

**1st Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the
Committee of Permanent Representatives, 9-10 June 2020, Virtual meeting**

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Main outcomes of the meeting

The Bureaux of the Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, together with the Chairpersons of the Regional and Political Groups:

- Reconfirmed that UNEA-5 provides an opportunity to revitalize multilateral environmental cooperation and strengthen UNEP in the times of COVID-19,
- Recognized that the theme adopted for UNEA-5 (“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”) remains relevant.
- Took note of the four action areas for UNEA-5 proposed by the Secretariat as a useful guidance to Member States, while recalling that the preparation of negotiated outcomes of the Assembly is a Member-State driven process and underlining that the Secretariat’s proposal should not limit or redefine the UNEA-5 theme.
- Welcomed the draft outline of a ministerial declaration for UNEA-5 presented by the President of UNEA-5 and recommended to keep it short, concise and ambitious and respond to the UNEA-5 theme.
- Considered that an effective and strategic communication remains an important component of an a successful UNEA-5 and requested the Secretariat to refine the draft Communication Strategy in order to more accurately reflect the agreed-upon theme.
- Agreed that implementation of existing UNEA resolutions remains at the heart of a successful Assembly and welcomed the development of an online tool by the Secretariat to track implementation of existing resolutions and allow for voluntary reporting by member States.
- Took note of a list of mandates which may result in negotiated resolutions at UNEA-5.
- Recommended that UNEA-5 consider a limited number of draft resolutions, with a view to rationalize its work, without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the UN Environment Assembly, while recalling the right of Member States to submit draft resolutions and decisions.
- Took positive note of the proposal to launch the 50-year commemoration of the creation of UNEP at UNEA-5 and called for additional information on the format and outcome of the commemoration.
- Took positive note also of the offer from Sweden, supported by Kenya, to host a UN high level meeting in Stockholm in 2022 to commemorate the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, called for additional information regarding the proposal, while keeping in mind that this process is separate but interlinked with the commemoration of the creation of UNEP.
- Encouraged further discussion on the commemorations among Member States under the auspices of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

AGENDA ITEM 1: Opening of the Joint Preparatory Retreat and adoption of the agenda

1. The President of the Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, welcomed participants and opened the meeting, followed by opening remarks from H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director UN Environment Programme. A list of participants can be found in [Annex 1](#).
2. The agenda of the meeting was adopted (available [here](#)).
3. The Members of the two Bureaux congratulated H.E. Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez Echandi, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica and Vice President of the Assembly, on his recent appointment as CEO and Chairperson of the Global Environment Facility.

AGENDA ITEM 2: UNEA-5 in the era of COVID-19

4. The Executive Director introduced a revised note from the Secretariat on the preparations for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, entitled “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals” (document available [here](#); presentation is available [here](#)). The Executive Director underscored the continued relevance of the UNEA-5 theme in the context of the response and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and outlined 4 proposed action areas where UNEA-5 can contribute to strengthen actions for nature to achieve the SDGs:
 - Nature for Poverty Eradication, Jobs and Economic Prosperity
 - Nature for Human and Ecosystem Health
 - Nature for Climate
 - Nature for Sustainable Food Systems
5. Members of the two Bureaux reconfirmed that UNEA-5 provides an opportunity to revitalize the multilateral environmental cooperation and strengthen UNEP in the era of COVID-19, and that the theme adopted for UNEA-5 (“Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”) remains highly relevant, including to place nature and sustainable consumption and production at the center of economic recovery plans to “build back better”.
6. Members also emphasized the need for continued strong international cooperation and solidarity in the field of environment, and underlined the importance of close interaction with Major Groups and Stakeholders, including the private sector. Members also recalled that UNEA-5 is now expected to take place in advance of several other important environmental meetings in 2021.
7. Members welcomed the revised note and the four action areas proposed by the Secretariat as useful guidance to Member States, including as a voluntary framework to encourage a limited number of action-oriented resolutions, while recalling the rights of Member States to submit draft resolutions in accordance with the rules of procedure. Members also noted the role of UNEA in promoting coherence in the international environmental debates, while stressing the need to respect the mandates of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and UN agencies.
8. Members underlined that the proposed action areas should not limit or redefine the adopted theme for UNEA-5, that UNEA-5 should contribute to strengthening the implementation of the environmental dimension of all Sustainable Development Goals, and that other areas such as pollution, sustainable consumption and production, resource efficiency and desertification, as well as means of implementation in the context of the common but different responsibilities, are equally important.

