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# Switzerland - Interventions following the agenda

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### 3 Programme performance review of UNEP's Programme of Work 2020-2021

#### General Statement

Excellencies, colleagues

We would like to thank you for the informative presentation. To begin, we would like to share our general observations before focusing on a few considerations specific for certain subprogrammes. We will be pleased to send in further specific comments and suggestions in writing.

We value greatly the transparent reporting on UNEP's performance to the CPR. It supports the important role of the CPR in assuming its oversight function.

Switzerland has advocated for a light reporting in order to decrease the reporting burden on the Secretariat. We are pleased to see that the current reporting is condensed and to the point. At the same time, the reporting provides information that is easily accessible and in a manner that member states can understand where UNEP stands with respect to the implementation of PoW/B and the adopted resolutions.

We appreciate the reporting broken down into segments per subprogramme. To give the reader a quick feedback, we would suggest the following: To sum up the segments of the performance report, we would see value in a short concluding indication from the Secretariat on the overall direction of UNEP in its entirety, the interplay among the subprogrammes, and for each of the subprogrammes for instance some sort of a traffic light assessment to indicate whether they are lagging behind, on track or ahead of the expected results.

Again with regard to the reporting burden: We take it that this programme performance report will be complementary to the monitoring and reporting on the adopted resolutions as mandated under UNEA 4 resolution 22, that the PPR and the resolutions' reporting will be mutually supportive of one another and make best use of possible synergies.

Now to our considerations and questions on specific subprogrammes:

We noted that the three UNEA resolutions on marine litter and microplastics are placed into the realm of the subprogramme on chemicals and waste and air quality. The implementation of these resolutions requires expertise from beyond this subprogramme as it concerns the whole life-cycle. Therefore, we are interested in how UNEP ensures an effective coordination within its organization and what you have experienced in delivering on such a cross-sectoral topic. Specifically, how is UNEP organized structurally (including line of reporting) to assure on the delivery of these resolutions (slide 60)?

Given that the implementation of these resolutions require expertise from beyond this subprogramme as it concerns the whole life-cycles, we were wondering how an effective coordination within UNEP is secured and what your experiences were in delivering on such a cross-sectoral topic? Specifically, how is UNEP organized structurally (including line of reporting) to assure on the delivery of these resolutions? (slide 60)

We had hoped to see that the UNEA-4 resolution on marine litter and microplastics was also placed under the subprogramme on resource efficiency. In particular the 10YFP on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns was tasked by UNEA 4 resolution to elaborate on guidelines with respect to the topic as shown on slide 75.

On slide 82, you indicated a valid point with respect to the challenges ahead. How does UNEP tackle a potential missed opportunity, namely that billions of post-Covid stimuli were not used for green recovery and building back better?

In the “opportunities” section on the same slide, we missed the notion of a successful adoption of a post-2022 framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns within UNEP and at the UN level since the 10YFP/One Planet Network is ending.

Finally, on the subprogramme on environment under review:

On slide 94, the World Environment Situation Room (WESR) is a promising platform at the interface of science and policy. One of the indicators in the Programme of Work and Budget mentions UNEP Live which has been discontinued. Could you elaborate on how the WESR can fill that gap and even more so will become a one-stop shop for credible and accessible data and the platform for decision-makers to access policy relevant information on the environment?

We wanted to emphasize that while the subprogramme environment under review needs to make sure that the environmental dimension of sustainable development is covered, it must not forget about its role in supporting Member States to reach the internationally agreed environmental goals.

In looking ahead, we also missed the notion on the future of GEO as an opportunity for UNEP’s work for instance on slide 100.

As mentioned in the beginning, we have limited our intervention to the most salient points to save time and will send further specific comments in writing.

Thank you

### **Specific comments per subprogramme**

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#### **Climate Change**

The subprogramme is advancing the national plans of individual countries. Could you explain whether the support of UNEP is based on requests received by member states or how the advancing of national plans of individual countries is selected?

