



**149th meeting
of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP
18 February 2020**

**Interventions on behalf of the European Union
and its Member States**

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Executive Director

- Chair, Madam Executive Director, distinguished colleagues; it is my privilege to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Serbia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.
- I would like to thank the Executive Director for her report, which is a very useful tool to keep the CPR up to date on recent developments. We encourage you to continue providing this information. I would like to refer in particular to the important evidence brought to our attention and the attention of parties meeting at the Climate COP in Madrid towards the end of last year, through the series of scientific reports, including the 2019 Emissions Gap Report.
- These and other evidence-based activities of UNEP, are setting the tone for this year, 2020, the “Super Year for Nature”, to quote Madam Executive Director. This is indeed a year that we must not waste and we have to rise to the challenge and take the opportunity to agree a new ambitious and accountable biodiversity framework with a clear overarching target that could drive and lead the efforts of the international community and all

relevant stakeholders at all levels. In the same 2020 year we must meet the already overdue commitment to implement the Paris Climate Agreement. Dear colleagues, today's collective ambition is so low, that, according to UNEP's report, we would need to come up with five times stronger NDCs, if we want to keep the warming of our Planet below 1.5 degrees. And we hope that we will be on the right track to achieve this goal before the next Climate COP in Glasgow, taking place later this year.

- However, most of all, we would like to see that the environmental agenda ceases to be fragmented and that policies and actions are integrating responses across all dimensions, whether climate, biodiversity, pollution or otherwise. So that the detrimental effects of environmental degradation that undercut sustainable development are fully recognised and addressed.
- And for that we need a strong UNEP and UNEA that truly sets the global environmental agenda. As we approach the 50th anniversary of UNEP, the EU and its Member States, would like to thank Sweden and Kenya for their joint proposal to kick-start a process at UNEA-5 in February next year and to culminate in a UN High Level Meeting in 2022, in Stockholm. We see this as a great opportunity to mobilise urgent action to lead the world to a sustainable path.
- While a lot remains to be done, we are pleased to see increased efforts by UNEP in promoting the environmental dimension in the UN system. As stated on previous occasions, we would like to receive regular updates on activities under the Environment Management Group and UNEP's engagement with the UN Resident Coordinator System. We welcome also the update on UNEP's achievements in methodology for the SDG indicators and look forward to a continued update on the alignment of UNEP's Programme of Work with the 2030 Agenda. One particular opportunity

emerging in the near future is the meeting of the UN Chief Executive Officers to be held in May in Nairobi. We would like to ask that the CPR be duly informed about the preparations as well as the outcomes of that meeting as well as UNEP's activities and achievements in this regard. We are also grateful for the update and welcome the increasing cooperation between UNEP and other relevant UN agencies, like UNDP, FAO, WHO and, of course, UN-Habitat.

- As regards UNEP's financial status, we note with appreciation the adoption by UNGA of the Programme Budget for 2020, but are concerned about the continued funding gap for sessions of UNEA. It is of fundamental importance that this issue is addressed in order to ensure enough resources for a strengthened and relevant UNEA.
- Lastly, Chair, allow me to thank the Executive Director for the update on regional activities. As far as Europe is concerned, we look forward to the visit by Ms Andersen and her team to Brussels in early March for the EU-UNEP high level meeting in view of enhancing our multilateral cooperation on climate, biodiversity, circular economy and international environmental governance in the context the new EU policy the European Green Deal. I am also pleased to inform my distinguished colleagues that the European Commission agreed in January to support with ca. EUR 16 million twelve UNEP projects in areas directly contributing to the Programme of Work and Multilateral Environmental Agreements.
- I thank you Chair, I thank you colleagues and wish all of us a very fruitful meeting today.

