

Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) to the
United Nations Environment Programme
Informal Open-ended Working Group meeting
Thursday 10 November 2016
09:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.,
UNON Gigiri, Conference Room 4

Strengthening the procedures and governance of the Assembly and the Committee of the Permanent Representatives: communication guidelines for the Secretariat of Governing Bodies

In line with its duties under Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure and in an effort to make the work of the governing bodies of the UN Environment Programme more visible and accessible to a wider public the Secretariat of Governing Bodies¹ has introduced a number of measures to enhance the transparency of its activities and the support provided to Governments and Stakeholders.

The changes include setting up a user-friendly website enabled with the capacity to simplify access and searches for documentation relevant to the work of the governing bodies of the UN Environment Programme.

This Guidance Note spells out the basic criteria that the Secretariat will follow with regards to the management of information related to the work of these Governing Bodies of the UN Environment Programme shared by electronic means (email) and through the portals associated with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the UN Environment Assembly, in a manner consistent with the UNEP Access to Information Policy (<http://www.unep.org/delc/Portals/119/documents/REVISED-access-to-information-policy-Jan-2016.pdf>).

The policy was established by the Executive Director on 3 February 2016.

Documentation

Examples of documentation relevant to the work of the Governing Bodies of UN Environment consist generally of three categories: pre-session documents, in-session document and post-session documents.

Pre-session documents are presented to participants in advance of the session to help them prepare for consideration of each agenda item. Pre-session documents consist of: Official working documents (UNEP/EA.2/x) and Information documents (UNEP/EA.2/INF/x). Some documents are denoted with .../Add.x or .../Rev.x symbols, where .../Add.x refers to "addendum"

¹ To be renamed Governance Affairs Office

to a main document and .../Rev.x refers to "revision" to the original document.

In-session documents are working documents that are presented and considered “in-session”. Due to the temporary and sometimes politically sensitive nature of these documents, in many cases especially during the sessions of the Assembly or during informal consultations conducted during the inter-sessional period, these are available only to the participating delegates on an “in-session documentation portal”. In-session documents consist of the following: Limited documents (UNEP/EA.2/L.x), Conference room papers (UNEP/EA.2/CRP.x) and non-papers.

Post-session documents refer to final documents issued after the conclusion of the session or meeting, including meeting proceedings, summaries and resolutions and decisions that have been adopted.

In addition, written reactions, inputs or contributions sent by Member States or accredited organizations related to a specific meeting which are transmitted to the Secretariat after a meeting will be considered post-session documents.

Communications

Communications include, but are not limited, to emails to Permanent Missions sent to and from the official account of the Secretariat (sgb@unep.org) by the Secretary, Note Verbales and letters from the Secretariat.

Public portals

The Secretariat will maintain and regularly update the following public portals

<https://web.unep.org/unea>

<https://web.unep.org/about/cpr>

<https://myunea.org>

Restricted portals

The Secretariat will maintain portals whose access will be restricted to Members for specific purposes. An example is <https://papersmart.unon.org/>.

Public meetings

Examples of public meetings include, but are not limited to meetings of the UN Environment Assembly, its sessional committees, such as the Committee of the Whole and working parties as well as the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Subcommittee meetings and Working Groups unless the body concerned decides otherwise as per rule 67 of the Rules of Procedure of the UN Environment Assembly.

Other examples of public meetings include informal briefings organized by the Secretariat and consultations and meetings organized by the Secretariat with organizations representing the Major Groups and Stakeholders, unless the Secretariat, as organizer of the meeting, decides

otherwise.

In the case of public meetings, the Secretariat will make public the provisional agenda, working documents, informational materials, statements, presentations and any other relevant document presented prior or during the meeting, unless deemed sensitive by the presiding officer or the Secretariat, in which case these will be made available only to the participating delegates on an “in-session documentation portal” or transmitted directly via electronic means (email).

Private meetings

Examples of private meetings include, but are not limited to the meetings of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly, the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Consultations of the Executive Director with the Regional and Political Groups and any other informal consultation organized by the Secretariat of bilateral, regional or multilateral deemed private in nature.

In the case of the meetings of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly, the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Secretariat will make public, upon approval by the presiding officer, the timing, venue and annotated provisional agenda for the meeting while indicating its private nature.

