

**7<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP  
(Nairobi, 12-16 October 2020)**

**Agenda item 5b.**

**Action plan for the implementation of subparagraphs (a)-(h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development**

*Comments by the European Union and its Member States*

- The EU and its Member States wish to thank the Secretariat for producing the draft action plan in response to paragraph 14 of UNEA decision 4/2 and having taking into account previous discussions on the matter within the CPR.
- We welcome the more concrete suggestions and proposals enshrined in the draft and think that the document constitutes a good basis for further work, although the EU and its MS would encourage the document to more clearly and concretely outline who is to take action as well as relevant timelines. In particular, the EU and its Member States welcome the cross-cutting emphasis and ambition to strengthen delivery through and with the UN Development System, wherever possible.
- In the following, we wish to provide some concrete feedback on the respective subparagraphs (a) to (h):

**Subparagraph (a) on universal membership and strengthening the governance**

- The EU and its Member States welcome the virtual meetings and consultations that the Secretariat has arranged during spring/summer 2020 and see these as a good and practical way to engage with capitals and non-Nairobi based missions. The EU and its Member States wish the Secretariat to continue providing such opportunities even after physical meetings in Nairobi become feasible again. However, we emphasise the importance of continuously improving the quality of said IT solutions, to make their use more effective.
- In this regard, we support further efforts on standardising and formalising CPR online meetings to enable remote participation of MS in the deliberations of the CPR, as well as further improvement of providing the documents for the meetings online, in a timely and transparent manner. Moreover, regarding paragraph 2.2, in the context of virtual CPR meetings, particular attention should be given to reliable interpretation in all 6 official languages of the UN.
- We believe that the paragraph 1.3 should speak of “universal non-earmarked contributions” and “universal core funding responsibility”.

**Subparagraph (b) on financing**

- The EU and its Member States welcome the clear reference to the universal funding responsibility in line with the universal membership of UNEA under subparagraph a). In our view, providing the financial base for UNEP is a joint responsibility and therefore it is important that all MS provide predictable financial support to UNEP. Secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resource from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions are both important for fulfilling UNEP’s mandate, tasks according to the implementation of UNEA decisions and resolutions, and, in many ways for achieving implementation of para 88 as a whole.

- Considering the limited resources coming from the UN regular budget, voluntary financial contributions from all Member States will be central, while we wish to emphasise the voluntary nature of said contributions.

### **Subparagraph (c) on UNEP's coordination role**

- The EU and its Member States consider this subparagraph of substantial importance for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda as a whole. We believe it is necessary for UNEP to have a strong coordination role on environment related issues.
- We welcome the suggestions made with regard to promoting greater linkages between the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) and UNEA. However, we see the need to improve the process of compilation of UNEP's contribution to HLPF, in order for it to be concise and timely and thus, as effective as possible. We also encourage the member states to include contributions by UNEA in their national interventions in the HLPF and in other relevant fora.
- The EU and its Member States welcome the strong commitment to strengthen engagement in and with UN Country Teams (UNCTs), in particular with regard to contributing to Common Country Analyses and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks. The objective of strengthening the capacity of UNEP staff to be able effectively leverage system-wide collaboration at all levels is crucial in this regard.
- With respect to the work of the EMG the EU and its Member States believe that the application of the System-wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment and their visibility should be enhanced, including in the sessions of UNEA. We support the Executive Director in continuing to proactively lead the international environmental agenda and using the EMG to further coordinate and cooperate with relevant UN agencies. It is important in this regard to ensure access to sufficient core funding as well as to other sources of funding for the EMG to continue to perform this role.
- At the same time, the potential for better coordination and promoting the mainstreaming of the environmental dimension of sustainable development through the UN Chief Executive Board for Coordination (CEB) should be further explored.
- We also welcome the aim to enhance the collaboration within the UN on the implementation of the UN Sustainability Strategy.
- In addition, the EU and its Member States welcome the suggestions in the action plan aimed at enhanced cooperation between MEA secretariats, as well as systematically involving MEAs in UNEA sessions in the future, and we would like to call upon the ED to continue strengthening coordination and collaboration with and between MEAs, as well as other multilateral fora, that take relevant decisions for the state of the environment.

