



South Africa's intervention on preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP during the Subcommittee meeting of 14 July 2020

Mr Chair,

Thank the secretariat for its presentation.

My delegation wishes to align its intervention with the statement delivered by Eritrea on behalf of the African Group.

At the outset allow me to indicate that all the discussions and outcomes of the commemoration should be underpinned by the pillars for sustainable development.

Mr Chair, in guiding the agenda for discussions on the commemoration for the creation of UNEP, my delegation wishes to underscore the importance of not being selective in the paragraphs contained in para 88 of the outcome document on RIO+20 on the "future we want". Each sub-paragraph contained therein is important in advocating for a strengthened UNEP Headquarter. In this regard, we cannot continue on the trajectory of highlighting and implementing some elements given the very importance milestone of 50 years since the creation of UNEP we are planning to commemorate.

On the launching of the commemoration and proposed engagements and activities to follow, it is important to have strong messaging for such events. And that messaging should include and call for support towards the strengthening of the UNEP Headquarters and the only UN Headquarter in the developing world.

On the issue of potential opportunities to strengthen environmental multilateralism from launching UNEP's 50th anniversary during UNEA5 lies the importance of implementing decisions and resolutions adopted by the Assembly. In this regard, my delegation wishes to call for the inclusion of resolution 4/22 in Box 1. It is through implementation that the work of UNEP can be further appreciated and felt by people on the ground as this will touch on their livelihoods. This approach will not only position UNEP as the organization for the environment but would also highlight in actual terms, the opportunities presented by the organisation in positively impacting on people's daily lives.

Part of the messaging for the outreach and engagement activities should include the involvement of regional and country offices. As previously stated in the preceding agenda item, there needs to be clarity on how UNEP implements its mandate. It must be clear to ordinary people how UNEP delivers its work through UN country teams as required by the UN reform. While planning to showcase UNEP's work in shaping a healthy environment, the message should also include educating ordinary people on how to interact with nature in a sustainable way. In this regard, in Box 2, my delegation would like to see the role of Regional and Country offices in leading activities which will ensure interaction with people on the ground.

Lastly Mr Chair, my delegation agrees that while we should highlight UNEP's achievements, the commemoration should not be limited to successes but allow for relevant stakeholders, including local communities, to share views on the future of the organisation with the view to strengthen the UNEP Headquarter.

I thank you!