



Statements by Switzerland at the 151st Session of the CPR

Agenda Item 4. Report by the Executive Director

Statement by Amb. Valentin Zellweger

Mr. Chair

I'm very happy to be back in Nairobi where I started my diplomatic career more than 25 years ago. I'm glad to engage with you, Mr. Chair, and with the esteemed colleagues in promoting the agenda of UNEP and UN-Habitat and in working with UNON.

Switzerland is a longstanding, strong supporter of UNEP and of the environmental agenda. There is sufficient scientific evidence that the environment is under stress and yet, we're lagging behind in the implementation of the environmental dimension of the Agenda 2030.

Switzerland is undertaking important efforts at national level to reach the ambitious goal of climate neutrality by 2050. But of course, international co-operation and solidarity are essential to comprehensively tackle environmental issues. Last month, my Government decided to significantly increase Switzerland's contribution to the Green Climate Fund to USD 150 million for 2020 to 2023.

Madame Executive Director,

I'm very pleased to work with you again. As you've pointed out in your presentation, the environment needs all our attention and our commitment. Urgent and decisive action is needed to turn the needle – as UNEP puts in its Mid-Term Strategy – and to ensure a healthy environment for future generations.

A strong, focused and well-functioning UNEP is more needed than ever. I would like to commend you, Madame Executive Director, on your leadership, also in the development of the new Mid-Term Strategy and Program of Work. The inclusive and participatory process has led to good results and my Government sees the current draft very positively. Climate, biodiversity and chemicals & waste are key areas where decisive action is needed during the period of the new Mid-Term Strategy with the adoption of strong post-2020 frameworks for biodiversity as well as chemicals & waste and ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions at COP 26. The strengthening of the science-policy interface and of environmental governance has long been called for by Switzerland. And finally we welcome the fact that UNEP is tackling new challenges like digitalization and is actively contributing to make the Reform of the UN Development System not only a

success for the UN but also for the way that environmental issues are dealt with by the UN.

UNEP needs sufficient funding, including sufficient core funding, to live up to its mandate and the expectations raised in the new Mid-Term Strategy. While we reiterate our call on all Member States to pay their fair share to the Environment Fund, we would also like to invite UNEP to underpin the Mid-Term Strategy with a realistic and conservative budget.

Mr. Chair, Madam Executive Director,
It's an exciting time to work on global environmental issues at the heart of environmental governance and I assure you the full co-operation of my country and of myself.

Thank you.

Agenda Item 5. Consultation on the Medium-Term Strategy 2021- 2025 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023.

Switzerland would like to commend UNEP on the transparent, open and inclusive process towards developing the MTS and Budget. Starting with a (high-level) scoping consultations (i.e. discovery sessions). We are now gradually progressing towards a document that will serve UNEP to guide its daily business.

Switzerland wants to express its support for the approach taken by the Secretariat: Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns as the crosscutting theme, the critical importance of the foundational and enabling sub-programmes and, of course, the pertinence and importance of the three action areas.

At this stage, Switzerland would like to provide two comments, one general and one more specific one.

The general comment is on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (SCP). We fully support the understanding that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are considered to be the underlying threat of environmental protection.

We would like to suggest that the MTS lays out more specifically how SCP contribute to the three action areas. One approach could be to consult the new Strategy of the 10YFP / One Planet Network on SCP for specific goals and see how these goals can contribute to the three action areas. We also suggest that the document takes note of the fact that the official UN process from Rio+20, i.e. the 10YFP, will end in 2022. A call for a continuation of the multilateral UN embedded framework beyond 2022 should be included into the strategy.

The more specific approach is on the water related work of UNEP. As the custodian agency for the SDG 6.5.1. on water quality, UNEP does important work on this issue. With the proposed focus on pollution action, UNEP's work on water would be largely reduced to "waste water", leaving out the important work and the role that UNEP has been playing on water-related issues, particularly fresh-water. While we welcome a focused MTS, this focus should not be to the detriment of important areas of UNEP's work.

Finally, Switzerland very much welcomes the UNEP's intention to present at the Annual Sub-Committee one realistic budget that underpins the new MTS.

Switzerland will provide more detailed comments in writing.

Agenda Item 6. Progress update on the consultation process under the UN General Assembly resolution 73/333.

Switzerland continues to argue for a lean and focused process. We should aim to finish the substantial discussions prior to the OECPR, during the inter-sessional period, as the High-Level Segment of UNEA-5 provides an ideal platform to adopt the political declaration resulting from 73/333.

The recommendations endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 73/333 already provide the building blocks for the political declaration. We are hence in a position to move quite fast on formulating the political declaration.

With respect of the next steps, for the second meeting, we expect the co-chairs to present us with a zero draft of the political declaration as an input. We shall then provide feedback on the text without going into line by line negotiations. Ahead of the third meeting, we expect a final draft we can then finalize as part of that third meeting. Again, that will allow for subsequent