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## United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

153<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to  
the United Nations Environment Programme

Nairobi, 26 January 2021

Online meeting

14:00 – 17:00 (GMT+3)

### **Agenda Item 5: Preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP.**

This note serves as a background document for consideration of agenda item 5: Preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP.

The consists of a revised draft strategic plan for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP, taking into consideration the guidance received from Member States and stakeholders at the meeting of the CPR subcommittee on 10 December 2020.

The document contains a tentative programme for the kick-off UNEP@50 during the concluding plenary of the online meeting of UNEA-5 on 23 February and includes the feedback received by Member States on the programme of activities for the commemoration. The document also contains additional information on the expected launch of UNEP's Global Assessments Synthesis Report entitled *Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies*. The Committee is informed that the Secretariat will make a briefing on this specific topic at the forthcoming 153 meeting of the Committee.

Member States are invited to review the revised strategy and provide further guidance to the Secretariat with a view to facilitate an impactful UNEP@50 commemoration, including with regard to the planned kick-off at the online session of UNEA-5 and to the culmination of the commemoration foreseen to take place in Nairobi in February 2022.

## Strategic Plan for the commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of UNEP

### A. 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 commence at the online session of UNEA-5 in February 2021 and culminate in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February 2022 in UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. It should be complemented by various forms of initiatives organized in conjunction with relevant meetings and events held at other locations in 2021 and 2022, concluding at the World Environment Day on 5 June 2022 (the date of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary).
2. 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.
3. A successful UNEP@50 commemoration will require close cooperation between the UNEP Secretariat, the current and incoming UNEA Presidencies, the UNEA and CPR Bureaux, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and interested accredited organizations. It will also to a large extent rely on the availability of additional extrabudgetary financial resources.
4. 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,
5. The culmination of UNEP@50 may, subject to the agreement of Member States, 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".
6. UNEP@50 is distinctly different from, but interrelated with, a possible UN high-level political meeting in Stockholm that, subject to a possible mandate provided by the UN General Assembly, 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.
7. The UNEP@50 commemoration and the offer by Sweden to host a UN High Level meeting (Stockholm+50) can be, if mandated by the UN General Assembly, mutually reinforcing and contribute to 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, in line with the aspirations and goals outlined in UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2022-2025 and beyond.

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

8. Following the decision by the UNEA Bureau on 8 October 2020 to organize a two-step UNEA-5, with an online session in February 2021, followed by a resumed in-person session in February 2022, and based on guidance provide by Member States on UNEP@50, the Secretariat proposes the following tentative programme for the kick-off UNEP@50 during the concluding plenary meeting starting at 4 p.m. on 23 February:
  - A short and inspiring UNEP@50 video, comprising a selection of environmental success stories and important initiatives, showcasing UNEP's role in catalyzing and advancing multilateral environmental governance;

- A statement by the Executive Director of UNEP and the President of the Assembly;
  - Possible statements by a limited number of other dignitaries;
  - A statement from Major Groups and Stakeholders emanating from the civil society consultation process on UNEP@50;
  - Launch of a visual identity / logotype for UNEP@50.
9. In conjunction with the online virtual meeting of the Assembly, and in order to build momentum, the Executive Director also intends to launch the first UNEP Global Assessments Synthesis Report entitled *Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies*. This new UNEP report, supported through funding from the European Union, stems from a request made by Member States in UNEA resolution 4/23 (paragraph 7). It is also linked to the work of the Adhoc Global Assessments Dialogue, which brings together the secretariats and co-chairs of major global scientific environmental assessments undertaken under the UN umbrella to consider possible areas of cooperation and synergies across recent assessments<sup>1</sup>. The Synthesis report is aligned with the UN Secretary General's recent speech on the state of nature issued in December 2020, supports the scientific basis framing of the proposed UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-25, and is expected to set out the scientific backdrop for the UNEP outreach activities throughout 2021. The Synthesis report may also serve as useful background for the leadership dialogue to be held during the online session of UNEA-5.

### **C. Engagement and outreach activities for UNEP@50**

10. The kick-off at the online meeting of UNEA-5 will mark the beginning of a UNEP@50 communication initiative, designed to raise awareness about the role and value-added of UNEP to policy-makers and the general public throughout 2021 and 2022. The initiative will build on planned and existing communication events planned for 2021 and 2022, including the World Environment Days and the communication strategy for UNEA-5, as well as relevant communication initiatives at regional level.
11. The Secretariat in cooperation with relevant governing bodies and secretariats and conventions as well as interested member States and organizing partners, will give prominence to the UNEP@50 commemoration at relevant high profile multilateral environmental meetings and events, which may include some of the following:
- World Wildlife Day 2021 – 3 March 2021
  - International Day for Biological Diversity – 22 May 2021
  - 15<sup>th</sup> UN Biodiversity Conference of the Parties (COP 15) - 17-30 May 2021
  - World Environment Day 2021 - 5 June 2021
  - Fifth Session of the International Conference for Chemicals Management (ICCM5) - July 2021
  - The High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2021 – July 2021
  - The 76<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA 76) – 14-30 September 2021
  - The 26<sup>th</sup> UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) – 1-12 November 2021
12. Relevant UNEP science policy interface flagship reports will be tailored for the commemoration of UNEP@50, such as:
- The UNEP Frontiers Report 2020/21.
  - GEO-6 for Business and GEO for Cities.
  - The Global Waste Management Outlook II.

