achieving common objectives was to use wording that everyone could understand, to be people-centred and solution-oriented and to fully integrate environment and development.

35. In addition to answering questions from the floor, the Executive Director invited the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to meet with him to discuss the possibility of sending a United Nations Environment Programme technical mission to assess the environmental situation of that country. Stressing that the Government of China had drastically increased its financial contribution and was providing eleven junior professional officers to the United Nations Environment Programme, the Executive Director then invited middle-income countries to follow China's example and contribute at least one junior professional officer to the Programme.

36. The Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, said that the current draft resolution on the proposed Global Pact for the Environment had been compiled by legal experts for general discussion and did not constitute a draft text for negotiation by member States. He further clarified that member States would have an opportunity to review and agree on the text to be used for negotiations.

Agenda item 5

Implementation of the programme of work and budget and of Environment Assembly resolutions

37. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to several notes by the secretariat under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1): a note on a new consolidated reporting tool to the Committee of Permanent Representatives setting out a proposal for reporting by the secretariat to the Committee on the implementation of the programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme, which had been drafted by the secretariat taking into account the outcomes of a subcommittee meeting held on 6 February 2018, with the objective of helping the Committee to fulfil its mandate of overseeing the implementation of the programme of work and budget, incorporating seven additional documents, each of which provided an overview of the project portfolio for each of the seven subprogrammes of the United Nations Environment Programme for the period 2018–2021; a note by the secretariat on upcoming milestones on biodiversity; and a note by the secretariat on an implementation plan for Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics.

38. Mr. Thiaw then outlined the main elements of the proposed consolidated reporting tool, which, he said, sought to deliver better reports that responded to the needs of member States. The proposed reporting tool would encompass quarterly reports containing three sections: a policy update describing policy changes and developments, reforms and decisions made by the parties to international environmental treaties and international conferences on the environment; a programme update providing updates on each subprogramme to enable member States to see trends, challenges and opportunities and to provide guidance to the secretariat on how to address them; and a financial and human resources update with information on the financial and human resources situation of the United Nations Environment Programme, including information on the recruitment of staff financed from both budgetary and extrabudgetary resources.

39. The proposed quarterly reports would also provide information on the implementation of Environment Assembly resolutions, which would become more robust over time, and on challenges experienced by the secretariat in the implementation of the programme of work. If member States agreed to the proposed consolidated reporting tool, the new quarterly reports would replace the current Executive Director progress update reports to the Committee, since the former would cover all the issues currently included in the latter.

40. Turning to the note by the secretariat on upcoming milestones on biodiversity under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), Mr. Thiaw said that it highlighted biodiversity-related events that would take place between 2018 and 2020 and had been prepared in response to Environment Assembly resolution 3/2 on pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors.

41. Subsequently, Mr. Habib El-Habr, Coordinator of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, provided a summary of the implementation plan set out under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1) in the note by the secretariat on an implementation plan for Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics.

42. Ms. Anne Lemoire, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Environment Programme, then provided updates on the management reform and other reform efforts of the Programme, and on the secretariat's activities related to the strategic management of human resources.

43. With regard to the reform issue, Ms. Lemore said that the secretariat was focused on how the organization could contribute to two strands of the United Nations reform process being led by the Secretary-General, namely the reform of the United Nations development system and the management reform, and on aligning its reform efforts with those of the United Nations in New York.

44. Concerning the reform of the United Nations development system, representatives of the New York office of the United Nations Environment Programme were engaged in discussions on that issue, which were centred on how to ensure that the entities of the United Nations worked as “One United Nations” and on the role of resident coordinators, regional commissions and other stakeholders in achieving that objective.

45. As for the management reform, as an entity of the United Nations Secretariat, any decisions taken by member States in New York would be binding on the United Nations Environment Programme, so the secretariat was following the process in New York very closely in order to ensure that the management reform efforts of the Programme were in line with decisions made in New York.

46. The management reform focused on three key elements discussed in the last paragraph of the summary of the September 2017 report by the Secretary-General entitled “Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: ensuring a better future for all” (A/72/492), which Ms. Lemore said was the basis of the management reforms currently under discussion in New York. Those three elements, she went on, were decentralization, including through the delegation of authority and stronger regional presence; enhanced accountability and transparency to achieve programme delivery and mandate implementation; and simplification and a reduction of bureaucracy in order to focus on achieving real world impacts.

47. In line with that overall approach, the secretariat had established four teams or processes to look at different areas of the reform agenda. The first team was being led by the Director of Corporate Services and the Chief of Staff and was focused on enhancing the internal accountability structure of the United Nations Environment Programme to strengthen its regional presence and programme delivery, for instance by rebalancing the relationship between regional and division directors and by streamlining the budget process to, for example, allocate funds directly to the divisions and regional offices for the implementation of the programme of work. The second process was focused on the simplification of processes to enhance the efficiency of the Programme. The secretariat had set up an online tool on the Intranet and created a very small internal reform advisory committee made up of non-senior staff in order to collect the views of staff on how simplification could be achieved. The staff had made a set of recommendations related to travel, recruitment, procurement, consultancies and programme design and implementation, which senior management was examining in order to determine which of them could be implemented in Nairobi and which could be shared with the New York office for consideration. The third group, called the Country Presence Committee, was being led by the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and was looking at how the regional, subregional and country presence of the Programme could be strengthened. The fourth and last group, led by the Deputy Executive Director, was focused on ensuring that all the reforms undertaken in Nairobi were fully aligned with the United Nations system-wide reform.

48. With regard to the management of human resources, which Ms. Lemore said was probably the most challenging task of the United Nations because the rules were extremely constraining, the United Nations Environment Programme was keeping in mind that the second highest priority of the Secretary-General was achieving gender parity in the United Nations system at all levels by 2028, and at the senior leadership level by 2021. An analysis of the Programme revealed large gender gaps at the P-4, P-5 and D-1 levels, so proactive steps must be taken to meet the gender targets and benchmarks set by the Secretary-General. If no progress was achieved by the end of 2019, the authority to recruit staff at the failing level would be taken away from the United Nations Environment Programme and passed on to human resources colleagues at the Secretariat headquarters in New York. In addition to gender, the Programme was taking into account the principles of geographical distribution and mobility in the management of its human resources, particularly with regard to senior staff appointments.

49. In closing, Ms. Lemore listed several vacant positions that had been or would soon be advertised. She also said that the secretariat was exploring options for hiring a permanent senior legal adviser, including by pooling resources with other organizations to have a common adviser, stressing that the secretariat was of the view that the support of a legal adviser during the third session of the Environment Assembly had been critical to the success of the session.

50. Before opening the floor for comments, the Chair said that in April 2018 the secretariat would hold a special briefing session on the management reform.

51. In the discussion that followed, representatives thanked the secretariat for the documents and information presented.
52. Many representatives welcomed the proposed consolidated reporting tool discussed under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), suggesting that more concise and readable reports would help the Committee to fulfil its oversight role, increase transparency and reduce the burden on both the secretariat and the Committee. One representative suggested that the consolidated reports should include information on the impact of the global initiatives of which the United Nations Environment Programme was a part and the impacts of those initiatives on the programme of work.
53. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the proposed tool was a step in the right direction and a good basis for discussion, and suggested that an ad hoc working group be established to develop it. He also suggested that the new quarterly reports should not increase the burden of reporting but build on available information to regularly update the Committee on the implementation of the programme of work and of Environment Assembly resolutions, including how the activities undertaken during each reporting period and the financial and human resources allocated to such activities had contributed to the objectives set out in the programme of work, as well as resource mobilization. He further suggested that the proposed quarterly reports should not compromise the well-established results-based reports of the United Nations Environment Programme, but that the frequency of such results-based reports, which were labour-intensive, should perhaps be reconsidered.
54. One representative asked if the proposal to replace the regular updates by the Executive Director to the Committee with the new consolidated reports would mean a lesser degree of participation by the Executive Director in the work of the Committee, suggesting that such engagement needed to increase.
55. One representative said that the new quarterly reports should be circulated at least two weeks prior to Committee meetings to allow representatives to consult with their capitals on the reports. Another representative suggested that the secretariat produce a technical report for capitals and a simplified report for the Committee outlining what the secretariat was seeking from member States.
56. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the Executive Director to provide to the Committee without delay detailed written information on the financial allocations from the Environment Fund and extrabudgetary resources, stressing that such information had been requested by the Open-ended Committee at its third meeting and had not yet been provided. He then expressed concern about the financial situation of the process to produce the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), which he said was one of the flagship reports of the United Nations Environment Programme.
57. Another representative requested the secretariat to brief member States, in either a Committee or a subcommittee meeting, on how the resources of the organization were being allocated, and in particular on the proportion of resources going to the programme of work. While recognizing that the allocation of resources to priorities outside the programme of work was necessary, she suggested that it was nevertheless important that the secretariat discuss resource allocation priorities with the Committee.
58. Regarding the seven project portfolios for the period 2018–2021, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to brief the Committee on how the mandates set out in Environment Assembly resolutions were embedded in the foreseen projects listed in the portfolios.
59. With regard to the implementation plan for Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics discussed under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), one representative said that she was encouraged by the proposal to include major groups and stakeholders in the ad hoc open-ended expert group that would examine the barriers to and options for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics, and to invite such groups and stakeholders to submit position papers.
60. Another representative said that the implementation plan would serve to comprehensively implement resolution 3/7, including through work of the United Nations Environment Programme in supporting the development of new regional action plans and the revision of existing plans, on the basis of a stocktaking exercise; the creation of a tool to enable member States and stakeholders to share information on their implementation of the marine litter-related resolutions of the Environment Assembly; and the establishment of a process to convene the ad hoc open-ended expert group called for in resolution 3/7, which, she said, should be an open and inclusive intergovernmental process that

resulted in member State commitments that would take the agenda forward and lead to tangible results.

