

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday 10 December 2020  
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m and 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. (EAT)  
Online Meeting

**Agenda Item 5: Preparations for the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of UNEP**

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Based on the [Secretariat note on preparation for the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of UNEP](#) (UNEP/SC/2020/10/5) dated 8 July 2020, and taking into account the discussions at the [150<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) on 30 April 2020, the [Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UNEA and of the CPR](#) on 9-10 June 2020, the [meeting of the CPR subcommittee](#) on 14 July 2020, and at the [7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the annual subcommittee](#) 12-16 October, as well as the decision by the [UNEA Bureau on 8 October](#) to organize a two-step UNEA-5, the Secretariat has prepared a draft strategic plan for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP, including a number of concrete proposals and approaches for the period February 2021 – February 2022.

The Committee of Permanent Representatives is invited to consider the draft strategic plan and provide further guidance on the way forward, in particular with regard to the planned launch of the commemoration at the virtual meeting of the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly in February 2021.

## **Draft strategic plan for the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of UNEP**

### **A. Proposed Principles for the commemoration**

1. The commemoration of the creation of UNEP (UNEP@50), as mandated in paragraph 8 of [UNEA Decision 4/2](#), should be launched and concluded at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It should be complemented by celebratory initiatives organized in conjunction with relevant meetings and events held at other locations.
2. UNEP@50 should be formally launched in conjunction with the virtual session of UNEA-5 in February 2021 and formally concluded in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February 2022.
3. In the period between the launch and the conclusion, the UNEP@50 commemoration should be given prominence in conjunction with selected high profile multilateral environmental meetings, such as meetings of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and of multilateral environmental agreements.
4. A successful UNEP@50 commemoration will require close cooperation between the UNEP Secretariat, the current and incoming UNEA Presidency, the UNEA and CPR Bureau, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives. It will also rely on additional extrabudgetary financial resources.
5. UNEP@50 should focus mainly on UNEP's core mandates, in particular its strong science-policy interface, as also highlighted in paragraph 7 of [UNEA Resolution 4/23](#), and international environmental governance drawing from established processes and a strategic communication approach,
6. UNEP@50 may provide an opportunity to take stock of, endorse or adopt the outcome of the consultation process under [General Assembly Resolution 73/333](#), entitled "Follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277".
7. UNEP@50 should have a minimal environmental footprint, through the identification and application of effective and cutting-edge information and communication technology and should include in its strategic approach all relevant stakeholders
8. UNEP@50 is distinctly different from, but closely interrelated with, a possible UN high-level political meeting in Stockholm that may take place in the second quarter of 2022 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment, subject to a possible decision by UN General Assembly.
9. The Unep@50 commemoration and the offer by Sweden to host a UN High Level meeting (Stockholm+50) can be mutually reinforcing and contribute to a reinvigorated and modernized environmental multilateralism and to a strengthened capacity by UNEP to support the implementation of the environmental dimension of the UN 2030 Agenda and UN reform.

### **B. Launch of the commemoration at the virtual meeting of the fifth session for the UN Environment Assembly in February 2021**

10. Following the decision by the UNEA Bureau on 8 October to organize a two-step UNEA-5, with a virtual meeting in February 2021, followed by a resumed in-person meeting in February 2022, the Secretariat proposes the following actions:
  - In advance of the virtual meeting of the Assembly, and in order to build momentum, the Executive Director will launch the first UNEP "Global Assessments Synthesis Report". The report builds on a Global Environmental Assessments Dialogue, bringing together experts from all major global environmental assessments undertaken under the UN umbrella, with the aim to foster increased

coherence, synergy and consistency across these major assessments. This report is expected to set the substantive backdrop for the outreach activities to be undertaken during the year 2021. It is proposed that the Executive Director organizes an interactive presentation to Member States on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February, prior to the OECP. The synthesis report could also be used as a background document for the virtual leadership dialogue that could be held during the virtual session of UNEA-5.

- In conjunction with the virtual meeting of UNEA-5, UNEP will also launch a UNEP@50 communication initiative and visual identity, designed to raise awareness about the role and value-added of UNEP to policy-makers and the general public throughout 2021, by showcasing UNEP's central role and continued importance in terms of its mandate, strategic programmes, science-based approach, and policies for a healthy environment. The initiative will build on planned and existing communication events planned for 2021 and 2022, including the World Environment Day 2021 and the communication strategy for UNEA-5, as well as relevant communication initiatives at regional level.

11. It is further recommended that in the decision concerning the date and format of the resumed session of the Assembly expected to be adopted at the virtual meeting in February 2021, the Assembly decides to celebrate UNEP@50, either

- a) As part of the High-Level segment of UNEA5 with a new agenda item titled "Commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972" from Thursday 4th to Friday 5th of February 2022,

or, alternatively

- b) As a Special Session of UNEA, organized back to back to the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February 2022, held immediately after the closing of the Assembly's high-level segment.

