

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

DRAFT CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Main outcomes of the meeting

The Bureaux of the Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, together with the Chairpersons of the African Group of States, the Latin American and Caribbean Group of States and the European Union:

- **Welcomed** the content of the concept note by the Secretariat for the theme of the fourth Environment Assembly, as revised by the Secretariat on September 3rd;
 - **Welcomed** the development of a communication strategy for the Assembly, including proposals to use media-friendly messages in all 6 UN official languages, and underlined the need to reach out to all relevant stakeholders;
 - **Welcomed** the inclusive consultations led by the President of the Assembly to elaborate strong and action-oriented political message linked to the theme of the Assembly, and **agreed** that the President should produce a zero-draft of the Ministerial Outcome Document as a basis for further consultations;
 - **Endorsed** a draft structure of the fourth session of the Assembly, as amended at the meeting, and **took note** of a draft structure of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives which will be further considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
 - **Recommended** that an Action Plan towards a pollution free planet should be considered as a potential outcome of the fourth Assembly, and agreed to intensify consultations with Member States, including through the Committee of Permanent Representatives in Nairobi;
 - **Endorsed** draft guidance to Member States on the submission of draft resolutions to the fourth Assembly, including recommended time frames and deadlines;
 - **Agreed** to continue the practice of engaging in interactive dialogues with representatives from key stakeholders who which to contribute to a successful Environment Assembly;
 - **Mandated** the Secretariat to start developing a vision for a long-term global environment agenda and elaborate a stock-taking analysis of the UN Environment Programme and its governing bodies.
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AGENDA ITEM 1: Opening of the Joint Preparatory Retreat and adoption of the agenda

1. The President of the Assembly welcomed participants and opened the meeting, followed by opening remarks from H.E. Mrs. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and Mr. Erik Solheim, Executive Director UN Environment Programme. A list of participants can be found in [Annex 1](#).
2. A minute of silence was observed in honor of the late former UN Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan.
3. The meeting adopted the agenda (available [here](#)).

AGENDA ITEM 2: Theme and main outcomes of the Assembly

4. The Secretariat introduced a revised concept note on the theme of the Assembly (available [here](#)), a note on the main outcomes of the Assembly (available [here](#)), and a note on a communication strategy for the Assembly (available [here](#)).
5. The meeting reconfirmed that the outcomes of the Assembly should contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outcome document and the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), including the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns.

6. The meeting agreed to the contents of the concept note for the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly, as revised by the Secretariat on 3 September 2018. Participants reiterated that the concept note is a Secretariat document and emphasized that the theme of the Assembly should be considered in an integrated and balanced manner. Participants also requested that the Secretariat be guided by the concept note when developing background documents for the High-Level segment, Leadership Dialogues and communication materials for the Assembly.
7. The meeting agreed that the background documents should explore environmental and business challenges relating to food systems, chemicals and waste, energy and the cross-cutting issues of resource efficiency, the use of “big data” and information, and partnerships. The document should also focus on how to create innovative business development, and on innovative solutions that can be scaled-up.
8. The meeting welcomed an update by the Secretariat on the communication strategy for the Assembly (available [here](#)), including proposals to use media friendly messages such as “Think Beyond, Live Within” and “SolveDifferent”, and provided guidance to the Secretariat on the further development of a communication strategy, including stronger alignments to the different components of the theme, an emphasis on storytelling, social media engagement, and assets that will support outreach by and through member States, civil society and the private sector. The Secretariat was requested to report back by the beginning of October. Participants also requested the Secretariat to give attention to the provision of tools and templates that will facilitate their own communication efforts, including to support engagement of stakeholders and outreach down to local levels.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Key messages and Ministerial Outcome Document

9. The meeting welcomed the efforts by the President of the Assembly to develop an outline of the Ministerial Outcome Document for the Assembly (available [here](#)), and the inclusive process of consultations to forge consensus on a document with a strong and action-oriented political message linked to the theme of the Assembly.
10. The meeting also provided substantive comments to the draft outline of the Ministerial Outcome Document. The President committed to develop a Zero Draft Ministerial Outcome Document to be shared to Member States by end of September 2018, taking into consideration the feedback received at the meeting and submissions received from Member States in writing. Participants underlined the need for the Outcome Document to reflect results from key global environmental assessments, and supported the proposed roadmap for negotiations as outlined in the President’s letter dated 8 August 2018 (available [here](#)).

AGENDA ITEM 4: Preparations for the Fourth Session of the UN Environment Assembly

4.1 Structure of the Assembly and the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

11. The meeting endorsed a draft structure of the Assembly, with an amendment to include a reference to the report of the International Resource Panel on day 3 of the Assembly, and the delivery of a summary of the discussions related to the science/policy interface on the final day of the Assembly. In addition, the meeting agreed that it will be important to observe the time limits set for national speeches are set and observed, and to offer the possibility to submit pre-recorded messages. Participants took note of the draft structure of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, which will be further considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The structure of the Assembly is available [here](#).

4.2 Themes for the Leadership Dialogues at the High-Level Segment

12. The meeting took note of the Secretariat note on Leadership dialogues (available [here](#)), and requested the Secretariat to develop a full concept note on the themes for the Leadership Dialogues

by mid-October, considering, among others, the three focus areas contained in the agreed Concept Note on the theme for the Assembly. The Secretariat was encouraged to take into account lessons learnt from previous leadership dialogues such as the need to improve interactivity and participation amongst Ministers, to reflect the Science Policy Interface (including the Global Environmental Outlook) and to highlight partnerships.