61. Also referring to the implementation plan for resolution 3/7, another representative requested the secretariat to provide information on progress achieved by the United Nations Environment Programme in the prioritization of actions to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics; specific current and planned activities regarding regional action plans and the provision of technical, financial and other support to member States in the implementation of paragraphs 4 (b) and 4 (h) of resolution 3/7; capacity-building activities carried out to help countries in developing new policies, regulatory frameworks and measures for the prevention and management of marine litter and microplastics; and progress achieved in the implementation of the policy-relevant recommendations presented by the Executive Director at the second session of the Environment Assembly (UNEP/EA.2/5). She further requested the United Nations Environment Programme, in its capacity as the world's leading voice for the environment, to develop campaigns and other mechanisms to raise public and private sector awareness of the importance of reducing marine plastic pollution, and to undertake plans, projects and campaigns to ensure that the key sectors listed in paragraph 9 of resolution 3/7 took action to reduce marine pollution. Lastly, she suggested that the four discussion papers to be considered by the ad hoc working expert group at its first meeting should be submitted at least one month in advance of the meeting so as to give participants enough time to review them.

62. With regard to the note by the secretariat on upcoming milestones on biodiversity under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), the representative of Colombia drew attention to the sixth session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to be held in Medellín, Colombia, from 18 to 24 March 2018.

63. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern regarding the lack of progress achieved in the implementation of resolutions and decisions of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme, noting that many remained unimplemented or partially implemented and that no platform existed for member States to follow up on their implementation. He requested the secretariat to develop a robust implementation plan for all such resolutions and decisions, setting out specific timelines and milestones, and to create an online platform to enable member States to monitor their implementation.

64. Another representative suggested that the secretariat develop an implementation plan for all Environment Assembly resolutions which would include activities to be undertaken by the Executive Director.

65. With regard to the management reform, one representative asked if there was any coordination regarding the reform between the United Nations Environment Programme and other Nairobi-based entities, and suggested that a direct line of communication between the Committee and the four teams that had been established to examine different areas of the management reform agenda should be created so that the Committee could provide input into their work and fulfil its oversight role.

66. Two representatives said that they looked forward to receiving detailed information on the nature of the reforms and their impact on the United Nations Environment Programme, with one suggesting that the Committee should be fully informed of such issues not only through meetings and briefings, but also through simple reports.

67. With regard to the management of human resources, one representative said that it was important to consider the principle of geographical balance in the hiring process in order to ensure that the United Nations did not become a "North club". Another representative said that achieving regional balance and effective mandate delivery and maintaining staff morale were all key management objectives.

68. On hiring a legal adviser, one representative expressed support for the idea of advertising a permanent legal adviser position and making the adviser available to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Another representative expressed appreciation to the Chief of Staff for her willingness to think creatively and explore ways to hire a permanent senior legal adviser to support the United Nations Environment Programme.

69. A number of representatives requested the Executive Director to provide details on staffing and restructuring, with one saying that such details were required for the Committee to perform its oversight role. One requested the secretariat to provide information on staffing developments over the previous two years in the divisions, regional offices, Executive Office, missions and duty stations of the United Nations Environment Programme around the world, so that the Committee could assess the current human resources situation of the organization.

70. The Committee took note of the documents presented and requested the secretariat to convene an informal subcommittee meeting to discuss and provide feedback to the secretariat on the proposed consolidated reporting tool discussed under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1).

Agenda item 6

Assessment of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

71. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Lessons learned from the third United Nations Environment Assembly and the way forward towards the fourth session”, which had been compiled by the secretariat taking into account comments from member States made during a subcommittee meeting held on 6 February 2018, as well as written inputs submitted thereafter by individual member States and regional and political groups. Noting that the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly would review the document at a joint meeting on 27 February 2018, he invited the Committee at the current meeting to provide feedback on the document to enable the secretariat to revise it further before the joint bureaux meeting.

72. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the document on lessons learned and to those who had contributed to making the third session of the Environment Assembly a success.

73. With regard to lessons learned from the third session, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the secretariat should undertake further work on the “group/delegation” registration option of the online registration system used at the third session in order to facilitate group registrations, stressing that in many cases the registration of an entire delegation was carried out by a single officer. He stressed that no more than two negotiating sessions should be held in parallel at any given time so that small delegations could participate fully in the negotiations, and that flexibility was needed with regard to the late submission of draft resolutions to be considered at sessions of the Environment Assembly, bearing in mind that the deadlines for submissions were voluntary and that later submissions were sometimes justified and were in line with the rules of procedure of the Assembly.

74. On the deadlines for submission of draft resolutions, one representative said that setting such deadlines was crucial to ensuring that member States were able to consider all the resolutions prior to the commencement of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. Stressing that the loose political agreements currently in place did not appear to be working, another representative said that it was perhaps time to make the deadlines binding, and to consider asking the secretariat to revise the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly to assess whether they were sufficiently robust.

75. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that the fourth session of the Environment Assembly should continue to focus on consensus; be relevant to other international processes related to the environment within and outside the United Nations system, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and be preceded by an active intersessional preparatory process. He urged the secretariat to ensure that the preparatory process was transparent and inclusive, to maintain close contact with non-resident representatives on the process and to provide periodic reports to the Committee on preparations for the fourth session. In closing, he expressed a willingness to engage with the secretariat on ideas for ensuring that all developing countries, regardless of their classification in other processes, could actively participate in the preparatory process and in the fourth session itself.

76. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that, on the basis of the document under consideration and member State discussions, a set of recommendations for the fourth session of the Assembly be elaborated and agreed upon during the joint retreat of the bureaux scheduled for 22 and 23 March 2018.

77. One representative said that the success of the third session had been the product of the adoption by the secretariat and member States, following a less successful second session, of new models for the preparatory process; cooperation between the two bureaux; and decision-making and consensus-building around the ministerial declaration, suggesting that those models, which embraced transparency, inclusiveness and consensus-building, should be further strengthened.

78. Speaking on behalf of her Government and the presidency of the third session of the Environment Assembly, the representative of Costa Rica offered to share the lessons learned at the session with the presidency of the fourth session. She stressed that the adoption of a strong ministerial declaration at the third session, which had been possible owing to a participatory, inclusive and

transparent process and the support of the two bureaux, had been a major achievement, and she urged the Committee to work with the Executive Director on an implementation plan for the declaration in order to make it action-oriented.

79. One representative highlighted as lessons learned from the third session the need for greater coordination between the secretariat and member States with regard to Environment Assembly session events, including side events, and the need for increased engagement between member States and stakeholders. Referring to the document on lessons learned, the representative requested the secretariat to explain how the impact of the voluntary pledges made during the third session – 1.4 billion people worldwide breathing cleaner air according to the document – had been calculated; whether the regional ministerial meetings discussed in the document had been budgeted for and their cost implications; and why there was a reference in the document to the need to mobilize additional resources, since it was her understanding that the convening of Environment Assembly sessions was part of the core mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme and should thus be financed from the core budget of the organization. Limited resources would be better spent, she said, on producing the best possible Global Environment Outlook report rather than on producing a report on the theme of the fourth session, and it was more important to implement Environment Assembly resolutions than to adopt ministerial declarations.

80. Several representatives suggested that the practice of holding the meetings of the Open-ended Committee and the sessions of the Environment Assembly back to back should continue, expressing the view that back-to-back sessions made it easier for non-resident representatives to participate in the negotiations and facilitated the process. Others said that the Open-ended Committee meetings should be held several weeks before Assembly sessions, suggesting that the cycle of Assembly meetings had been adjusted and things should return to normal at the fourth session, back-to-back meetings could come at the expense of the substance of Assembly resolutions, given that time was needed to obtain the support of capitals on key resolution provisions, and holding back-to-back meetings was a challenge for small delegations.