### **C. Engagement and outreach activities during the intersessional period between its launch and its conclusion at the resumed session of UNEA-5**

12. The Secretariat in cooperation with relevant governing bodies and secretariats and conventions as well as interested member States and organizing partners, will develop an outreach plan to give prominence to the UNEP@50 commemoration at relevant high profile multilateral environmental meetings and events, which may include some of the following (non-exhaustive list):

- Sustainable Energy for All Forum (SEforALL Forum) -16-18 February 2021
- World Wildlife Day 2021 – 3 March 2021
- UN Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (STI Forum) - 4-5 May 2021
- UN Development Cooperation Forum 2021 - 6-7 May 2021
- UN Biodiversity Conference (CBD COP 15) - 17-30 May 2021
- World Environment Day 2021 - 5 June 2021
- Launch of Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) - June 2021
- Fifth Meeting of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) - July 2021
- High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021 – July 2021
- Basel Convention COP15, Rotterdam Convention COP10 and Stockholm Convention COP10 – 19-30 July 2021
- UN Food Systems Summit – September 2021

- World Renewable Energy Congress – September 2021
- 76th Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 76) – 14-30 September 2021
- UNCCD COP – 15 - 14 September 2021
- International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste 2021 - 29 September 2021
- World Expo 2020 - 1 October 2021 - 31 March 2022
- World Food Day 2021 16 October 2021
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty 2021 - 17 October 2021
- UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 26) - 1-12 November 2021
- Minamata Convention COP4 – 1-5 November 2021
- Barcelona Convention COP 22 December 2021

13. Building on the initiatives under the 75th Anniversary of the UN, the Secretariat will also develop a broad engagement and outreach strategy to celebrate and reflect on key achievements and to solicit views for a new course for UNEP’s future, in light of current and emerging global environmental trends. The outcome of this initiative would be presented at the conclusion of the commemoration in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5.

14. Relevant UNEP science policy interface flagship reports may be tailored to commemoration of UNEP, such as:

- The UNEP Frontiers Report 2020/21.
- GEO-6 for Business.
- The Global Waste Management Outlook II.
- The Pollution Summary Report: Tracking Progress: where is the world in taking action to address pollution.
- The Protected Planet Report.

15. The Secretariat will implement the UNEP@50 communication initiative launched at the virtual session of UNEA-5, including through targeted social media initiatives and toolkits, facilitating for governments, civil society organizations, private sector entities and academia to support the campaign.

#### **D. Stakeholder engagement**

16. The Secretariat will support active engagement by the civil society and the general public, with a view to empower them to influence and feel ownership for UNEP@50, UNEP will, in accordance with its mandate and established practices for stakeholder engagement, undertake broad outreach efforts to strengthen the engagement of accredited non-governmental organizations and major groups and stakeholders in the commemoration activities.

#### **E. Science-policy input on the global environment for UNEP@50**

17. Under UNEA resolution 4/23, UNEP was tasked to develop a “science-policy input on the global environment” as a contribution to the UNEP@50 commemorations events.

18. In addition to the Global Assessments Synthesis Report mentioned above under section B, UNEP will develop a “legacy publication”, to review the development of the global environmental science-policy interface over the five decades since the Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was adopted in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972 that led to the establishment of the UNEP in the same year. This publication will also take a forward-looking approach and assess new trajectories, emerging trends, and potential game-changers for strengthening the environmental science-policy

interface and making progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals of UN 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed environmental goals.

19. This effort also builds on two elements of UNEP's ongoing work and core mandate on: (i) the Ad-hoc Global Assessment Dialogue, that brings together all major global scientific assessments to enhance synergies, led by UNEP's Science Division, and (b) the ongoing work on enhanced environmental governance, policy coherence and synergy across Multilateral Environmental Agreements, spearheaded by UNEP's Law Division.
20. In accordance with the guidance received from the meeting of the Joint Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau and the Committee of Permanent Representatives held in early June 2020, a tentative plan and initial outline for the publication will be presented in early 2021, and then finalized in early 2022 to be launched in conjunction with the conclusion of UNEP@50. This publication may also serve as a contribution to discussions and deliberations by Member States and stakeholders on strengthening the science-policy interface at UNEP@50.

#### **F. Conclusion of the commemoration of UNEP@50 in 2022**

21. To ensure a successful conclusion of the commemoration, the Secretariat considers that:
  - Member States may wish to either include a new item in the agenda of the resumed UNEA-5, entitled "Commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme in 1972" or, alternatively, convene a special session of UNEA back-to-back to the resumed fifth session under the Presidency of the sixth session of the Assembly.
  - If included within the resumed session of UNEA-5, the event should be held for a period of maximum 2 days as part of the high-level segment, during which Member States together with selected high-level dignitaries may reflect on the key UNEP achievements during the past 50 years, and look ahead towards future challenges and opportunities.
  - If convened as a Special Session under the leadership of the President and the Bureau of the Sixth session of the Assembly, the event should take a similar format of a period maximum two days comprising of a high-level opening plenary, roundtables, and a closing plenary.
  - Member States should consider to use UNEP@50 as an opportunity to take stock of, endorse or adopt the outcome of the consultation process under General Assembly Resolution 73/333, entitled "Follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277" and, if agreed by Member States, conclude with the adoption of a high-level political declaration with *a view to strengthening the implementation of international environmental law and international environmental governance, in line with paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled 'The future we want'* as set out in the process established under resolution 73/333.