

## Comments from Canada on the Review Process by the CPR 14 January 2020

### 1. Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives: Implementation of paragraphs 9-13 of Decision UNEP/EA.4/2 entitled "Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly".

a) Consolidation of discussions held at the 1st consultation meetings on 31 October and 26 November 2019, on the basis of a document entitled "Emerging consensual elements" from the co-facilitators, and taking into account meeting summaries from the previous consultations.

Canadian comments on the "Emerging consensual elements" document from the co-facilitators (30 December 2019 draft):

Canada regrets not being able to participate from capital. We welcome the draft "emerging consensual elements" drafted by the co-facilitators and offer the following feedback for consideration:

Regarding proposal 1. reproduced below:

- it would be important to specify examples of the "UNEA-related events and campaigns" for which the Theme would provide a framework, including the Science-Policy Business Forum.
- At the end of the sentence, what "established practices" does this refer to? The same comment applies to *Proposal 9*. Referring to "established practices" may not be adequate or relevant anymore because we are precisely undertaking a review of governance.
- 1. *Under the guidance of the UNEA Bureau and the Secretariat, ensure that the UNEA theme provides a framework for the political debate at high-level segment as well as for other UNEA-related events and campaigns, and that it provides "soft guidance" for Member States in their preparation of draft UNEA resolutions, while fully respecting Member States' right to table draft resolutions on any subject in accordance with the UNEA Rules of Procedures and established practices.*

Regarding Proposals 2, 3 and 4 reproduced below:

- Technically, there is no such thing as the "Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives". There is a "open-ended meeting of the CPR" (which lasts 5 days etc), as decided by decision GC 27/2 para 10) Likewise the Annual SubCommittee is technically a "meeting", not a separate body.
- Here we would like to reinforce the view expressed by many as captured in the Meeting Summary issued on 26 November, that there is a need to ensure a common understanding of the established functions of the CPR, the Open Ended meeting of the CPR, the Subcommittee, and Annual Subcommittee etc before adopting potential changes to ensure no overlap/ambiguity in mandates.
- As also captured in the Meeting Summary of the 1<sup>st</sup> consultation, changing the names of some of the bodies or meeting will require a UNEA decision, even if the mandates

technically may not change. The input of the UNEP legal team will be important in determining any consequences on organization and structure resulting from the changes.

2. **Organize, as a general practice and unless otherwise decided by UNEA, meetings of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives back-to-back** with the UN Environment Assembly, while ensuring effective, participatory and inclusive intersessional preparations.
3. **Designate the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives as a "Preparatory Committee for the UN Environment Assembly" (UNEA PREPCOM)**, while keeping its current mandate, as established in UNEP Governing Council decision 27/2, unchanged.
4. **Designate the Annual Subcommittee meeting as a "Review and Oversight Committee"**, while keeping its existing mandate, as established in UNEP Governing Council decision 27/2, unchanged.

#### Proposal 5 (reproduced below):

The question of enabling all MS to participate in the negotiations of resolutions i.e. avoiding multiple concurrent meetings is also (and particularly) true for the Open-ended meeting of the CPR and any WG that may be set up during that week. We recommend the proposal explicitly captures this. Currently it reads like it is limited to the UNEA high level segment and other UNEA events.

5. *Under the guidance of the UNEA Bureau and the Secretariat, **create an optimal balance between political negotiations, the UNEA high-level Segment, and official and non-official UNEA events**, to ensure political ownership and to enable, as far as possible, all Member States to participate in the negotiations on UNEA resolutions. This may entail limiting the number of side events and other events, and minimizing overlaps in the scheduling and structure of UNEA sessions.*

#### Proposal 8 (reproduced below):

- It will take more than "better scheduling" of the Science-Policy Business Forum and the Sustainable Innovation Expo to enhance the science-policy interface there. The design and programming of the Business Forum and Expo should be done with this in mind.
- The proposal of "dedicated briefings and consultations on the theme and proposed resolutions" is loosely worded. In general, the proposals should be specific enough to enact real change. Generalities will not enact change. The briefings should be done by the scientific community in conjunction with UNEP and ensure science properly feeds into the resolutions, the selection of the theme and UNEA events.
- The overall goal is to make the bridge between science and policy easier to cross and to ensure UNEA events and outcomes are informed by the latest science.

8. *Under guidance of the UNEA Bureau and the Secretariat, **strengthen science-policy interface at UNEA**, including by strategic scheduling of the Science-Policy-Business Forum and the Sustainable Innovation Expo, making best use of flagship scientific environmental assessments, and by facilitating science-based decision making through the provision of dedicated briefings and consultations on the theme of UNEA and/or proposed resolutions.*

#### Proposal 10 (reproduced below):

Like the comment on proposal 8, proposals that state generalities and the obvious or repeat what is already done will not enact change towards improve efficiencies and impact. Executive decisions and conclusions from the CPR and other bodies (like the proposed possible "Review and Oversight Committee") should be clearly and explicitly recorded as official records available in an easily retrievable repository.

10. Under the guidance of the CPR Bureau and the Secretariat, **improve the identification and formulation of decisions and conclusions from CPR meetings**, including through strategic and timely scheduling of CPR meetings and high-quality documentation from the Secretariat, such as annotated agendas, background documentation and meeting summaries.

b) The respective roles and responsibilities of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly and of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, including those related to interactions with their respective constituencies (Decision 4/2, subparagraph 10 (b)), on the basis of background documentation from the Secretariat.

Canadian comments:

The Secretariat note called “Options under subparagraph 10(b)”, issued on 24 December 2019, outlines options (not all mutually exclusive) regarding the UNEA and the CPR Bureaux in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.5.

- Regarding roles and responsibilities of the Bureau, the development of Terms of References (TORs) for both Bureaux should help reduce overlap. Generally speaking, the Bureau of the CPR is focused on the functioning of the CPR while the UNEA Bureau is concerned with preparing UNEA. That said, decisions on modifying Bureaux or on TORs should not be made independently of decisions on the names, governance, role and mandate of the CPR and the Open Ended meeting of the CPR to ensure a holistic view and consistency.
- Bureau members should represent their respective regional groups and therefore conduct adequate consultations.
- If Joint UNEA and CPR Bureaux meetings are held, objectives of such meetings should be clarified in accordance with the mandate of both Bureaux and bodies.
- Bureau members have an individual role to play in increasing the visibility, relevance, reach and impact of UNEA and UNEP in other global and regional fora, and of disseminating UNEA outcomes. It would be relevant to assess what would help empowering Bureau members in that role, including through the development of possible supporting tools, such as a guidance.