

Australia's Intervention to UNEP ASC-7 Agenda Item 4: Consideration of a draft UNEP Medium Term Strategy and 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023

13 October 2020

- Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, thank you for the opportunity to take the floor.
 - Australia would like to take this moment to express our appreciations to the Executive Director and her team for their work in organising this week's meeting and preparing the agenda papers, including the draft Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work and Budget.
- Australia commends UNEP for an innovative draft Medium Term Strategy which reinforces UNEP's role as the lead global authority on the environmental dimensions of sustainable development.
 - Australia welcomes this draft Medium Term Strategy, which is more targeted and better aligned with the core organisational and programmatic strengths of UNEP.
- In these times of COVID, we want to see international organisations be responsive to the challenges of the pandemic.
 - This pandemic has a significant environmental component. UNEP must be a key actor in global efforts to promote a sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID. UNEP also has an important role to play in preventing future zoonotic pandemics.
 - Australia notes that there is some mention of COVID in the draft Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work. However, we would like to see a stronger consideration of the risks and opportunities posed by the pandemic to the global environmental agenda, and the role that UNEP could play.
- The One Health approach referenced in the draft Medium Term Strategy is a prime example of how UNEP could contribute to joined-up efforts across the UN system.
 - We encourage UNEP to consider how all subprogrammes could better actionise the "One UN" agenda in the Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work.
- Australia is pleased to see that the draft Medium Term Strategy draws inspiration from existing global commitments. We are supportive of efforts by UNEP to pursue an agenda that is in-line with UNEP's mandate as well as internationally agreed environmental commitments.
 - However, UNEP should ensure that the vision, outcomes and objectives in the Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work are consistent with international agreements, including the Paris Agreement, as determined and agreed to by Parties.
- Finally, in terms of programme implementation, Australia aligns ourselves with the views shared by other Member States, yesterday and today, for more concerted efforts to deliver outcomes across all geographical regions.
 - We would welcome greater consideration in the Medium Term Strategy of how UNEP could better utilise and strengthen its regional contribution, including in the Pacific.
 - Australia encourages UNEP to avoid being prescriptive in its support to Member States. We encourage UNEP to consider that each Member State has unique circumstances as it further develops the targets and outcomes in the draft Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work.
- Thank you Chair