81. With regard to logistics, one representative proposed that the secretariat notify participants whenever documents had been uploaded on the Environment Assembly website, and that it simplify the registration process. Another representative suggested that the secretariat explore ways of ensuring improved attendance at the Assembly sessions in which national statements were delivered, and of avoiding late-night meetings.

82. One representative asked the secretariat to identify dates for the subcommittee meetings to be held during the last quarter of 2018 and the start of 2019, stressing that it was important to hold formal and informal meetings in the lead-up to the fourth session in order to negotiate the Assembly resolutions and the ministerial declaration well in advance of the fourth session.

83. In closing, the Chair said that the secretariat would revise the document on lessons learned in the light of the discussion at the current meeting and any written comments submitted thereafter and present the revised document for consideration at the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27 February 2018. With regard to the organization of the intersessional process, he said that the Committee would need to discuss the matter further in consultation with the Bureau of the Environment Assembly.

Agenda item 7

Consideration of selection criteria and possible themes for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

84. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the secretariat on selection criteria and possible themes for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, which had been presented to the subcommittee at a meeting held on 15 February 2018 and had also been considered by the Bureau of the Environment Assembly on 30 January 2018. The document, he said, proposed two possible themes for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, namely, sustainable consumption and production, and food and nature/biodiversity.

85. The Chair further noted that, during the subcommittee meeting of 15 February 2018, the group of African countries and another group of countries had expressed support for a third possible theme concerning innovative solutions for the environment. The secretariat had therefore been asked to revise the note taking into account the subcommittee discussions and the discussion at the current meeting and to submit the revised note for consideration at the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27 February 2018. The Environment Assembly Bureau was required to take a decision on the theme of the fourth session, in consultation with the Committee, no later than 31 March 2018. It was to be

hoped, therefore, that the joint bureaux retreat, to be held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March 2018, would reach consensus on the theme.

86. Before inviting comments from the floor, the Chair invited Mr. Ado Lõhmus, Special Envoy of the President of the Assembly, to deliver a message on behalf of Mr. Siim Kiisler, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly and Minister for the Environment of Estonia, and Mr. Thiaw, to provide an overview of the two possible themes proposed by the secretariat for the fourth session.

87. In his remarks, Mr. Lõhmus said that the President and his team were fully committed to addressing the lessons learned from the third session of the Environment Assembly, which had set a very high standard of success for the fourth session. He stressed that they would adopt a solution-oriented approach by focusing on acute environmental problems that were easy to communicate and could lead to citizen action, and that they would embrace the principles of inclusiveness by engaging with the private sector and civil society to seek their input and to raise the visibility of the Assembly; of cooperation, between member States, the bureaux and the secretariat, New York and Nairobi colleagues, and the Environment Assembly and key bodies such as the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and of ownership, by maintaining the consensus-based atmosphere that had prevailed at the third session.

88. With regard to the ministerial outcome document, Mr. Lõhmus said that before working on a zero draft of the document, it was important to discuss a follow-up mechanism for its implementation. As for the theme of the fourth session, he said that it should focus on the better use of resources, including natural, financial and temporal resources, and suggested that member States must work efficiently in the preparatory process and discuss solutions to acute environmental problems in order to make the best use of the time available in the lead-up to the fourth session.

89. In his presentation, the Deputy Executive Director said that the secretariat had identified “food and nature/biodiversity” and “sustainable consumption and production” as two possible themes for the fourth session, taking into account the suggestion by member States that the theme should resonate with the general public; appeal to decision makers; enhance partnerships with stakeholders, including member States, the private sector and civil society; and help the United Nations Environment Programme to move forward into its next programme of work.

90. The first proposed theme dealt with a topic that was of great importance to the world, given the need to feed an additional two billion people by 2050 without harming the planet. That challenge would require dealing with issues such as the use of pesticides and fertilizers; making agriculture much more efficient to prevent deforestation and degradation of key resources such as freshwater and soils; protecting pollinators; and addressing non-agricultural food production, such as the production of fish and seafood and forest products. Ministers at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly needed to be empowered to take action in order to feed the world in an environmentally sound manner, using scientific reports produced by bodies such as The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity initiative and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and to build partnerships with United Nations and other entities working on, or interested in, food-related issues. If tackled properly, he said, the theme would have a huge impact on the world and compel different actors to come together to address it.

91. The second proposed theme was equally topical, since the projected population of nine billion people by 2050 would have a higher income and a higher footprint on the planet than the current population. Ensuring that people’s consumption was sustainable was imperative in order to ensure that food, minerals and other resources on which the economy depended were not depleted. This would require a move away from linear economies – which were premised on the extraction, exploitation, usage and throwing away of resources, were not sustainable in the context of a growing population and shrinking resources and could be expected to lead to more conflicts over access to natural resources –to circular economies. The theme of sustainable consumption and production also offered enormous potential for partnerships, with actors such as the World Economic Forum, entities working on the circular economy and a range of United Nations entities, and the use of scientific reports such as those produced by the International Resource Panel.

92. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the note on selection criteria and possible themes for the fourth session and to the Deputy Executive Director for his oral presentation on the two themes described therein.

93. With regard to the selection criteria set out in the note, two representatives, speaking on behalf of groups of countries, suggested that there was no need to further discuss the criteria, which one said was useful but should not be seen as exhaustive, and proposed that member States focus their efforts on discussing and agreeing on the theme itself.

94. Noting that the United Nations Environment Programme and many other organizations were already paying attention to the two themes proposed by the secretariat, one representative expressed support for the theme of innovation, which she said was action-oriented, focused on solutions and could encompass tools and approaches, such as resource efficiency, waste reduction, adaptive management and the integration of environmental economic and social data platforms, to tackle issues discussed in the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook report.

95. While noting that all the proposed themes merited consideration, one representative expressed support for a theme focused on the nexus between food production and biodiversity, stressing that meeting the international demand for food and ensuring biodiversity protection were both key for human well-being but were often seen as two competing goals.

96. Another representative expressed support for the theme of sustainable consumption and production, stressing that it had global reach and was of interest to all countries and regions; it encompassed a wide range of environmental and socioeconomic topics and could help to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 12 and thereby improve quality of life for all; it was connected to the objective of the third session of achieving a pollution-free planet; and it would enable the participation of the private sector and civil society, given the shared responsibility among different stakeholders in sustainable consumption and production. She then suggested that the secretariat improve the outline of the goals of each of the proposed themes in the revised note.

97. With regard to the proposed new theme of innovation for the environment, one representative said that it was an overarching topic, of interest to all regions and countries, under which specific focus areas could be identified.

98. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for further exploring the two themes proposed by the secretariat, which, he said, presented a risk of overlaps with existing work but could be framed in a way that added value to such work. He said that the new proposed theme of innovation to be included in the revised note of the secretariat also deserved consideration, but he expressed concern that the theme could be framed either too narrowly, for instance as a tool for furthering the sustainable consumption and production or the sustainable agriculture agendas, or too loosely, given that environmental innovation could be linked to a very wide range of topics.

99. A number of representatives suggested that the theme of innovation could be framed in a way that accommodated the two themes proposed by the secretariat and any challenges identified by member States as critical, for instance by focusing on innovation for sustainable consumption and for the protection of biodiversity in food production.

100. One representative drew attention to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme entitled *Frontiers 2017: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern*, which he said could help member States to set an overarching theme for the fourth session. He requested the secretariat to make a synthesis of the report available to member States.

101. In closing, the Chair encouraged member States to engage in informal consultations on the theme in order to make a strong recommendation to the Bureau of the Environment Assembly. He said that the secretariat would revise its note on possible themes for the fourth session in order to include the three themes proposed to date, and present the revised note for consideration by the two bureaux at their joint meeting on 27 February 2018, on which he would brief member States at the subcommittee meeting scheduled for 15 March 2018.

Agenda item 8

Preparation of the contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

102. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the secretariat on the process of contributions of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (UNEP/CPR/141/8). He said that the note had been prepared by the secretariat in response to Environment Assembly resolution 3/3, in which the Assembly had committed to conveying the main messages of its sessions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and agreed to provide substantive inputs to the annual forum meetings.

The forum would meet in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018, and it was critical that it consider the outcomes of the third session of the Environment Assembly.

103. The Deputy Executive Director explained that the document (UNEP/CPR/141/8) provided an update on the process and timelines set up by the secretariat to provide inputs to the high-level political forum for its meeting to be held in July 2018. In response to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the Environment Assembly requesting him to provide those inputs by 27 April 2018, the United Nations Environment Programme was preparing an inputs document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council. The secretariat would share a draft version of the document with the President of the Environment Assembly by 2 March 2018, and, after revising the document in the light of comments received from the President, it would submit a revised draft to the joint bureaux ahead of its retreat of 22 and 23 March 2018. The Committee, the bureaux and member States would then have the opportunity to provide comments on the revised draft by 6 April 2018. In addition to that written input, the United Nations Environment Programme was working with colleagues in New York to ensure that the President of the Assembly was able to participate in, and deliver an oral presentation to, the high-level political forum at its meeting in July 2018.

