

Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR)  
Bureau Meeting, Executive Board Room  
Monday 26 September 2016, 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm  
Executive Boardroom

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

### **1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.**

1. H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Chair of the Committee and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania, chaired this meeting, in which the following participated:

CPR Bureau members

- H.E. Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana, Vice Chair, Africa Group
- Mr. Pedro Cardoso, Deputy Permanent Representative, representing H.E. Ms. Marcela M. Nicodemos, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, Vice Chair, Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
- Mr. Shahbaz M. Malik, Deputy Permanent Representative, representing H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan, Vice Chair, Asia-Pacific Group

Observer

- Mr. Toni Sandell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Finland, nominated representative for West European and Other States Group

2. The UNEP Secretariat was represented by:

- Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director, UN Environment
- Mr. Ibrahim Thiaw, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment
- Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies
- Ms. Rosemary Mukasa, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies

### **2. Preparation for the 136<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

3. Under this agenda item, the Chair clarified that the document titled, "Lessons learned from UNEA-2 and way forward to UNEA-3," is a Chair's document and not one for negotiation. In his introductory remarks, the Executive Director said that the theme for the 2017 Environment Assembly should be selected as soon as possible. He said more resources were needed for communication and other negotiation formats and initiatives were required on sensitive issues. The Deputy Executive Director informed the meeting that the Chair's document was very comprehensive and would be used by the Secretariat in addition to its internal document. He noted that issues like the outcome document and deadlines for submission of draft resolutions were political issues best handled by the Committee of Permanent Representatives with the engagement of the Environment Assembly Bureau.

4. The Chair opened the floor for discussions. The lessons learnt document was welcomed. The need to determine how the unresolved matter of the stakeholder

engagement policy would be handled at the 2017 Environment Assembly was also raised.

5. Members supported the establishment of working group with a larger mandate in order to prioritize recommendations formulated by Committee members, including issues such as Rules of Procedure, selection criteria for themes and agenda of the Fourth Annual Subcommittee meeting. One member wished to see an open working group. Another requested that regional consultations ahead of the Environment Assembly be held in good time and proposed at least two interactions with the Executive Director to allow for follow up. The meeting underscored the need to enhance the visibility of UN Environment and the Environment Assembly globally and especially at the grassroots level.

6. One member requested the Secretariat to distribute the Rules of Procedure in the six working languages of the United Nations and to prepare and distribute a Delegates' Handbook. Another member proposed that the Secretariat invite the Office for Legal Affairs from New York to be available to interpret the Rules of Procedure at UN Environment Assembly and for discussions with Member States. It was suggested that UN Environment experiment with different formats for engaging non-resident members in discussions of the Committee.

#### **4. Agenda and organizational modalities of the fourth annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

7. Under this agenda item, the Deputy Executive Director made introductory remarks on behalf of the Secretariat. On the duration of the Subcommittee meeting, he noted that it was a decision for Member states.

8. The Chair opened the floor for comments from members. In the discussion that followed, the Secretariat was requested to prepare the agenda of the 4th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives by the end of 2016. One member expressed the view that this agenda should be discussed by the working group and should focus on the seven sub-programs to allow for in depth consideration of UN Environment's work. He also felt that the length of the Annual Sub-committee meeting should be determined by the agenda and that there should be a link between the thematic debate and 2017 Environment Assembly preparations. A proposal was also made to invite secretariats of different conventions to allow for in depth consideration of UN Environment's work. Another representative said his group required more time was needed to study the proposals.

9. On where the results of the UN Environment workshop on "Achieving environmental sustainability for sustainable development" that took place from in New York, would be discussed, it was proposed that recommendations of the Working Group should be raised at all meetings of Committee of Permanent Representatives, including in the proposed working group with the involvement of Secretariats of Multi-lateral Environment Agreements.

#### **5. Briefing on simplifying communication across the UN Environment Programme**

10. Using the implementation of the resolutions as a starting point, the Executive Director reminded the meeting that citizen engagement, including stakeholders and business community, is the foundation for implementation of environmental agenda. This was difficult to attain given the communication barrier between the UN and ordinary people. The UN used acronyms which people outside the system could not understand and language that did not resonate with the public. He informed the meeting that to

simplify communication, UNEP would be referred to as UN Environment and the names of all divisions had been simplified. DTIE would be called Economic Division, DELC would be legal and DEWA would be science. He assured the Bureau that that there was no agenda to change legal arrangements in the organization and this would be communicated to the 136<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee.

11. Members agreed on the need to simplify communication. One member requested for written communication that could be shared with capitals and asked whether the understanding on simplifying communication would be shared in New York. The Executive Director responded that a letter would be prepared for distribution to member states explaining the simplification of language. He added that change had to start somewhere and hoped that the simplification would inspire change in other parts of the UN system.

## **6. Dates for the next Bureau meeting**

12. The Chair informed the meeting that the next Committee Bureau meeting would be held on 2 November 2016.

## **7. Other Matters**

13. The Secretary of Governing Bodies briefed the meeting on the Joint UN Environment Assembly Bureau and Committee of Permanent Representatives Retreat. Under the guidance of the President of the Environment Assembly, the Secretariat was organizing a retreat to discuss key issues relating to the Environment Assembly. It was mapping out core issues around which a draft agenda had been prepared. The agenda would include a meeting of the Bureau to enable it to discharge its functions. He welcomed comments on additional components to the 1 page topic paper that had been circulated. Stakeholders' engagement was included in the Environment Assembly Bureau retreat agenda, which also included a component on how to expand partnerships in areas like the private sector.

14. In the discussion that followed one member said that the outcome of the retreat should be as concrete as possible regarding 2017 Environment Assembly preparations. Another required more clarity on the structure of the retreat and also proposed a meeting between members of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau and representatives of regional groups at the end of the session to enable Nairobi based Permanent Representatives to engage with the Environment Assembly Bureau. Another member requested a meeting of UN Environment Assembly Bureau with the whole Committee.

15. One member was grateful for the briefing on the Sixth Global Environment Outlook and requested for confirmation that a progress report would be presented to the 2017 Environment Assembly. Members looked forward to future briefings.

16. The Secretary of Governing Bodies informed the meeting that the Secretariat had revamped the online portal of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and that it would go live in the course of the week. The new portal would allow Members not resident in Nairobi to access documents. In line with the UN Environment Information Policy, information and public documents would be made accessible.

17. The Secretary further informed the meeting that Go-to-meeting had replaced video-conferencing as the mode of remote participation for Geneva and Addis Ababa based representatives. In response to a question on the inclusion of non-resident members in negotiations, the Secretary informed the meeting that this would only be possible in the next phase.

18. On the calendar of the Committee, the Chair requested the inclusion on an

additional meeting of the informal working Group to prepare for the Environment Assembly Bureau retreat. 18 October 2016 was suggested.

19. The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.