13. The meeting also underscored that the leadership dialogues should provide an opportunity to reach out to stakeholders and leaders outside the environmental sphere, and that the outcome of the dialogues should be adequately reported to the closing plenary and included in the report of the Assembly.

4.3 Update on the Action Plan towards a pollution free planet

14. The meeting welcomed progress towards the development of an implementation plan on pollution as a follow-up to the third session of the UN Environment Assembly (available [here](#)), and requested the Secretariat to organize consultations with Member States preferably by the end of September, through the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to ensure broad ownership, and, where relevant, alignment with the Programme of Work and Budget. Participants supported a proposal by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to appoint, in consultation with the President, co-facilitators to lead a process towards the adoption of the implementation plan as a key outcome of the Assembly.

4.4 Engagement of stakeholders, including the private sector

15. The meeting considered a Secretariat note on the status of engagement of major groups and stakeholders, including the private sector, in the preparations of the next session of the Assembly (available [here](#)), and encouraged the Secretariat to ensure a balanced approach in the engagement towards civil society and the private sector as well as all other relevant stakeholders. Participants also recognized the efforts by the Executive Director to increase the allocation of resources to support engagement with the major groups.

4.5 Guidance to Member States on Assembly resolutions

16. The meeting endorsed the draft guidance to member States on the submission of resolutions to the Assembly prepared by the Secretariat, specifying that member States should inform the Secretariat of their intent to submit resolutions as soon as possible but no later than **15 November 2018**, and that the draft resolutions should be submitted no later than **21 January 2019**. Participants invited the President of the Assembly to communicate this guidance to all member States. Some participants suggested that a review of the rules of procedure regarding submission of draft resolutions should be undertaken, while others cautioned against such an approach.
17. The meeting also requested that consultations on draft resolutions should be convened as early as possible upon submission and emphasized the need to include information on for example possible financial implications and on the impact on the Programme of Work. Final negotiations on resolutions should take place during the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

4.6 Preparatory regional ministerial meetings and other relevant meetings

18. The meeting underscored the importance of strong regional preparatory processes contributing to the Environment Assembly (an overview is available [here](#)), and highlighted the importance of involvement and participation of individual Bureau members at relevant regional meetings, to help raise visibility and awareness of the Assembly in the regions and learn about regional political priorities.

AGENDA ITEM 5: A long term vision for the global environmental agenda in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda

19. The President invited Professor Pamela Chasek, an independent expert to the Secretariat, to briefly introduce the topic and the discussion paper on “Stockholm + 50” (available [here](#)) and a new long-term vision for the Environmental agenda (presentation available [here](#)).
20. Participants welcomed the presentation as an opportunity to reflect on the role of the UN Environment Assembly in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Participants noted that the 50th anniversary of the UN Conference on the Human Environment (the Stockholm Conference) and the UN Environment Programme in 2022 represents a potential opportunity to take stock of achievements made and consider whether a new long term vision for the global environment may be needed.
21. The meeting agreed to consider this issue further, underscoring the need for an in-depth assessment through a stock-taking exercise of the role of the UN Environment Programme and its governing bodies, with close involvement by the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Development of a new UN Environment Programme of Work and Budget for 2020-21

22. The Secretariat presented a note on the development of a new Programme of Work and Budget for the period 2020-21 (available [here](#)), including with regard to the timeline for finalization of a draft Programme of Work, and several budget options. The Secretariat highlighted efforts in aligning the sub-programmes at both impact and expected accomplishment levels to the Sustainable Development Goals as well as to other internationally agreed environmental goals.
23. Participants discussed various budget options, noting the trend towards lower environment fund (unearmarked funds) contributions, and higher extrabudgetary (earmarked) contributions which may restrict the space of the Programme to more address new and emerging priorities. It was suggested that the Secretariat should base the draft budget on a realistic forecast while at the same time sustaining the expectation that member states to maintain or increase their voluntary contributions, taking into account the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions (VISC). The Secretariat acknowledged the need to scale up resource mobilization efforts.
24. The meeting underlined the need to provide sufficient time for member States to thoroughly review the final draft Programme of Work and Budget before adoption by the Assembly.

AGENDA ITEM 8: Consideration of the draft summary from the Retreat, and closure of the meeting

25. The President of the Assembly and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives presented a draft Chair’s summary of the discussions, and invited participants to submit possible comments on the draft Summary by 12th of September at the latest, after which the document will be finalized and circulated to all member States.
26. Participants commended the Government of Estonia for the generous hospitality and organizational efforts which allowed for a successful meeting. The meeting also lauded the initiative of the Government of Estonia to convene the Earth Innovation Forum on the 5th of September as a significant national contribution to the preparation for the Assembly.
27. The meeting closed at 17:30.

Dialogue with representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders on preparations for the Assembly

28. The President welcomed Leida Rijnhout (representing the Stakeholder Forum), Jouni Nissinen (EEB, president) and Merili Vares from the Let’s Do It movement to present views and questions from stakeholders on the preparations for the Assembly.
29. The meeting took note with appreciation of the contribution the stakeholder representatives (a summary is available [here](#)), and held engaged in a rich and interactive exchange of views. It was agreed to continue the practice of organizing regular dialogues with stakeholder representatives at future meetings.