#### **Env. Gov.**

One goal is to mainstream the environment into sustainability planning of national policy setting. Are there attempts and strategies to further support mainstreaming of the environment into economic and fiscal planning? (slide 52)

In comparison to other subprogrammes like on ecosystems and climate change the environmental governance subprogramme, which actually speaks to the core mandate of UNEP, unfortunately does not attract more earmarked funding. Are there innovative ways to make this subprogramme more attractive for earmarked funding? (slide 54)

#### **Chem&Waste and Air Quality**

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### **Resource Efficiency**

Regarding the subprogramme on resource efficiency, on slide 82, you indicated a valid point with respect to the challenges ahead. How does UNEP tackle a potential missed opportunity, namely that billions of post-Covid stimuli were not used for green recovery and building back better?

In the “opportunities” section on the same slide, we missed the notion of a successful adoption of a post-2022 framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns within UNEP and at the UN level since the 10YFP/One Planet Network is ending.

### **Environment under Review**

As shown on slide 94, the World Environment Situation Room (WESR) is a promising platform at the interface of science and policy. One of the indicators in the Programme of Work and Budget mentions UNEP Live which has been discontinued. Could you elaborate on how the WESR can fill that gap and even more so will become a one-stop shop for credible and accessible data and the platform for decision-makers to access policy relevant information on the environment?

We wanted to emphasize that while the subprogramme environment under review needs to make sure that the environmental dimension of sustainable development is covered, it must not forget about its role in supporting Member States to reach the internationally agreed environmental goals.

In looking ahead, we also missed the notion on the future of GEO as an opportunity for UNEP’s work for instance on slide 100.

A final comment with regard to the reporting burden: We take it that this programme performance review will be complementary to the monitoring and reporting on the adopted resolutions as mandated under UNEA 4 resolution 22, that the PPR and the resolutions’ reporting will be mutually supportive of one another and make best use of possible synergies.

#### 4 Consideration of a draft UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023

- Switzerland wants to congratulate UNEP on the transparent, open and inclusive process towards developing the MTS and the PoW and Budget.
- Most importantly, Switzerland wants to express its **full support** for the approach taken by the Secretariat on shaping its new MTS: the three action areas, with sustainable consumption and production considered to be the enabling element, and science-policy & governance to form the foundation for the three action areas.
- Switzerland had provided general and specific comments on the MTS in writing. We will also do that for the PoW following this intervention. Here, we are providing you with the overarching concerns this delegation wants to see improvements on.

*The following three elements we would like to see strengthened in the next versions of MTS & PoW:*

- We support the understanding that unsustainable consumption and production patterns are considered to be the underlying threat of environmental protection. SCP is to some extent included in the “Finance and Economic Chapter” of the MTS. While the production angle of SCP is embedded well in the chapter, the topic would merit a more explicit placing of the **consumption angle** into the strategy and more so in the PoW. Further, it does not, however, refer to the 10YFP / One Planet Network. This framework ends in 2022. We consider a framework like the **10YFP** embedded in the UN as absolutely crucial to address SCP in the long-term as layed out in the MTS.
- The current MTS advocates for authoritative science that is delivered with greater coherence and integration. In order for UNEP to continue to be an authoritative voice in the global scientific community, [ ] collecting and analyzing scientific data, **and assessing potentials and risks of new & emerging technologies** is of utmost importance. A sound assessment of potential benefits and risks of new and emerging issues is fundamental for further political action. In order to have UNEP lead the digital transformation, UNEP must be ready to assess emerging technologies.
- We are suggesting adequate space for the work of UNEP under the **Environment Management Group**. PoW and MTS should be highlighting the role of the EMG and its System Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment in the UN system. The documents must allow us to understand the role and opportunity of UNEP in the EMG and the UN-wide strategy.