### **Subparagraph (d) on science-policy interface**

- The EU and its Member States believe that keeping the world's environmental situation under review is the backbone of UNEP's work. In particular, we consider the on-going work to assess the future of GEO to be very important for ensuring that this flagship activity by UNEP remains a valid and useful contribution for both scientists and policy makers in the future as well.
- In this regard, we note that the implementation of future decisions by Member States based on the outcomes of the process on the future of GEO will be essential, as well as enhanced coherence between the different environmental assessments.
- While providing high-quality environmental data is essential for a strong science-policy interface, the EU and its Member States are of the view that at the same time, the importance of UNEP's science products formulating concrete policy recommendations should be further highlighted.

### **Subparagraph (e) on environmental information**

- The EU and its Member States note that the development of the environmental data strategy called for in UNEA4 declaration and in resolution 4/23 will be an essential contribution to the implementation of subparagraph e). We appreciate the plan to provide reports to CPR in 2021, 2023 and 2025, but would encourage that brief presentations to update on the process of its development will be provided on a regular basis to the CPR in the interim.
- We would welcome further updates on the World Environment Situation Room as well as on how UNEP evaluates the impact of its communication.
- The EU and its Member States support and encourage UNEP's efforts towards digital transformation and vision for digital cooperation in the environmental domain and call upon UNEP to align these efforts, going beyond the environmental data strategy, with the relevant strategies of the UN Secretary-General.
- The EU and its Member States would like to suggest that in paragraph 13.1, UNEP also be encouraged to engage national parliaments and lawmakers, for example through audits of the Executive Director. Likewise, in paragraph 13.2, we would suggest for UNEP to be encouraged to develop partnerships with educative structures and national entities to mainstream environment education.

### **Subparagraph (f) on capacity building**

- The EU and its Member States commend UNEP's extensive capacity building efforts and support to Member States in the formulation and implementation of environmental policies aimed at achieving internationally agreed goals, in particular environment-related SDGs. In this regard, we emphasise that capacity building is an important means of implementation and extends beyond technology-related capacity building to all areas of UNEP's work, in particular on environmental data, science-policy interface, environmental law and governance, policy formulation and implementation, and would, therefore, welcome language on strengthening such capacity-building.
- The EU and its Member States will welcome regular updates on the implementation of the Strategy for South-South and Triangular Cooperation, in particular in relation to capacity-building and facilitating access to technology.
- We also wish to emphasise the need to develop and deliver capacity building in a way that will integrate multiple processes and areas of work of UNEP (such as the Fifth Montevideo Programme, UN development system reform, etc.). We welcome that the UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators are identified as key partners for fostering a coherent response to national needs in this regard.

### **Subparagraph (g) on headquarters functions**

- The EU and its Member States believe that successful cooperation with relevant UN agencies present on the ground will be much more important than UNEP's presence in a particular region, as long as the relevant products, instruments and policy advice or other support to mainstream environmental considerations for sustainable development can be delivered in an effective manner. In that respect, the approach envisioned to support more Member States and regions through cooperation with other UN agencies in the light of the UN Reform will be very important for increasing UNEP's impact.
- We welcome the continued engagement with UNON for enhancing the UNON facilities in Nairobi on par with other UN duty stations. We encourage regular updates to the CPR on progress and what concrete improvements are planned by UNON in Nairobi.

### **Subparagraph (h) on stakeholder participation**

- The EU and its Member States welcome UNEP's efforts to engage with various stakeholder groups and emphasise the importance of ensuring broad, transparent and active participation of representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders accredited to UNEP in all public meetings of UNEA and its subsidiary organs. We encourage UNEP's efforts in ensuring further ways for stakeholders to engage remotely via interactive video links and underline that this type of engagement does not exclude participation at physical meetings.
  - In our view, the aim to ensure stable and adequate allocation of financial resources from the Environment Fund towards this end, or even increase it, should be reflected, inter alia, in the funding structure of UNEA sessions.
  - In particular, we welcome the focus by UNEP on inclusion of and enhanced cooperation with Children and Youth Major Group (not excluding the importance of other Major Groups). At the same time, given the importance of gender equality in the work of UNEP, we would also encourage enhanced cooperation with the Women Major Group.
  - Finally, the EU and its Member States would like to note our expectation that the latest versions of the private sector engagement strategy/policy, partnership policy, etc. will be updated in the light of the MTS and UN Reform.
-