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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.