*On the proposed Budget*

- This delegation welcomes the step taken by UNEP to present **one** realistic budget. It allows MS to assess the underlying assumptions and provide clear guidance to the Secretariat.
- By keeping the budget of the EF at the current level of 2020-2021 at 200 mio, we are of the opinion that it strikes the balance between being realistic given past trends but still signaling to the MS that a certain level of a budget is required to implement the PoW/B.
- We also support the distribution of the EF across the three action areas and for the two foundational subprogrammes, governance and science-policy. The work of the latter two – for example the GEO – should be funded by the EF. While action areas - these are the thematic subprogrammes - naturally attract additional earmarked funding, the foundational work does not. The situation is similar to foundational research in science which is also mostly supported by public funding.
- Switzerland wants to stress the point that a healthy EF remains the foundation of an operational UNEP. In that regard, we call on MS to contribute according to their fair share that is the VISC. We must fulfill para 88 on guaranteeing “sustainable financing of UNEP”.
- With respect to new ways of attracting more financial resources to the UNEP, for example through the soft earmarking, we are open to new opportunities. These new ways should neither be leading to additional administrative burden nor be distracting funding from the EF. These new options should be complementing the main task that is to attracting the fair share of contributions to the EF. Switzerland stands ready to engage in an open dialogue with the Secretariat for the future.

**5 Implementation of UNEA decision 4/2 entitled “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly”.**

**(a) Stock-taking meeting for the process for review by the CPR.**

- We commend the co-facilitators on the revised document and the progress achieved so far.
- The document entitled Converging Elements provides more clarity on the role of UNEA and its subsidiary bodies. In particular, we welcome the proposal to name the open-ended CPR open-ended CPR Preparatory meeting for UNEA and the Annual Sub-Committee Review and Oversight Meeting. These naming provides clarity on what these important meetings are about without changing its mandate and function stipulated in Governing Council Resolution 27/2. However, the short version in brackets, in particular (CPR Pre-UNEA) is misleading because it is limiting to CPR and excludes the participation of Capital experts and civil society.
- We also welcome the Guidance on the role and function of the Bureaux of UNEA and of the CPR. This guidance helps to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both bureaux as well as areas of interaction and co-operation. A partial integration into the text as suggested by some delegations would defeat the purpose to provide the necessary guidance. We don't think that the Guidance note should be adopted by MS, but by the Bureaux themselves.
- We agree that the inter-sessional period between the ASC/ROM and the OECPR/CPR Pre-UNEA should be used to better prepare the UNEA both in terms of resolutions and decisions. The ASC is an important moment to identify areas for thematic resolutions, amongst others based on the ED's report on the implementation of resolutions.
- Decisions are crucial for the good functioning of UNEP, such as decisions on the MTS, PoW and Budget. They should be drafted by the Secretariat at an early stage and finalized ideally prior to the OECPR.
- We also agree that intentions to present resolutions should be announced timely through a concept note. These concept notes should be subject to consideration by the CPR and the Secretariat in preparation of the OECPR, which might include clustering of resolutions, etc.
- We think that the soft deadline for presenting draft resolutions should be at a date, which most delegations feel comfortable with. If this is not the case, we run the risk that only selective draft resolutions are presented within the soft deadlines by those delegations who feel comfortable with it.
- Switzerland will continue to be engaged in this important process.

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

- We commend the Secretariat on the excellent Action Plan, which is clear and actionable.
- We note that important parts of para 88 have been successfully implemented such as the universality of the membership to UNEA or the consolidation of HQ functions in Nairobi.
- We also note that other elements of para. 88 continue to be ‘business in progress’ and we are glad to see that many of these items will be addressed in the new MTS as priority issues, such as the coordination mandate of UNEP within the UN, the strengthening of the science-policy interface, the strengthening of environmental information through the development of a long-term global environmental data strategy and the increased capacity-building through the UN Development Systems Reform and the strengthened UN Resident Coordinators system.
- We also note and deplore that we are lacking behind in two areas. More should be done to achieve secure, stable and adequate funding and to ensure active participation of all relevant stakeholders. In these two areas, the responsibility is with us Member States to ensure that every Member States provides its fair share to UNEP's budget and to promote enhanced and meaningful dialogue with stakeholders. The Ministerial Declaration could be a place, where Member States could make stronger commitment in this sense.