104. Drawing attention to paragraph 7 of the note, which set out timelines for the preparation of the written input to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, the representative of the secretariat noted that the Committee would have the opportunity to review the document and give its final approval thereon at its 142nd meeting, to be held in April 2018.

105. In the discussion that followed, representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat and to the Deputy Executive Director for the document and information provided, with many expressing support for the proposed way forward and for giving the President of the Environment Assembly the opportunity to deliver a statement to the high-level political forum and thereby increase the visibility of the Assembly.

106. With regard to the timelines proposed for the production of the document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, suggested that the draft version of the document be shared with the subcommittee prior to the joint bureaux retreat of 22 and 23 March 2018.

107. As for the document itself, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it should focus on the central theme of the July 2018 forum meeting and the Sustainable Development Goals to be discussed at the meeting, in the template proposed by the Economic and Social Council.

108. Another representative urged the United Nations Environment Programme to produce a document not longer than one page that provided the specific information that the Economic and Social Council had requested, stressing that the Programme was not a central concern of the high-level political forum. Another representative said that the document must be concise and reflect the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

109. Thanking representatives for their comments, the Deputy Executive Director clarified that the document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council would be submitted not on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme but on behalf of the Environment Assembly, which was a unique body with universal membership that had the legitimacy to deliver a message on the environmental dimension of sustainable development to the high-level political forum. It was critical therefore that representatives provide comments on the document and engage with their counterparts in New York in order to ensure that the President of the Assembly was allowed to deliver a message to the forum.

110. The Chair said that the secretariat would present to the subcommittee, between 13 and 15 March 2018, the draft document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, revise the document in the light of the discussions of the subcommittee and present it for consideration at the joint retreat of the bureaux on 22 and 23 March 2018.

Agenda item 9

Report of the subcommittee

111. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/141/9). He noted that since the 140th meeting of the Committee, eight subcommittee meetings, five secretariat briefing sessions, four informal consultations on resolutions/decisions and two informal consultations on the ministerial outcome document of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly had been held. The

secretariat had also provided several targeted briefings to member States on various topics, the details of which were provided in the above-mentioned document.

112. Stressing that two agenda items of the current meeting had overlapped with two agenda items of the subcommittee meeting held on 15 February 2018, and that there was limited value in repeating statements already made at the subcommittee meeting, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that in the future the secretariat should present a detailed summary of subcommittee meetings to the Committee and that member States should be invited to only provide comments on the way forward for items already discussed by the subcommittee.

113. The representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat strived to ensure that a detailed report of every subcommittee and Bureau meeting was produced by the rapporteur. Future subcommittee reports could therefore provide links to the summaries of each individual subcommittee meeting.

114. The Committee took note of the report.

Agenda item 10

Other matters

115. One representative requested that the secretariat make available the following documents to the Committee in order to enable the Committee to perform its oversight role: strategy on resource mobilization; stakeholder and private sector engagement strategies; strategy on communication and outreach, including outreach to non-resident missions; strategy on the regional and subregional presence of the United Nations Environment Programme; a list and an overview of all memorandums of understanding signed in 2017, and their financial implications; and information on the host country agreement with the Government of Kenya.

Agenda item 11

Closure of the meeting

116. The meeting was declared closed at 5.10 p.m. on Tuesday, 20 February 2018.



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**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
142nd meeting
Nairobi, 10 May 2018**

**Draft minutes of the 141st meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 20 February 2018**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 20 February 2018, by Mr. John Moreti, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. The meeting was attended by 104 participants representing 75 members and two observer missions. The Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, participated via videoconference from New Delhi.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Rajesh Swami, Deputy High Commissioner and Deputy Permanent Representative of India; Jamal Abdullah Dulaimi, First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Ahmad Hafizuddin Zainal Abidin, Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Mr. Jabr bin Ali Hussein Al Hawashela Al Dosari, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar; Ms. Amanda Mkhwanazi, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa; Ms. Pornprom Petklai Nihon, Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand; and Ms. Phibby Awere Otaala, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Uganda.
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Ms. Marcela Nicodemos, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil; Mr. Zaid Noori, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Mohammed Husham Malik Al-Fityan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Ahmad Fuad, Deputy Permanent Representative of Malaysia; Mr. Johan Nel, Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa; and Mr. Nippon Rachawej, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1).
6. At the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee agreed to consider agenda item 4 immediately after agenda item 1, and to take up agenda item 3 after consideration of agenda item 8.

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft report of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

7. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the draft report of the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, held from 29 November to 1 December 2017 (UNEP/CPR/141/2).
8. One representative asked whether in the future the reports of the Committee and Open-ended Committee meetings could be issued shortly after such meetings had been held, and whether there was a justification for the practice of referring to all speakers as “representatives”, without identifying the country or group on whose behalf they were speaking.
9. With regard to the first question, the Chair said that time was needed to produce and clear meeting reports. With regard to the second question, he said that the issue required further discussion.
10. The Committee adopted the report on the basis of the draft report (UNEP/CPR/141/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

11. In his oral briefing, which he delivered via videoconference, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme drew attention to the document entitled “Executive Director’s progress update report to the Committee of Permanent Representatives”, available on the website of the Committee. He then outlined a number of key activities undertaken by the secretariat since the previous meeting of the Committee.
12. The third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held from 4 to 6 December 2017, had been a major success thanks in part to the selection by member States of an agenda focused on achieving a pollution-free planet, an issue on which all countries agreed on the need to take action. In order to ensure that the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, to be held in Nairobi from 11 to 15 March 2019, was even more successful than the third, the secretariat planned to engage with the bureaux of the Committee and the Assembly and to hold formal and informal consultations with member States to discuss lessons learned from the third session and to shape the agenda of the fourth session.
13. In the spirit of the “One United Nations” approach, the United Nations Environment Programme had signed agreements with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to help to move the climate agenda forward by engaging in advocacy work; with the World Trade Organization to address the links between the environment and trade, to save resources and to make environmental solutions more efficient; and with the World Health Organization to launch the most successful campaign possible to fight pollution, which was a major environmental and health issue.
14. The United Nations Environment Programme had also worked hard to engage with the private sector. Through its Finance Initiative, the organization had been working on the Sustainable Stock Exchanges Initiative and was on the verge of releasing global guidelines on sustainable banking developed in collaboration with a number of large banks. The organization was also partnering with The Coca-Cola Company, which had promised to become a “zero waste” company worldwide; with BNP Paribas, which had promised to invest \$10 billion in greening agriculture in India and Indonesia; with Rabobank, which aimed to make investments in green agriculture in Brazil and possibly elsewhere; with One97 Communications Limited, India’s largest digital finance company, which had agreed to invest in public outreach and practical actions to fight pollution; and with Nornickel, which had large-scale mining operations in Norway and the Russian Federation, with the aim of helping the company to green its operations.
15. The organization had also been working with the Government of France and other member States in New York on the Global Pact for the Environment, proposed by French President, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, and for which it was expected to provide the secretariat for the pact negotiations. All the stakeholders agreed that the negotiating process should take place both in New York and Nairobi, bearing in mind that all countries had missions in New York, but not all were represented in Nairobi. The Executive Director encouraged representatives in Nairobi to convey their views on the proposed pact to their colleagues in New York.

16. The United Nations Environment Programme had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of India to hold the 2018 World Environment Day celebrations in India, and in December 2017, the Executive Director had attended a meeting in China on the country's Belt and Road Initiative, which, he said, was the largest investment initiative of its time, covering vast areas of the planet. The organization was part of a new global coalition called the Greening the Belt and Road Initiative, which would be launched in China in 2018 and sought to ensure that the Belt and Road Initiative supported investments in solar and wind energy and green infrastructure projects. A number of member States, as well as coalition partners such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the World Resources Institute, would be invited to the launch event.

17. The organization had started consultations regarding a paper entitled *Understanding Circular Economy in Africa*, which sets out its strategy to improve its work in Africa, focusing on issues discussed by the African Union, such as how to use the environment as a beacon for job creation; how to assist Africa in successfully moving towards a circular economy; how to fight pollution in a rapidly urbanizing context, for instance through better mass transit systems and planning; how to protect wildlife and nature without hindering economic growth; and environmental security.

18. During the fifty-fourth Munich Security Conference, held from 16 to 18 February 2018, in response to an earlier request from the Conference, the United Nations Environment Programme had made a presentation on the role of climate change and environmental degradation in amplifying and multiplying conflicts, and it expected to continue to work with the Conference in the future. He noted that the United Nations Environment Programme had signed a memorandum of understanding with the Munich Security Conference on the environmental aspects of security.