Agenda Item 5: Implementation of par.8 of UNEA Decision 4/2 (UNEP@50)

- The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) thank the Executive Director for the oral update on UNEP's preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972; we also appreciate the fruitful discussions between UNEP, Kenya and Sweden.
- EU+MS recognise the 50th anniversary of UNEP and the Stockholm Conference as an important opportunity to raise the visibility of the environmental agenda and mobilise urgent action to implement international agreements to stop environmental degradation.
- EU+MS welcome the joint proposal by Sweden and Kenya for a UN High Level political meeting in Stockholm in 2022 and on the commemoration of UNEP@50 that could kick-start in Nairobi at UNEA5, as a good basis for further consultations. Moreover, EU+MS believe the meeting in Stockholm could provide an opportunity to adopt the high-level political declaration as outlined in UNGA resolution 73/333.
- EU+MS look forward to hearing views of all Member States and welcome further consultations on this matter, including in the context of UNGA on the format and modalities of the 2022 UN high level meeting.

Agenda Item 6: Implementation of UNGA Resolution 73/333

- The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) thank UNEP for the draft roadmap for consultations on follow-up of General Assembly resolution 73/333.
- We support the Secretariat's proposal on institutional setup by placing the consultation process under the auspices of the CPR with the emphasis on ensuring regular coordination between the CPR Bureau and UNEA Bureau.
- We also support the Secretariat's proposal on leadership by envisaging the consultation process to be led by two co-facilitators, one from a developed and one from a developing country. They should be committed and available for consultations with Member States, members of UN specialised agencies, and regional groups throughout the process period. We find that the co-facilitators should also actively engage with MS without representation in Nairobi, e.g. through video or teleconferences, bilateral or regional consultations.
- We invite the UNEA President and CPR Chair to appoint the two co-facilitators as soon as possible, in consultation with their respective Bureaus and with the Chairs of the Regional Groups, to enable the co-facilitators to engage with the process in a timely manner.
- The preparation of substantive elements of a political declaration for a high-level meeting, mandated by resolution 73/333, should begin promptly and it should be organised efficiently, transparently and inclusively.
- The text for UNEA-5 should contain at the very least the building blocks or the outline of the political declaration, or preferably the draft declaration itself, on the basis of the substantive recommendations of the AHOEWG, as included in the annex to UNGA resolution 73/333, and the results of the consultations in 2020. The content should be formulated in an actionable way that could provide for effective follow-up and implementation.
- The offer by the government of Sweden to host a UN high level meeting in Stockholm in 2022 for the commemoration of the 1972 Stockholm Conference provides an opportunity to adopt the high-level political declaration as outlined in UNGA resolution 73/333.
- In order to send a strong political signal and address commitments, the foreseen declaration needs to be ambitious, concise and consensual. In addition, it should provide concrete and actionable responses to the recommendations and the objectives from the UNGA Resolution 73/333. We attach importance to paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document "The Future We Want" and its implementation, including ensuring the central role of the UNEP in setting the global environmental agenda.
- To achieve this, we support two proposed substantive consultation meetings in Nairobi ahead of the UNEA-5: one in June and another in October, back to back with the 7th Annual meeting of the sub-committee of the CPR. We support to have both dedicated meetings last no longer than three (3) days. In order to make efficient use of these consultation meetings, they should be well prepared.
- We see merit in a consultation meeting in June, if it frames the type and extent of outcome of UNEA-5 and hold substantive discussions on the content of the declaration, based on the recommendations as endorsed by the General Assembly with resolution 73/333.

- We find that the co-facilitators, in consultations with the CPR Bureau and the UNEA Bureau, should secure a meaningful, substantive meeting in June, according to the evaluation of the input of informal consultations to be held by them in the coming months.
- EU+MS suggest that the co-facilitators, in collaboration with the UNEP Secretariat, provide an input analysis on concrete declaration content, including on actions, at least six (6) weeks before the June meeting in following up on the recommendations and objectives from resolution 73/333.
- Proposals for elements for the declaration that would merit further consideration after the June meeting should be further elaborated by the co-facilitators and presented for discussion at least six (6) weeks before the October meeting.
- We would welcome the input from UNEP on key scientific findings and developments according to the newest knowledge that should be addressed, and effective measures that they find are key in that regard for improving the global environment and achieving the SDGs and other global goals.
- We expect the consultations to be concluded at the October meeting, with agreement on an ambitious draft political declaration - or at least a number of key elements or an outline for it, with an opportunity for adoption at the UN High-Level meeting in 2022 in Stockholm.
- EU+MS suggest that a relevant procedural resolution for setting modalities for the continued preparation of the above-mentioned declaration after UNEA-5, to be proposed by the co-facilitators on the basis of consultations with MS, will be negotiated at the OECPR-5, along with other expected resolutions to be adopted at the UNEA-5. We would not find it helpful to start the negotiations on the procedural resolution already in October, where focus should be on finalising the substantive discussions on the declaration.
- We would like to re-emphasise that the consultation process must be inclusive and transparent, envisaging participation also for Member States without permanent representation in Nairobi and relevant stakeholders, through various means such as written contributions, consultations, videoconferences and informal outreach.
- NB – We expect the CPR to endorse the Roadmap in today’s meeting. However, for it to be endorsed, the references to “member States” in sections “Institutional Setup” and “Proposed Roadmap”, 1st bullet, need to be amended by adding references to “Members of specialised agencies”. EU+MS are in a position that the composition of actors in this consultation should be consistent with that of the Ad-hoc Open-ended Working Group established under UNGA Resolution 72/277. Moreover, as the process is envisaged to be “under CPR auspices”, it needs to recognise the EU who is a full member of the CPR.

