

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Sub-Committee Meeting  
Thursday 30 March 2017  
9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.,  
United Nations Office at Nairobi Gigiri,  
Conference Room 4

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

#### **Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

1. The Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan, called the meeting to order, welcomed members and invited them to consider and adopt the agenda.
2. The Agenda was adopted without any amendments.

#### **Agenda Item 2: Update on the Joint Bureaux meeting of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

3. High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, provided an update on the outcomes of the joint meeting of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, which took place on 22 March 2017 from 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm (Nairobi time).
4. High Commissioner, H.E. Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar, proceeded to enumerate the main decisions of the joint meeting as follows:
  - a) Both bureaux will continue working together in preparation for the 2017 Environment Assembly and will hold a Second Preparatory Retreat 9-10 June 2017, in Costa Rica.
  - b) The negotiated wording of the theme of the Assembly: “*Towards a Pollution-Free Planet*” was endorsed and adopted as the official theme of the 2017 Environment Assembly.
  - c) The proposal on the timeline for submissions of draft resolutions as contained in the Chair’s Summary of the Fourth Annual Subcommittee’s meeting was endorsed and adopted without prejudice to the Rules of Procedure.
  - d) The table of required documentation for the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the 2017 Environment Assembly as amended through the Chair’s Summary of the Fourth Annual Subcommittee was endorsed.

- e) It was agreed that the Committee of Permanent Representatives will continue to engage Member States in further deliberations on the structure of the 2017 Environment Assembly taking into account the views already expressed by Member States.
  - f) The President of the Assembly was encouraged to continue to lead early consultations aimed at developing in a timely manner a Ministerial Outcome Document linked to the theme of the Assembly. The Ministerial Outcome Document should be succinct, actionable, appealing and drafted in a language that is easy to understand.
5. The meeting was also informed that the President of the UN Environment Assembly shared his vision and timelines for a ministerial outcome document for the 2017 Environment Assembly. On draft resolutions for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly, members of the Joint Bureaux reiterated the view that the number and lengths of these should be limited given the restricted time available.

### **Agenda Item 3: Consideration of the revised structure of the 2017 Environment Assembly**

6. The Secretariat made a Power Point presentation on the revised structure of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. The presentation covered key elements of the structure such as: (a) Opening Plenary; (b) Committee of the Whole; (c) High Level Segment Official Opening; (d) National Statements; (e) Leadership Dialogues; (f) Commitments (not pledges); (g) General Plenary; and also alluded to (i) Participation of Heads of State.
7. Following the presentation by the Secretariat, members made comments and requested for clarification and more information on the structure of the Assembly. Some members welcomed the idea to have a wrap-up session on Wednesday morning of the Assembly to highlight commitments made this far and those announced during leadership dialogue and national statements.
8. The Secretariat emphasized that deliberations at the Committee of the Whole close on Monday, so as to allow for document translations and circulation one day before it is presented for adoption by the Assembly on Wednesday afternoon.
9. One member suggested that opening remarks should be minimized and time-limited in order to accelerate negotiations. It was recommended that time allocated to Opening Remarks on Monday, the first day of the Assembly, be restricted to three minutes.
10. On National Statements, it was recommended that these should be provided with a suitable environment for their delivery, be of limited number, and where possible, broadcast of pre-recorded statements be encouraged to create a balance and avoid losing the critical audience to the Leadership Dialogues. National Statements in these instances are critical in terms of delivering different national commitments.

11. It was recalled that the Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux in October 2016, had recommended that these Pre-recordings of National Statements be facilitated with the support of the Conference Services of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, so that they form an integral part of the proceedings and be incorporated into the records of the Assembly. Therefore, Member States are encouraged to make these pre-recordings available on the designated Assembly *website* as well as on social media platforms in advance of the 2017 Environment Assembly.
12. Further to the discussion of the structure, members suggested that the Executive Director and the President of the Environment Assembly introduces the theme of the Assembly at the Opening Plenary, before the Leadership Dialogue commences. In addition, it was critical to identify and develop a list of speakers well in advance.in accordance to Rule #35 and practices of the General Assembly.
13. On the Leadership Dialogues, members requested for more information and clarity on how these would be structured. Use of social media to engage, trigger, stimulate, and sustain discussion on topical issues of the theme was recommended to make the dialogues more open and attractive.
14. The Secretariat emphasized that the participation of accredited stakeholders during the Assembly is critical. The Secretariat offered to provide the list of these stakeholders in advance to the Member states and reiterated that in accordance with Rules of Procedures, major groups and stakeholders could take the floor at the discretion of the chair. .
15. It was also recalled that during the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly in 2016, stakeholder dialogue was an integral part of the Assembly, and this should be reflected accordingly.
16. Some members requested the Secretariat to clarify on the following subjects: (a) the distinct objectives and relationship between Leadership Dialogue and Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues; (b) how different meetings of these dialogues will be connected to each other and what would be the expectations; (c) possible impacts of these dialogues on the outcome of the Assembly. Members also pointed out that it was critical to assign actual time (duration) to discuss and endorse the ministerial outcome document on the last day of the Assembly.
17. Concerns were raised about availability of adequate interpretation and translation services. Referring to the challenges raised during the Second Session UN Environment Assembly, some members expressed the view that the Secretariat needs to mobilize regional resources in terms of interpretation with a focus of saving costs.
18. At the request by the Secretariat, Mr. Francisco Vasquez, Chief of Meeting Coordination Unit, UN Office at Nairobi, made a few remarks on the foreseen challenges in terms of sourcing additional interpreters. He pointed out that two teams of internally sourced

interpreters would be assigned in parallel during the three days of the Assembly. However, additional teams of interpreters could be recruited externally, upon request, which will require additional resources.

19. He further informed the members that interpreters could be hired internally, locally and/or externally: from the Middle East for Arabic interpretations; from Europe for other languages such as Spanish and Russian. He also informed that Nairobi duty station was going to be strengthened in terms of Chinese language interpreters.
20. The Secretariat further underscored that, if agreed, no later than Monday, 4 December, 2017 translated resolutions will be circulated by at least one day before their adoption and coordination with the UN Office at Nairobi is already under-way.
21. On the possibility of participation of Heads of State and Governments, it was mentioned that their presence could raise the profile and visibility of the Assembly. The Secretariat took note, however, of the challenges and risks associated with it.
22. Members adopted the Preliminary Structure for the 2017 Environment Assembly as a basis for further discussion and requested the Secretariat to amend following recommendations by members.
23. In conclusion, H.E. Ms Julia Pataki, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania summarized the action points agreed to by the members and closed the meeting.
24. The meeting closed at 10:48 am.