**(c) Preparations for UNEA-5, including a possible scoping exercise and/or timetable for the tabling of resolutions for UNEA-5.**

**Draft Preliminary Outline of Executive Director's Report to UNEA 5**

- In our understanding, the theme of the UNEA-5 focuses on the delivery with respect to the environmental dimension of sustainable development. The theme should not be taken to address sustainable development globally but rather specifically by capitalizing on UNEP's competencies, namely on the environment.
- To contribute to achieving the SDGs, a "mainstreaming" the environmental actions into the social and economic dimensions will be essential. For example, not only delivering on SDG 13 on climate, but making sure that climate-related actions are embedded in SDG 8 on economic growth.
- We welcome the call to seize the current pandemic as an opportunity to build back better. Returning back to the same state as before the pandemic would indeed be a regression with regard to achieving the SDGs. UNEP as the highest environmental authority is best placed to ensure that the call to build back better is heard among Member States as well as within the UN system.
- We are missing the link to the many legally-binding internationally agreed environmental goals and would welcome to see the report commit to these goals vis-à-vis the SDGs.
- Finally, we would like to see a notion on how UNEP intends to deal with emerging issues. In our understanding emerging issues are to be tackled using scientific knowledge and providing an assessment on the issues in order to make science available for informed decision making.

**UNEA-5 Structure and Resolutions/Decisions**

- We thank the UNEA Presidency and the Bureau for its leadership and for its proposal to organize a meaningful UNEA under the current difficult circumstances.
- Switzerland agrees with the proposal to split the UNEA into two sessions and to have a virtual high-level segment in February 2021 and a resumed session with physical participation at a later stage. As many other delegations, we would have preferred the resumed session to take place later in 2021, according to the well-established UNEA-cycle and in order to avoid competition with the high-level event on S+50, i.p. in terms of high-level presence. We've learned today this was the preferred option that all but one region in the UNEA Bureau. Notwithstanding, the Presidency has come up with this proposal after wide consultation and we assure our support.
- This split of UNEA over two year obliges us even more to make the UNEA in February a politically meaningful event. The global environment faces too many challenges as to allow for silence by the global leading assembly for the environment, the UNEA. We need to collectively engage to prepare a strong and meaningful Ministerial Declaration. We are grateful to the UNEA Presidency for the transparent and inclusive preparation process and look forward to the announced consultation. Achieving a strong political result in February 2021 is not only important for UNEA but also for Nairobi. Nairobi simply cannot afford not to produce any politically meaningful result in three years (between UNEA 4 and a resumed UNEA-5). When all other UN Headquarters are able to successfully conduct and conclude political work during the current crisis, we should do our best to make this also possible in Nairobi and to ensure in this way that Nairobi remains relevant as the World Capital of Environmental Governance.
- Apart from the Ministerial declaration, we would see the following outcomes in February 2021:
- Adoption of draft decisions on the MTS, the Programme of Work and Budget and Budget, which are key for the functioning of UNEP
- As well as the adoption of the following decision and resolutions:
  - Draft decision on the logo/visual identity of the UNEP
  - Draft decision to take note of the action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88
  - Draft resolution on the Review Process
  - Draft resolution on the implementation of GA resolution 73/333

Deliberations on these decisions and resolutions are much advanced and we should be able to finalize them by February 2021. We don't see any merit in continuing the discussions on these items beyond February 2021.

We support that the High-Level Segment is part of the first UNEA 5 segment in February 2021 and we suggest to move this agenda item to the very beginning. We are of the opinion that the leadership dialogues should be used to conclude on the UNGA 73/333.

Switzerland remains fully engaged to support the UNEA Presidency in organizing and conducting a politically meaningful UNEA-5.