19. In closing, the Executive Director invited member States to submit nominations for the positions of Deputy Executive Director and Director of the organization's New York office, which were now open as a result of the regular rotation of staff, and for other positions that would soon become available, including those of Director of the Europe Office, Director of the Ecosystems Division and Director of the Corporate Services Division. He then announced the appointments of Mr. Sami Dimassi, current acting Director of the Corporate Services Division, as Director of the West Asia Office; Mr. Gary Lewis as acting Director of the Programme and Policy Division; Mr. Iyad Abumoghli, former Director of the West Asia Office, as special adviser on faith-based initiatives; and Mr. Jan Dusík, current acting Director of the Europe Office, as principal adviser on Arctic and Antarctic issues.

20. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the Executive Director for his report and oral briefing and for participating in the current meeting via videoconference. One representative expressed the hope that the secretariat would schedule future Committee meetings in a way that enabled the Executive Director to attend them in person thereby engaging more fully with the Committee.

21. Expressing appreciation for the transparent manner in which information was being transmitted to the Committee, one representative encouraged the Executive Director to continue that approach. Another representative said that the report and the activities described therein showed that the global dialogue on the role of the environment in achieving common goals was shifting, signalling that there was no need to be motivated by the environment in order to want to protect it.

22. Two representatives requested the Executive Director to provide information on ways in which the various global initiatives of the United Nations Environment Programme described in his report were being integrated into, and supported the implementation of, the organization's programme of work and management theories.

23. Regarding the third session of the Environment Assembly, all those who spoke said that it had been a success. They highlighted the political determination shown by member States, which, combined with the hard work of the secretariat and the leadership of the Environment Assembly President and Bureau and of the Committee Bureau, had led to the adoption of a ministerial declaration and eleven resolutions with the aim of achieving a pollution-free planet. Several representatives said that member States must engage constructively in the preparations for the fourth session of the Assembly, including by selecting a theme for the session.

24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, offered to support the Executive Director in developing a plan for the implementation of the ministerial declaration adopted by the Environment Assembly at its third session, which the Assembly had requested the Executive Director to develop in consultation with the Committee, as well as the programme of work and budget for 2020–2021. The programme of work would be the first to be developed under the leadership of the

Executive Director and would present an opportunity for him to reflect in it his vision for the United Nations Environment Programme under the guidance of member States.

25. Drawing attention to a note by the secretariat under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1) on the implementation plan for Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to produce similar implementation updates and plans for all the resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its third session, expressing the view that such updates and plans would help the United Nations Environment Programme to improve the implementation of, and follow-up on, the resolutions and decisions of the Assembly.

26. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern that very limited information on the involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme in the wider United Nations reform process had been provided in the Executive Director's report and requested that additional information on that issue be transmitted to the Committee to enable member States to provide inputs to the process. Another representative asked about the role of the organization in the reform of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Yet another requested the secretariat to brief the Committee on how the organization and management reform of the organization fitted into the wider reform of the United Nations.

27. With regard to the financial performance of the United Nations Environment Programme, one representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that additional information was needed to help member States to understand how different sources of revenue were being used to implement the resolutions and decisions of the governing body of the organization. The same representative commended the Executive Director on the launch of the new United Nations Environment Programme website, but asked him to reinstate the previous address for the site, www.unep.org, which he said was shorter and easier to memorize than the new address.

28. Regarding the proposed Global Pact for the Environment, one representative asked about the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the negotiations on the pact and the meaning of several terms and phrases contained in a draft resolution on the pact. Another representative expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts to enable the Committee to participate in the negotiations, but said that the United Nations Environment Programme should play a significant role in the negotiations given that the organization had initiated and serviced most of the existing multilateral environmental agreements.

29. With regard to staffing issues, one representative encouraged the secretariat to consider recruiting a permanent legal adviser specializing in the rules and regulations of the United Nations. Drawing attention to the second United Nations staff survey, which she said had not been flattering for the United Nations, she asked the Executive Director to share his plans for improving work satisfaction among the staff of the United Nations Environment Programme.

30. Several representatives expressed appreciation to the United Nations Environment Programme for activities undertaken in their countries. The representative of India said that the World Environment Day celebrations in his country would not be merely symbolic but would focus on India's mission to address environmental challenges, including plastic pollution, on which the celebrations would focus.

31. Responding to questions from representatives, the Executive Director offered to provide information on how the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme fitted into its programme of work. As for the programme of work for 2020–2021, he said that the secretariat would provide an update to the Committee on the drafting process in the coming weeks.

32. Concerning the dissatisfaction of staff reported in the United Nations staff survey, the Executive Director said that the solution lay in reforming the United Nations so that it was much simpler, more efficient and less bureaucratic and became a place where people were proud to work.

33. With regard to the proposed Global Pact for the Environment, he said that the decision regarding the role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the pact negotiations would not be taken in Nairobi, so he encouraged Committee members to engage with their colleagues in New York to ensure that Nairobi would play a major role in the negotiating process.

34. Lastly, with regard to the comment that the tone of the global conversation on the role of the environment in achieving common goals was changing, he said that the key to effecting such a change and achieving common objectives was to use wording that everyone could understand, to be people-centred and solution-oriented and to fully integrate environment and development.

35. In addition to answering questions from the floor, the Executive Director invited the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to meet with him to discuss the possibility of sending a United Nations Environment Programme technical mission to assess the environmental situation of that country. Stressing that the Government of China had drastically increased its financial contribution and was providing eleven junior professional officers to the United Nations Environment Programme, the Executive Director then invited middle-income countries to follow China's example and contribute at least one junior professional officer to the Programme.

36. The Deputy Executive Director, Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, said that the current draft resolution on the proposed Global Pact for the Environment had been compiled by legal experts for general discussion and did not constitute a draft text for negotiation by member States. He further clarified that member States would have an opportunity to review and agree on the text to be used for negotiations.

Agenda item 5

Implementation of the programme of work and budget and of Environment Assembly resolutions

37. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to several notes by the secretariat under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1): a note on a new consolidated reporting tool to the Committee of Permanent Representatives setting out a proposal for reporting by the secretariat to the Committee on the implementation of the programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme, which had been drafted by the secretariat taking into account the outcomes of a subcommittee meeting held on 6 February 2018, with the objective of helping the Committee to fulfil its mandate of overseeing the implementation of the programme of work and budget, incorporating seven additional documents, each of which provided an overview of the project portfolio for each of the seven subprogrammes of the United Nations Environment Programme for the period 2018–2021; a note by the secretariat on upcoming milestones on biodiversity; and a note by the secretariat on an implementation plan for Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics.

38. Mr. Thiaw then outlined the main elements of the proposed consolidated reporting tool, which, he said, sought to deliver better reports that responded to the needs of member States. The proposed reporting tool would encompass quarterly reports containing three sections: a policy update describing policy changes and developments, reforms and decisions made by the parties to international environmental treaties and international conferences on the environment; a programme update providing updates on each subprogramme to enable member States to see trends, challenges and opportunities and to provide guidance to the secretariat on how to address them; and a financial and human resources update with information on the financial and human resources situation of the United Nations Environment Programme, including information on the recruitment of staff financed from both budgetary and extrabudgetary resources.

39. The proposed quarterly reports would also provide information on the implementation of Environment Assembly resolutions, which would become more robust over time, and on challenges experienced by the secretariat in the implementation of the programme of work. If member States agreed to the proposed consolidated reporting tool, the new quarterly reports would replace the current Executive Director progress update reports to the Committee, since the former would cover all the issues currently included in the latter.

40. Turning to the note by the secretariat on upcoming milestones on biodiversity under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), Mr. Thiaw said that it highlighted biodiversity-related events that would take place between 2018 and 2020 and had been prepared in response to Environment Assembly resolution 3/2 on pollution mitigation by mainstreaming biodiversity into key sectors.

41. Subsequently, Mr. Habib El-Habr, Coordinator of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, provided a summary of the implementation plan set out under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1) in the note by the secretariat on an implementation plan for Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics.

42. Ms. Anne Lefore, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Environment Programme, then provided updates on the management reform and other reform efforts of the Programme, and on the secretariat's activities related to the strategic management of human resources.

43. With regard to the reform issue, Ms. Lemore said that the secretariat was focused on how the organization could contribute to two strands of the United Nations reform process being led by the Secretary-General, namely the reform of the United Nations development system and the management reform, and on aligning its reform efforts with those of the United Nations in New York.

44. Concerning the reform of the United Nations development system, representatives of the New York office of the United Nations Environment Programme were engaged in discussions on that issue, which were centred on how to ensure that the entities of the United Nations worked as “One United Nations” and on the role of resident coordinators, regional commissions and other stakeholders in achieving that objective.

45. As for the management reform, as an entity of the United Nations Secretariat, any decisions taken by member States in New York would be binding on the United Nations Environment Programme, so the secretariat was following the process in New York very closely in order to ensure that the management reform efforts of the Programme were in line with decisions made in New York.