Agenda Item 7: Interagency collaboration in the context of the Environment Management Group (EMG)

- The EU and its Member States (EU+MS) thank UNEP for the concise overview on the EMG activities in support of the implementation of paragraph 88 c) of the Rio+20 outcome document and relevant UNEA resolutions.
- EU+MS consider that the EMG has a very important role as the only UN inter-agency mechanism focused on the environment and on promoting collaboration among its members on integrated implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda. Therefore, we would welcome more frequent briefs with even more substance from the EMG to the CPR. The briefs could also contain information on issues that might pose a challenge for achieving progress in order for the MS to give advice and support on how to proceed.
- EU+MS see the 2017 synthesis report on implementation of the environmental dimension of the SDGs as an excellent report that regrettably did not get visibility in UNEA3. This overview does not specify when the next triennial synthesis report is due, i.e., whether it would be this year. That would allow for timely information to UNEA5 and would be a very useful publication in view of the upcoming UNEP+50 and Stockholm+50 commemorations.
- EU+MS welcome the first thematic report on biodiversity highlighting collaboration opportunities among the EMG members. We are interested to know when exactly the report will be published. It would be valuable to have it out well in advance of the CBD COP in October this year. The timely publication would also help advising UNEA5.
- EU+MS find very positive the EMG involvement and contribution to the Post-2020 global biodiversity framework. We would also be interested in hearing EMG's analysis on how it sees its input being reflected in the zero draft of the framework, as well as its preliminary view on how the draft could be improved in order to be used not only by CBD, but also for the Rio and other biodiversity-related conventions, other MEAs and the broader international community.
- Regarding the nexus dialogues, EU+MS are interested in the follow-up of the dialogues, how messages from the dialogues have been taken up and what may be the lessons learned. In addition, it would be helpful to know the dates of the upcoming dialogues, which address pressing topics, in particular the dialogue on linkages between biodiversity, chemicals and waste, bearing in mind that the respective processes are currently quickly progressing. A timely realisation of the dialogues would be important to ensure that messages by EMG feed into the respective processes and inform UN agencies' internal deliberations on subsequent implementation.
- EU+MS also welcome the EMG's Task team on marine litter and microplastics established in 2019, and look forward to its inputs to the work of the AHOEEG on marine litter and microplastics, well in advance of UNEA5.
- EU+MS are convinced that the UN as an organisation has to lead by example when it comes to ensuring the sustainability of its programmes and operations. We therefore welcome the UN Chief Executive Board's and EMG Senior Officials' decision to facilitate a consultative process for developing a UN System Sustainability Strategy 2020-2030 in 2020. We would welcome information on the roadmap of the consultative process and look forward to the resulting recommendations and strategy.
- EU+MS wish to highlight that, beyond the EMG, which is essential to foster inter-agency coordination and cooperation on the environment, the mainstreaming of environmental considerations also needs to take place in other inter-agency coordination mechanisms

and cooperation frameworks, both at the international (system-wide strategies and initiatives), and the national levels (UNCTs and UNSDCFs). We therefore call upon UNEP to continue engaging actively in and contributing to relevant inter-agency coordination mechanisms and the UN Development System reform.