Following the meeting and upon the clearance of the rapporteur, the presiding officer and other members of the respective Bureau, the Secretariat will make available in the relevant electronic portal summaries of the meetings, without attribution.

Communications from the Secretariat to all Permanent Missions

The Secretariat will continue to transmit regularly to Member States in a timely manner communications and documents generated by Member States, the Secretariat, or Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations in connection with Public Meetings, where appropriate to Private Meetings and to other matters relevant to the work of UN Environment.

To enhance efficiency, load of such communications the Secretariat will share electronic links and/or updates (instead of attached files) in those cases when the information is also made available in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

In addition, when several documents are being made available in connection to a specific meeting (generated by Member States, the Secretariat, or Accredited Non-Governmental Organizations), the Secretariat will try to consolidate such updates to reduce the number of communications sent out to Member States.

Where the communication being distributed is not made available on a public portal, the Secretariat will continue to attach the document files.

The Secretariat will maintain an annual registry of dispatched communications to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Ministers of the Environment and Members of the UN

Environment Assembly and to the Bureau of the Environment Assembly and the Bureau of Committee of Permanent Representatives. The Secretariat will retransmit to Member States any communication not received.

Statements

Statements are written records of a speech delivered by a representative of a Member State, an accredited organization or representative having obtained the permission of the President of chairperson of the meeting.

Statements and comments delivered during public meetings that are made available to the Secretariat will be posted as part of the in-session documentation as soon as possible in the relevant public portal and will not be circulated to Member States, unless otherwise requested by Member States. The same applies to comments and inputs made by Member States to presentations made by the Secretariat or others.

The Secretariat strongly encourages Member States to share their statements through email.

Communications to Regional Groups

Unless otherwise requested by the Chair of a Regional Group, the Secretariat will not distribute to members of any given regional group communications addressed to the Chair of a regional group. The Secretariat will understand that the respective Chairs of the Regional Group will distribute upon their discretion such information and documentation to their members and will liaise with the Secretariat accordingly. This will include invitations to Regional Group Consultations with the Executive Director and related communication.

Communications to Political Groups

Unless otherwise requested by the Chair of a Political Group, the Secretariat will not distribute to members of any given Political Group communications addressed to the Chair of a political group. The Secretariat will understand that the respective Chairs of the Political Group will distribute upon their discretion such information and documentation to their members and will liaise with the Secretariat accordingly. This will include invitations to Political Group Consultations with the Executive Director and related communication.

Communications with Member States that have not accredited a Permanent Representative to UN Environment Programme

In order to enhance the participation of Member States of the UN Environment Assembly during the inter-sessional period, particularly in the activities of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Secretariat will develop a list of contacts composed of the National Focal Points and Permanent Missions in New York and Geneva. The Secretariat will distribute to Member States that have not accredited a Permanent Representative to UN Environment Programme the same information that is made available to the Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

In addition the Secretariat shall regularly contact non-resident representatives of member states inviting them to nominate a focal point to be based in a relevant ministry or in a permanent mission to the UN to participate in online debates and other interactive sessions as relevant.

Notes Verbales

The Secretariat will circulate Note Verbales and accompanying attachments to all Member States if so requested by the sending Permanent Mission.

When the Note Verbale in question is produced in connection with a public meeting, the Secretariat will post the Note Verbale and its annexes (if any) on the relevant meeting page in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

In such cases, and to reduce the load of such communications, the Secretariat will share electronic links (instead of attached files) as the Note Verbale is also made available in the public portals maintained by the Secretariat.

Maintenance of the mailing lists

The Secretariat will strive to maintain updated directories of Ministers responsible for the Environment, National Focal Points and Permanent Missions to ensure that communications reach promptly to their intended recipient. Permanent Missions are entitled and in fact urged to communicate promptly to the Secretariat updates as soon as possible when changes arise, especially with respect to the following:

- Ministers responsible for the Environment
- National Focal Point in charge of matters related to the UN Environment Programme
- Permanent Representative to the UN Environment Programme
- Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Environment Programme

In the cases of Member States that have not accredited a Permanent Representative the Secretariat will act upon updates submitted through appropriate diplomatic channels.