46. The management reform focused on three key elements discussed in the last paragraph of the summary of the September 2017 report by the Secretary-General entitled “Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations: ensuring a better future for all” (A/72/492), which Ms. Lemore said was the basis of the management reforms currently under discussion in New York. Those three elements, she went on, were decentralization, including through the delegation of authority and stronger regional presence; enhanced accountability and transparency to achieve programme delivery and mandate implementation; and simplification and a reduction of bureaucracy in order to focus on achieving real world impacts.

47. In line with that overall approach, the secretariat had established four teams or processes to look at different areas of the reform agenda. The first team was being led by the Director of Corporate Services and the Chief of Staff and was focused on enhancing the internal accountability structure of the United Nations Environment Programme to strengthen its regional presence and programme delivery, for instance by rebalancing the relationship between regional and division directors and by streamlining the budget process to, for example, allocate funds directly to the divisions and regional offices for the implementation of the programme of work. The second process was focused on the simplification of processes to enhance the efficiency of the Programme. The secretariat had set up an online tool on the Intranet and created a very small internal reform advisory committee made up of non-senior staff in order to collect the views of staff on how simplification could be achieved. The staff had made a set of recommendations related to travel, recruitment, procurement, consultancies and programme design and implementation, which senior management was examining in order to determine which of them could be implemented in Nairobi and which could be shared with the New York office for consideration. The third group, called the Country Presence Committee, was being led by the Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and was looking at how the regional, subregional and country presence of the Programme could be strengthened. The fourth and last group, led by the Deputy Executive Director, was focused on ensuring that all the reforms undertaken in Nairobi were fully aligned with the United Nations system-wide reform.

48. With regard to the management of human resources, which Ms. Lemore said was probably the most challenging task of the United Nations because the rules were extremely constraining, the United Nations Environment Programme was keeping in mind that the second highest priority of the Secretary-General was achieving gender parity in the United Nations system at all levels by 2028, and at the senior leadership level by 2021. An analysis of the Programme revealed large gender gaps at the P-4, P-5 and D-1 levels, so proactive steps must be taken to meet the gender targets and benchmarks set by the Secretary-General. If no progress was achieved by the end of 2019, the authority to recruit staff at the failing level would be taken away from the United Nations Environment Programme and passed on to human resources colleagues at the Secretariat headquarters in New York. In addition to gender, the Programme was taking into account the principles of geographical distribution and mobility in the management of its human resources, particularly with regard to senior staff appointments.

49. In closing, Ms. Lemore listed several vacant positions that had been or would soon be advertised. She also said that the secretariat was exploring options for hiring a permanent senior legal adviser, including by pooling resources with other organizations to have a common adviser, stressing that the secretariat was of the view that the support of a legal adviser during the third session of the Environment Assembly had been critical to the success of the session.

50. Before opening the floor for comments, the Chair said that in April 2018 the secretariat would hold a special briefing session on the management reform.

51. In the discussion that followed, representatives thanked the secretariat for the documents and information presented.
52. Many representatives welcomed the proposed consolidated reporting tool discussed under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), suggesting that more concise and readable reports would help the Committee to fulfil its oversight role, increase transparency and reduce the burden on both the secretariat and the Committee. One representative suggested that the consolidated reports should include information on the impact of the global initiatives of which the United Nations Environment Programme was a part and the impacts of those initiatives on the programme of work.
53. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the proposed tool was a step in the right direction and a good basis for discussion, and suggested that an ad hoc working group be established to develop it. He also suggested that the new quarterly reports should not increase the burden of reporting but build on available information to regularly update the Committee on the implementation of the programme of work and of Environment Assembly resolutions, including how the activities undertaken during each reporting period and the financial and human resources allocated to such activities had contributed to the objectives set out in the programme of work, as well as resource mobilization. He further suggested that the proposed quarterly reports should not compromise the well-established results-based reports of the United Nations Environment Programme, but that the frequency of such results-based reports, which were labour-intensive, should perhaps be reconsidered.
54. One representative asked if the proposal to replace the regular updates by the Executive Director to the Committee with the new consolidated reports would mean a lesser degree of participation by the Executive Director in the work of the Committee, suggesting that such engagement needed to increase.
55. One representative said that the new quarterly reports should be circulated at least two weeks prior to Committee meetings to allow representatives to consult with their capitals on the reports. Another representative suggested that the secretariat produce a technical report for capitals and a simplified report for the Committee outlining what the secretariat was seeking from member States.
56. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the Executive Director to provide to the Committee without delay detailed written information on the financial allocations from the Environment Fund and extrabudgetary resources, stressing that such information had been requested by the Open-ended Committee at its third meeting and had not yet been provided. He then expressed concern about the financial situation of the process to produce the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6), which he said was one of the flagship reports of the United Nations Environment Programme.
57. Another representative requested the secretariat to brief member States, in either a Committee or a subcommittee meeting, on how the resources of the organization were being allocated, and in particular on the proportion of resources going to the programme of work. While recognizing that the allocation of resources to priorities outside the programme of work was necessary, she suggested that it was nevertheless important that the secretariat discuss resource allocation priorities with the Committee.
58. Regarding the seven project portfolios for the period 2018–2021, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to brief the Committee on how the mandates set out in Environment Assembly resolutions were embedded in the foreseen projects listed in the portfolios.
59. With regard to the implementation plan for Environment Assembly resolution 3/7 on marine litter and microplastics discussed under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), one representative said that she was encouraged by the proposal to include major groups and stakeholders in the ad hoc open-ended expert group that would examine the barriers to and options for combating marine plastic litter and microplastics, and to invite such groups and stakeholders to submit position papers.
60. Another representative said that the implementation plan would serve to comprehensively implement resolution 3/7, including through work of the United Nations Environment Programme in supporting the development of new regional action plans and the revision of existing plans, on the basis of a stocktaking exercise; the creation of a tool to enable member States and stakeholders to share information on their implementation of the marine litter-related resolutions of the Environment Assembly; and the establishment of a process to convene the ad hoc open-ended expert group called for in resolution 3/7, which, she said, should be an open and inclusive intergovernmental process that

resulted in member State commitments that would take the agenda forward and lead to tangible results.

61. Also referring to the implementation plan for resolution 3/7, another representative requested the secretariat to provide information on progress achieved by the United Nations Environment Programme in the prioritization of actions to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics; specific current and planned activities regarding regional action plans and the provision of technical, financial and other support to member States in the implementation of paragraphs 4 (b) and 4 (h) of resolution 3/7; capacity-building activities carried out to help countries in developing new policies, regulatory frameworks and measures for the prevention and management of marine litter and microplastics; and progress achieved in the implementation of the policy-relevant recommendations presented by the Executive Director at the second session of the Environment Assembly (UNEP/EA.2/5). She further requested the United Nations Environment Programme, in its capacity as the world's leading voice for the environment, to develop campaigns and other mechanisms to raise public and private sector awareness of the importance of reducing marine plastic pollution, and to undertake plans, projects and campaigns to ensure that the key sectors listed in paragraph 9 of resolution 3/7 took action to reduce marine pollution. Lastly, she suggested that the four discussion papers to be considered by the ad hoc working expert group at its first meeting should be submitted at least one month in advance of the meeting so as to give participants enough time to review them.

62. With regard to the note by the secretariat on upcoming milestones on biodiversity under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1), the representative of Colombia drew attention to the sixth session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services to be held in Medellín, Colombia, from 18 to 24 March 2018.

63. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern regarding the lack of progress achieved in the implementation of resolutions and decisions of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme, noting that many remained unimplemented or partially implemented and that no platform existed for member States to follow up on their implementation. He requested the secretariat to develop a robust implementation plan for all such resolutions and decisions, setting out specific timelines and milestones, and to create an online platform to enable member States to monitor their implementation.

64. Another representative suggested that the secretariat develop an implementation plan for all Environment Assembly resolutions which would include activities to be undertaken by the Executive Director.

65. With regard to the management reform, one representative asked if there was any coordination regarding the reform between the United Nations Environment Programme and other Nairobi-based entities, and suggested that a direct line of communication between the Committee and the four teams that had been established to examine different areas of the management reform agenda should be created so that the Committee could provide input into their work and fulfil its oversight role.

66. Two representatives said that they looked forward to receiving detailed information on the nature of the reforms and their impact on the United Nations Environment Programme, with one suggesting that the Committee should be fully informed of such issues not only through meetings and briefings, but also through simple reports.

67. With regard to the management of human resources, one representative said that it was important to consider the principle of geographical balance in the hiring process in order to ensure that the United Nations did not become a "North club". Another representative said that achieving regional balance and effective mandate delivery and maintaining staff morale were all key management objectives.