AGENDA ITEM 3: Preparations for UNEA-5

a) Preparation of UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration

9. The President of the Assembly presented an outline of the Ministerial Declaration for the Assembly (available [here](#)), and the inclusive process of consultations to promote broad consensus on a declaration with a strong and action-oriented political message linked to the theme of the Assembly.
10. Members welcomed the draft outline at this early stage of consultations while noting that the late submission did not allow for an in-depth discussion in the meeting. Members proposed several aspects that would be important to address in the ministerial declaration. It was noted that the Committee of Permanent Representatives is as a useful platform to ensure inclusivity and transparency in this process.

11. Members also recommended to keep the declaration short, concise, ambitious and related to the UNEA-5 theme, while also taking into account that UNEA-5 will take place in advance of several other important environmental meetings in 2021.
12. The president thanked the Members for their valuable inputs and announced that he would send a letter to invite all member states and stakeholders to provide further inputs with a view to develop a revised draft declaration. Such efforts include reaching out to all Member States, including those not represented in Nairobi, and consultations with relevant regional ministerial fora.

b) UNEA-5 Communication Strategy

13. The Secretariat presented a draft communication strategy for UNEA-5 (available [here](#); presentation is available [here](#)), outlining a set of actions to promote visibility and awareness around UNEA-5.
14. Members of the two Bureaux considered that an effective and strategic communication remains a very important component of an a successful UNEA-5, and requested the Secretariat to refine the draft Communication Strategy in order to more adequately reflect the agreed-upon theme.

c) Consideration of UNEA resolutions

15. The Secretariat referred to Annex 2 of the [background note](#) that lists key mandates which may result in negotiated resolutions/decisions from UNEA-5, and referred to an online instrument that will track the implementation of existing UNEA resolutions.
16. Members of the two Bureaux agreed that implementation of existing UNEA resolution remains at the heart of a successful Environment Assembly and that implementation remains a joint responsibility between the Secretariat and member States.
17. Members also welcomed the development of an online tool to track implementation of existing resolutions and allow for voluntary member States reporting is a very promising development, and stressed that the Secretariat should finalize it as soon as possible, and at the latest at the 7th annual subcommittee.
18. Members took note of the proposed list of mandates provided by the Secretariat which may result in negotiated resolutions at UNEA-5, and noted that it may need to be complemented, including with regard to chemicals.
19. While recalling the provisions set out in the rule 44 of the Rules of procedure, Members recommended a limited number of draft outcomes with a view to rationalize the work of UNEA and to facilitate the participation and ownership of smaller delegations in their negotiation process, especially in light of the logistical impact that COVID-19 pandemic might bring to these consultations.
20. Members also encouraged the finalization of the “Process for review by the CPR” with regard to agreeing on guidance to member States for the tabling of UNEA resolutions within the existing rules of procedure, and to further consider if and how relevant recommendations may be implemented already before UNEA-5, including with a view to increase the engagement of Member States who do not have diplomatic representation in Nairobi.

AGENDA ITEM 4: Preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP

21. The Executive Director provided an update on the preparations for the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP, following informal regional consultations and the discussion at the 150th meeting of the CPR,

on the basis of a background document (available [here](#); presentation available [here](#)), including with regard to:

- The proposal to launch the commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP at UNEA-5;
- The possible engagement and outreach activities following the launch;
- Ensuring a strong science-policy interface; and
- Further consultations with Member States and proposed next steps.

22. Members of the two Bureaux expressed appreciation for the update from the Executive Director and the report, while noting that the late submission did not allow for an in-depth discussion.