#### **Preparations for UNEP@50.**

No Secretariat's document available, Non-paper on Stockholm+50 by Sweden

- We thank Sweden for the non-paper on the Stockholm 2022 event. As mentioned in earlier interventions by Sweden and rightly pointed to by the CPR Chair, we do not have the mandate to further deliberate on this item in the realm of the CPR. In that light we will not be further commenting on the contents of the non-paper.
- First, of all we welcome a UN high level meeting in 2022 in Stockholm and stay ready to support Sweden in its endeavor to get to a decision at the UN General Assembly in NY.
- Importantly, as the UNEP@50 event and Stockholm are distinct but interrelated, we expect and Stockholm+50 and UNEP@50 will not compete but complement each other. This
- A UNEP@50 back-to-back with the resumed session of UNEA-5 will be the opportunity to commemorate the achievements of UNEP over the course of the last 50 years. It will further be backed by an important science-policy input that is currently being developed.
- With respect to the process of UNEP@50, this delegation seeks clarifications on how the Secretariat foresees the process from here moving forward from now on towards the celebrations at UNEP@50 in 2022?
- Again, we stand ready to further help to shape the UNEP@50 commemorative event.

#### **6 Implementation of UNEA resolution 4/22.**

No document available

- When I remember the negotiations we had on this particular resolution, I think the consensus was that we do not need more information and reporting. The most comprehensive reports and briefings miss their point if delegations lack the capacity to properly digest them.
- The dissatisfaction with the status quo that was at the basis of this resolution might reflect exactly this cognitive dissonance between the anxiety of Member States to be on top of everything and the realization of the fact that the more information is available the more difficult it becomes to have a full picture.
- And this is where the monitoring mechanism should bring relief. For us, the central point of the resolution is the dedicated portal. Delegations should be able to access – with a single click – all relevant information about the implementation of UNEA resolutions, such as links to existing reports and briefings, as well as linkages between the resolution and the Programme of Work.
- Most importantly, Switzerland is not advocating for more information, but for more meaningful and more accessible information.



- In that light, we encourage the Secretariat to focus on the core of the resolution that is to make accessible the progress of implementation through the work of UNEP. We do not judge a voluntary reporting by member states on the resolutions to be effective and supporting the portal. One would expect that the submissions by MS will be very selective, of differing quality, probably low in number and will increase the reporting burden on the side of MS.
- Additionally to the portal, we should also make full use of the existing tool that is the “Annual Subcommittee Meeting”. This should be the event when member states receive the information of the implementation of the PoW and the UNEA resolutions through the ED’s reports on the resolutions. To use this as a milestone in the reporting on the implementation and follow-up of the UNEA resolutions will enable space for discussion, create transparency and facilitate for member states to take into account the achievements so far when thinking about new resolutions.

## 7 Implementation of UNEA resolution 4/23.

### *On the World Environment Situation Room (and OP5)*

- We welcome that the World Environment does support the work towards “allow open access to up-to-date, quality-assured, credible and relevant data, including geospatial data, statistics, indicators and data analysis on the environment” as is required from UNEP in OP5 of the UNEA-4 resolution.
- The GRID centres are the backbone of UNEP’s science-policy work. In this light, Switzerland also welcomes the strong involvement of the GRID centres in the development of the WESR and in particular for the new data strategy.
- Firstly, in the note and to some extent in the PoW, we missed the narrative for the WESR that highlights its specific use at the science-policy interface. We believe that in responding to this, we would also welcome in the development of the data strategy (as in OP5) there is an explicit and strong narrative of how the WESR can contribute to being the bridge builder for informed decision-making.
- Secondly, it will also be helpful to understand how the WESR could be helpful in supporting a future of GEO process.

### *On the Future of GEO (OP6)*

- Switzerland noted with appreciation that all elements of the work plan are on track to deliver the expected outcome at UNEA-5. We also welcomed the open and transparent process of the broad consultations conducted over the course of the last month.
- We are looking forward to the options and recommendations from the StC in light of meeting the mandate that is to “keep the world environment situation under review”.

### *On measuring progress towards the IaEGs (OP9)*

- We noted with concern that by measuring progress towards Internationally Agreed Environmental Goals, the environmental dimension of sustainable development is lagging behind.
- Given the mandate of UNEP, we are looking forward to seeing how UNEP through its new Data Strategy will be addressing the challenges associated to that fact.