68. On hiring a legal adviser, one representative expressed support for the idea of advertising a permanent legal adviser position and making the adviser available to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi. Another representative expressed appreciation to the Chief of Staff for her willingness to think creatively and explore ways to hire a permanent senior legal adviser to support the United Nations Environment Programme.

69. A number of representatives requested the Executive Director to provide details on staffing and restructuring, with one saying that such details were required for the Committee to perform its oversight role. One requested the secretariat to provide information on staffing developments over the previous two years in the divisions, regional offices, Executive Office, missions and duty stations of the United Nations Environment Programme around the world, so that the Committee could assess the current human resources situation of the organization.

70. The Committee took note of the documents presented and requested the secretariat to convene an informal subcommittee meeting to discuss and provide feedback to the secretariat on the proposed consolidated reporting tool discussed under agenda item 5 of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/141/1).

Agenda item 6

Assessment of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

71. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Lessons learned from the third United Nations Environment Assembly and the way forward towards the fourth session”, which had been compiled by the secretariat taking into account comments from member States made during a subcommittee meeting held on 6 February 2018, as well as written inputs submitted thereafter by individual member States and regional and political groups. Noting that the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly would review the document at a joint meeting on 27 February 2018, he invited the Committee at the current meeting to provide feedback on the document to enable the secretariat to revise it further before the joint bureaux meeting.

72. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the document on lessons learned and to those who had contributed to making the third session of the Environment Assembly a success.

73. With regard to lessons learned from the third session, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the secretariat should undertake further work on the “group/delegation” registration option of the online registration system used at the third session in order to facilitate group registrations, stressing that in many cases the registration of an entire delegation was carried out by a single officer. He stressed that no more than two negotiating sessions should be held in parallel at any given time so that small delegations could participate fully in the negotiations, and that flexibility was needed with regard to the late submission of draft resolutions to be considered at sessions of the Environment Assembly, bearing in mind that the deadlines for submissions were voluntary and that later submissions were sometimes justified and were in line with the rules of procedure of the Assembly.

74. On the deadlines for submission of draft resolutions, one representative said that setting such deadlines was crucial to ensuring that member States were able to consider all the resolutions prior to the commencement of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. Stressing that the loose political agreements currently in place did not appear to be working, another representative said that it was perhaps time to make the deadlines binding, and to consider asking the secretariat to revise the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly to assess whether they were sufficiently robust.

75. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that the fourth session of the Environment Assembly should continue to focus on consensus; be relevant to other international processes related to the environment within and outside the United Nations system, including the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and be preceded by an active intersessional preparatory process. He urged the secretariat to ensure that the preparatory process was transparent and inclusive, to maintain close contact with non-resident representatives on the process and to provide periodic reports to the Committee on preparations for the fourth session. In closing, he expressed a willingness to engage with the secretariat on ideas for ensuring that all developing countries, regardless of their classification in other processes, could actively participate in the preparatory process and in the fourth session itself.

76. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that, on the basis of the document under consideration and member State discussions, a set of recommendations for the fourth session of the Assembly be elaborated and agreed upon during the joint retreat of the bureaux scheduled for 22 and 23 March 2018.

77. One representative said that the success of the third session had been the product of the adoption by the secretariat and member States, following a less successful second session, of new models for the preparatory process; cooperation between the two bureaux; and decision-making and consensus-building around the ministerial declaration, suggesting that those models, which embraced transparency, inclusiveness and consensus-building, should be further strengthened.

78. Speaking on behalf of her Government and the presidency of the third session of the Environment Assembly, the representative of Costa Rica offered to share the lessons learned at the session with the presidency of the fourth session. She stressed that the adoption of a strong ministerial declaration at the third session, which had been possible owing to a participatory, inclusive and

transparent process and the support of the two bureaux, had been a major achievement, and she urged the Committee to work with the Executive Director on an implementation plan for the declaration in order to make it action-oriented.

79. One representative highlighted as lessons learned from the third session the need for greater coordination between the secretariat and member States with regard to Environment Assembly session events, including side events, and the need for increased engagement between member States and stakeholders. Referring to the document on lessons learned, the representative requested the secretariat to explain how the impact of the voluntary pledges made during the third session – 1.4 billion people worldwide breathing cleaner air according to the document – had been calculated; whether the regional ministerial meetings discussed in the document had been budgeted for and their cost implications; and why there was a reference in the document to the need to mobilize additional resources, since it was her understanding that the convening of Environment Assembly sessions was part of the core mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme and should thus be financed from the core budget of the organization. Limited resources would be better spent, she said, on producing the best possible Global Environment Outlook report rather than on producing a report on the theme of the fourth session, and it was more important to implement Environment Assembly resolutions than to adopt ministerial declarations.

80. Several representatives suggested that the practice of holding the meetings of the Open-ended Committee and the sessions of the Environment Assembly back to back should continue, expressing the view that back-to-back sessions made it easier for non-resident representatives to participate in the negotiations and facilitated the process. Others said that the Open-ended Committee meetings should be held several weeks before Assembly sessions, suggesting that the cycle of Assembly meetings had been adjusted and things should return to normal at the fourth session, back-to-back meetings could come at the expense of the substance of Assembly resolutions, given that time was needed to obtain the support of capitals on key resolution provisions, and holding back-to-back meetings was a challenge for small delegations.

81. With regard to logistics, one representative proposed that the secretariat notify participants whenever documents had been uploaded on the Environment Assembly website, and that it simplify the registration process. Another representative suggested that the secretariat explore ways of ensuring improved attendance at the Assembly sessions in which national statements were delivered, and of avoiding late-night meetings.

82. One representative asked the secretariat to identify dates for the subcommittee meetings to be held during the last quarter of 2018 and the start of 2019, stressing that it was important to hold formal and informal meetings in the lead-up to the fourth session in order to negotiate the Assembly resolutions and the ministerial declaration well in advance of the fourth session.

83. In closing, the Chair said that the secretariat would revise the document on lessons learned in the light of the discussion at the current meeting and any written comments submitted thereafter and present the revised document for consideration at the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27 February 2018. With regard to the organization of the intersessional process, he said that the Committee would need to discuss the matter further in consultation with the Bureau of the Environment Assembly.

Agenda item 7

Consideration of selection criteria and possible themes for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

84. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the secretariat on selection criteria and possible themes for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, which had been presented to the subcommittee at a meeting held on 15 February 2018 and had also been considered by the Bureau of the Environment Assembly on 30 January 2018. The document, he said, proposed two possible themes for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, namely, sustainable consumption and production, and food and nature/biodiversity.

85. The Chair further noted that, during the subcommittee meeting of 15 February 2018, the group of African countries and another group of countries had expressed support for a third possible theme concerning innovative solutions for the environment. The secretariat had therefore been asked to revise the note taking into account the subcommittee discussions and the discussion at the current meeting and to submit the revised note for consideration at the joint meeting of the bureaux on 27 February 2018. The Environment Assembly Bureau was required to take a decision on the theme of the fourth session, in consultation with the Committee, no later than 31 March 2018. It was to be

hoped, therefore, that the joint bureaux retreat, to be held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March 2018, would reach consensus on the theme.

86. Before inviting comments from the floor, the Chair invited Mr. Ado Lõhmus, Special Envoy of the President of the Assembly, to deliver a message on behalf of Mr. Siim Kiisler, President of the United Nations Environment Assembly and Minister for the Environment of Estonia, and Mr. Thiaw, to provide an overview of the two possible themes proposed by the secretariat for the fourth session.

87. In his remarks, Mr. Lõhmus said that the President and his team were fully committed to addressing the lessons learned from the third session of the Environment Assembly, which had set a very high standard of success for the fourth session. He stressed that they would adopt a solution-oriented approach by focusing on acute environmental problems that were easy to communicate and could lead to citizen action, and that they would embrace the principles of inclusiveness by engaging with the private sector and civil society to seek their input and to raise the visibility of the Assembly; of cooperation, between member States, the bureaux and the secretariat, New York and Nairobi colleagues, and the Environment Assembly and key bodies such as the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the high-level political forum on sustainable development; and of ownership, by maintaining the consensus-based atmosphere that had prevailed at the third session.

88. With regard to the ministerial outcome document, Mr. Lõhmus said that before working on a zero draft of the document, it was important to discuss a follow-up mechanism for its implementation. As for the theme of the fourth session, he said that it should focus on the better use of resources, including natural, financial and temporal resources, and suggested that member States must work efficiently in the preparatory process and discuss solutions to acute environmental problems in order to make the best use of the time available in the lead-up to the fourth session.

89. In his presentation, the Deputy Executive Director said that the secretariat had identified “food and nature/biodiversity” and “sustainable consumption and production” as two possible themes for the fourth session, taking into account the suggestion by member States that the theme should resonate with the general public; appeal to decision makers; enhance partnerships with stakeholders, including member States, the private sector and civil society; and help the United Nations Environment Programme to move forward into its next programme of work.