23. Members took positive note of the proposal to launch the commemoration at UNEA-5, while calling for additional information on the format and outcome of the commemoration.

24. Members also noted the offer from Sweden, supported by Kenya, to host a UN high level meeting in Stockholm in 2022 to commemorate the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, noting that in the manner presented by the proponent this process is separate but interlinked with the commemoration of the creation of UNEP. Members also stressed the importance of further information regarding the offer.

25. Members encouraged further discussion on the commemorations among Member States under the auspices of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, scheduled for [23 June 2020](#).

AGENDA ITEM 5: Any Other Business

26. The Secretariat provided with a short overview of the outcome of the [Act #ForNature Forum](#), that took place online back-to-back with the preparatory retreat.

27. Members of the two Bureaux congratulated the Presidency and the Secretariat for successfully organizing this online events at such short notice, despite the challenges posed due the COVID-19 crisis.

AGENDA ITEM 6: Closing of the Joint Preparatory Retreat

25. The President of the UN Environment Assembly and the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives thanked the Members of the two Bureaux for their productive and active participation in the meeting and closed the meeting.

Annex 1:

List of Participants of the 1st Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

1. H.E Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, Minister of the Climate Change and Environment of Norway and President of the Assembly
2. H.E. Mr. Reggy Nelson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Suriname and Vice President of the Assembly
3. H.E. Ms. Brune Poirson, Secretary of State for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition of France and Vice President of the Assembly
4. Ms. Laksmi Dhewanthi, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia and Vice President of the Assembly
5. H.E. Dr. Mohammed Bin Dainah, Chief Executive of the Supreme Council of Environment of Bahrain and Vice President of the Assembly
6. Suzan Mohammed AlAjawi, Chief Environmental Policies & Planning of the Supreme Council for Environment of Bahrain
7. H.E. Mrs. Biljana Filipovic Djusic, Assistant Minister for International Cooperation in the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Serbia representing H.E. Mr. Goran Trivan, Minister of Environment of Serbia and Vice President of the Assembly
8. H.E. Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica and Vice President of the Assembly
9. Mr. Ado Lohmus, Permanent Representative of Environment of Estonia and Vice President of the Assembly
10. H.E: Mr. Bassiere Batio Nestor, Minister of Green Economy and Climate Change of Burkina Faso and Vice President of the Assembly
11. Ms. Shahkira Parker, Senior Policy Advisor - International Governance and Relations of the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa representing Hon. Ms. Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of South Africa and Rapporteur of the Assembly
12. H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
13. H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania and Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
14. H.E. Mr. Frans Makken, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Netherlands and Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
15. H.E. Mrs. Saqlain Syedah, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan and Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
16. H.E. Mrs. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana and Rapporteur of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

17. H.E. Mr. Beyene Russom Habtai, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Eritrea and Chair of Group of African States
18. H.E. Ms. Marta E. Juarez Ruiz, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica and Chair of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States
19. H.E. Ambassador Dragan Zupanjevac, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Serbia and Chair of the Group of Eastern European States
20. H.E. Mr. Ralf Heckner, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Group of Western European States
21. H.E. Mr. Hazem Shabat, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine and Chair of the Group of 77 and China
22. H.E. Mr. Simon Mordue, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the European Union
23. H.E. Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway
24. Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director, UN Environment Programme
25. Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director, UN Environment Programme
26. Mr. Rafael Peralta, Chief of Staff, UN Environment Programme
27. Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies, Director of Governance Affairs Office, UN Environment Programme
28. Mr. Tim Kasten, Acting Director of Programme and Policy Division, UN Environment Programme
29. Mr. Jian Liu, Director of Science Division, UN Environment Programme
30. Mr. Daniel Cooney, Acting Director of Communication Division, UN Environment Programme
31. Ms. Ligia Noronha, Director of Economy Division, UN Environment Programme
32. Ms. Susan Gardner, Director of Ecosystems Division, UN Environment Programme
33. Mr. Ulf Björnholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies, Deputy Director of Governance Affairs Office, UN Environment Programme
34. Ms. Julliette Biao, Regional Director, Africa