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<sup>1</sup> More information on this report is available at: <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/global-assessments-synthesis-report-path-to-sustainable-future>

- The Pollution Summary Report: Tracking Progress: where is the world in taking action to address pollution.
  - The Protected Planet Report.
  - The UNEP Emissions Gap Report 2021.
  - The UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2021.
13. The Secretariat will, subject to the availability of additional extrabudgetary financial resources, implement a range of communication activities, including through targeted social media initiatives and production of multimedia content for engaging governments, civil society organizations, private sector entities and academia to support the UNEP@50 commemoration. The main focus will be to position UNEP as the lead organization for the environment by:
- Reaffirming the relevance of UNEP’s environmental mandate and multilateral agenda and demonstrate its knowledge and expertise through past and present impact, science and innovation;
  - Calling for greater action and commitment to urgently solve the planetary emergencies through scientific progress and effective policy-making that protect both people building for example on the Global Assessment Synthesis Report and other scientific publications;
  - Asserting the significance of UNEP’s governance and role in the UN system (UN Environment Assembly, regional presence, Multilateral Environmental Agreements, UN reform);
  - Inspiring discussions and deliberations by Member States and stakeholders to strengthen the science-policy interface.
14. Potential communication outputs include:
- A dedicated webpage for UNEP’s 50th anniversary with interactive stories around UNEP’s success stories and articles for digital/website;
  - Videos for social media, tapping into the rich content of UNEP and joint UN projects that reflect the achievements of multilateral instruments in addressing environmental challenges, such as those arising from climate change, biodiversity loss and unsustainable natural resource management – with the objective to highlight the need for a reinvigorated multilateralism to support effective implementation and impact;
  - Dynamic interview-style videos for social and mass digital media with prominent celebrities, politicians and public face personalities that have helped generate public awareness, interest and understanding on the most pressing environmental issues facing our planet;
  - Brand identity development and implementation in UNEP’s corporate channels, a logo pack in six official UN languages (plus Portuguese and Kiswahili), and a visual identity toolkit for member states and partners that wish to support the commemoration.
15. The Secretariat will also consult with the secretariats of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their respective Governing Bodies to solicit inputs and create broader ownership for UNEP@50.

#### **D. Stakeholder engagement for UNEP@50**

16. The Secretariat will, in accordance with its mandate and established practices for stakeholder engagement, support an active engagement of major groups and stakeholders in the commemoration activities, with the aim to promote broad participation and ownership for UNEP@50.
17. The Secretariat will support the work of the “UNEP@50 Taskforce” initiated by Major Groups and Stakeholders, coordinated by the Science and Technology and the Children and Youth Major Groups, to put in place a broad consultation process for interested civil society organizations and representatives to identify relevant inputs feeding into the UNEP@50 commemoration. Based on surveys and scientific

assessments, stakeholders are expected to develop an independent report expressing their own perspectives and expectations on the 50-year commemoration of UNEP, under the working title “The UNEP We Want”, expected to be available by the end of 2021 and launched at the culmination of the commemoration in February 2022.

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

18. UNEA resolution 4/23 requests the Executive Director of UNEP to develop a “science-policy input on the global environment” as a contribution to the UNEP@50 commemorations events.
19. In addition to the Global Assessments Synthesis Report mentioned above under section B, and subject to the availability of extrabudgetary financial resources, UNEP is taking initial steps to develop a “legacy publication” (working title), to review the development of the global environmental science-policy interface over the five decades since the establishment of the UNEP in 1972. The concept is still under development and more information will be provided at a later stage.

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

20. To ensure a successful culmination of UNEP@50, 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” to be addressed as part of or immediately after the Assembly’s high-level segment, 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.
21. If included within the resumed session of UNEA-5, the event should be held for 1 - 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.
22. 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.
23. Additional extra-budgetary financial resources will be required for both of these alternatives. The additional costs of any of the two alternatives will vary, depending on the exact timing and length of the event.
24. Member States may also wish to consider using 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 General Assembly resolution 73/333.
25. Additional outreach activities in 2022 are expected to take place after the 2022 World Environment Day.