90. The first proposed theme dealt with a topic that was of great importance to the world, given the need to feed an additional two billion people by 2050 without harming the planet. That challenge would require dealing with issues such as the use of pesticides and fertilizers; making agriculture much more efficient to prevent deforestation and degradation of key resources such as freshwater and soils; protecting pollinators; and addressing non-agricultural food production, such as the production of fish and seafood and forest products. Ministers at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly needed to be empowered to take action in order to feed the world in an environmentally sound manner, using scientific reports produced by bodies such as The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity initiative and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and to build partnerships with United Nations and other entities working on, or interested in, food-related issues. If tackled properly, he said, the theme would have a huge impact on the world and compel different actors to come together to address it.

91. The second proposed theme was equally topical, since the projected population of nine billion people by 2050 would have a higher income and a higher footprint on the planet than the current population. Ensuring that people’s consumption was sustainable was imperative in order to ensure that food, minerals and other resources on which the economy depended were not depleted. This would require a move away from linear economies – which were premised on the extraction, exploitation, usage and throwing away of resources, were not sustainable in the context of a growing population and shrinking resources and could be expected to lead to more conflicts over access to natural resources –to circular economies. The theme of sustainable consumption and production also offered enormous potential for partnerships, with actors such as the World Economic Forum, entities working on the circular economy and a range of United Nations entities, and the use of scientific reports such as those produced by the International Resource Panel.

92. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the note on selection criteria and possible themes for the fourth session and to the Deputy Executive Director for his oral presentation on the two themes described therein.

93. With regard to the selection criteria set out in the note, two representatives, speaking on behalf of groups of countries, suggested that there was no need to further discuss the criteria, which one said was useful but should not be seen as exhaustive, and proposed that member States focus their efforts on discussing and agreeing on the theme itself.

94. Noting that the United Nations Environment Programme and many other organizations were already paying attention to the two themes proposed by the secretariat, one representative expressed support for the theme of innovation, which she said was action-oriented, focused on solutions and could encompass tools and approaches, such as resource efficiency, waste reduction, adaptive management and the integration of environmental economic and social data platforms, to tackle issues discussed in the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook report.

95. While noting that all the proposed themes merited consideration, one representative expressed support for a theme focused on the nexus between food production and biodiversity, stressing that meeting the international demand for food and ensuring biodiversity protection were both key for human well-being but were often seen as two competing goals.

96. Another representative expressed support for the theme of sustainable consumption and production, stressing that it had global reach and was of interest to all countries and regions; it encompassed a wide range of environmental and socioeconomic topics and could help to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 12 and thereby improve quality of life for all; it was connected to the objective of the third session of achieving a pollution-free planet; and it would enable the participation of the private sector and civil society, given the shared responsibility among different stakeholders in sustainable consumption and production. She then suggested that the secretariat improve the outline of the goals of each of the proposed themes in the revised note.

97. With regard to the proposed new theme of innovation for the environment, one representative said that it was an overarching topic, of interest to all regions and countries, under which specific focus areas could be identified.

98. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for further exploring the two themes proposed by the secretariat, which, he said, presented a risk of overlaps with existing work but could be framed in a way that added value to such work. He said that the new proposed theme of innovation to be included in the revised note of the secretariat also deserved consideration, but he expressed concern that the theme could be framed either too narrowly, for instance as a tool for furthering the sustainable consumption and production or the sustainable agriculture agendas, or too loosely, given that environmental innovation could be linked to a very wide range of topics.

99. A number of representatives suggested that the theme of innovation could be framed in a way that accommodated the two themes proposed by the secretariat and any challenges identified by member States as critical, for instance by focusing on innovation for sustainable consumption and for the protection of biodiversity in food production.

100. One representative drew attention to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme entitled *Frontiers 2017: Emerging Issues of Environmental Concern*, which he said could help member States to set an overarching theme for the fourth session. He requested the secretariat to make a synthesis of the report available to member States.

101. In closing, the Chair encouraged member States to engage in informal consultations on the theme in order to make a strong recommendation to the Bureau of the Environment Assembly. He said that the secretariat would revise its note on possible themes for the fourth session in order to include the three themes proposed to date, and present the revised note for consideration by the two bureaux at their joint meeting on 27 February 2018, on which he would brief member States at the subcommittee meeting scheduled for 15 March 2018.

Agenda item 8

Preparation of the contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development

102. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the secretariat on the process of contributions of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development (UNEP/CPR/141/8). He said that the note had been prepared by the secretariat in response to Environment Assembly resolution 3/3, in which the Assembly had committed to conveying the main messages of its sessions to the high-level political forum on sustainable development and agreed to provide substantive inputs to the annual forum meetings.

The forum would meet in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018, and it was critical that it consider the outcomes of the third session of the Environment Assembly.

103. The Deputy Executive Director explained that the document (UNEP/CPR/141/8) provided an update on the process and timelines set up by the secretariat to provide inputs to the high-level political forum for its meeting to be held in July 2018. In response to a letter from the President of the Economic and Social Council to the President of the Environment Assembly requesting him to provide those inputs by 27 April 2018, the United Nations Environment Programme was preparing an inputs document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council. The secretariat would share a draft version of the document with the President of the Environment Assembly by 2 March 2018, and, after revising the document in the light of comments received from the President, it would submit a revised draft to the joint bureaux ahead of its retreat of 22 and 23 March 2018. The Committee, the bureaux and member States would then have the opportunity to provide comments on the revised draft by 6 April 2018. In addition to that written input, the United Nations Environment Programme was working with colleagues in New York to ensure that the President of the Assembly was able to participate in, and deliver an oral presentation to, the high-level political forum at its meeting in July 2018.

104. Drawing attention to paragraph 7 of the note, which set out timelines for the preparation of the written input to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, the representative of the secretariat noted that the Committee would have the opportunity to review the document and give its final approval thereon at its 142nd meeting, to be held in April 2018.

105. In the discussion that followed, representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat and to the Deputy Executive Director for the document and information provided, with many expressing support for the proposed way forward and for giving the President of the Environment Assembly the opportunity to deliver a statement to the high-level political forum and thereby increase the visibility of the Assembly.

106. With regard to the timelines proposed for the production of the document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, suggested that the draft version of the document be shared with the subcommittee prior to the joint bureaux retreat of 22 and 23 March 2018.

107. As for the document itself, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it should focus on the central theme of the July 2018 forum meeting and the Sustainable Development Goals to be discussed at the meeting, in the template proposed by the Economic and Social Council.

108. Another representative urged the United Nations Environment Programme to produce a document not longer than one page that provided the specific information that the Economic and Social Council had requested, stressing that the Programme was not a central concern of the high-level political forum. Another representative said that the document must be concise and reflect the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

109. Thanking representatives for their comments, the Deputy Executive Director clarified that the document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council would be submitted not on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme but on behalf of the Environment Assembly, which was a unique body with universal membership that had the legitimacy to deliver a message on the environmental dimension of sustainable development to the high-level political forum. It was critical therefore that representatives provide comments on the document and engage with their counterparts in New York in order to ensure that the President of the Assembly was allowed to deliver a message to the forum.

110. The Chair said that the secretariat would present to the subcommittee, between 13 and 15 March 2018, the draft document to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council, revise the document in the light of the discussions of the subcommittee and present it for consideration at the joint retreat of the bureaux on 22 and 23 March 2018.

Agenda item 9

Report of the subcommittee

111. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/141/9). He noted that since the 140th meeting of the Committee, eight subcommittee meetings, five secretariat briefing sessions, four informal consultations on resolutions/decisions and two informal consultations on the ministerial outcome document of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly had been held. The

secretariat had also provided several targeted briefings to member States on various topics, the details of which were provided in the above-mentioned document.

112. Stressing that two agenda items of the current meeting had overlapped with two agenda items of the subcommittee meeting held on 15 February 2018, and that there was limited value in repeating statements already made at the subcommittee meeting, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that in the future the secretariat should present a detailed summary of subcommittee meetings to the Committee and that member States should be invited to only provide comments on the way forward for items already discussed by the subcommittee.

113. The representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat strived to ensure that a detailed report of every subcommittee and Bureau meeting was produced by the rapporteur. Future subcommittee reports could therefore provide links to the summaries of each individual subcommittee meeting.

114. The Committee took note of the report.

Agenda item 10

Other matters

115. One representative requested that the secretariat make available the following documents to the Committee in order to enable the Committee to perform its oversight role: strategy on resource mobilization; stakeholder and private sector engagement strategies; strategy on communication and outreach, including outreach to non-resident missions; strategy on the regional and subregional presence of the United Nations Environment Programme; a list and an overview of all memorandums of understanding signed in 2017, and their financial implications; and information on the host country agreement with the Government of Kenya.

Agenda item 11

Closure of the meeting

116. The meeting was declared closed at 5.10 p.m. on Tuesday, 20 February 2018.
