



Distr.: General
10 February 2021

English only



**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme**

**Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to
the United Nations Environment Programme
Fifth session
Nairobi (online), 15–19 February 2021**

**Draft minutes of the 153rd meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 26 January 2021**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting, which was held online, was opened at 2.15 pm on Tuesday, 26 January 2020, by Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.
2. The meeting was attended by participants representing 81 Member States, 1 observer missions and 17 organizations from the major groups and stakeholders.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Luke Joseph Williams (Australia); Mr. Dmitri Panin (Azerbaijan); Mr. Zsolt Meszaros (Hungary); Mr. Sarmad Ibrahim Al-Mashhadani and Mr. Mustafa Maath Al-Niami (Iraq); Mr. Giacomo Montemarani (Italy); Mr. Naravit Ongkamongkol (Thailand); Ms. Jacqueline Wabyona Banana (Uganda); Ms. Josephine Gauld (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members, thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Committee: Mr. Elman Abdullayev (Azerbaijan); Mr. Remy Barampama (Burundi); Mr. Burhan Namik Salim Al-Jaf and Mr. Ziyad Tariq Kafi Ali-Midlij (Iraq); Ms. Angela Loi (Italy); Mr. S. A. Maroof (Pakistan); Mr. Nathan Ndoboli (Uganda); Ms. Susie Kitchens (United Kingdom).
5. The Chair said that, following the precedent set prior to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, consideration of the Executive Director's quarterly report would be deferred until the 154th meeting of the Committee so as to focus on the preparations for the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, which was to take place in February 2021.
6. The Chair invited the representative of the United Kingdom to speak on behalf of the United Kingdom and Italy, joint Presidents of the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.
7. The representative of the United Kingdom said that 2021 was a year of both opportunity and duty to catalyse the change required to reset humanity's relationship with nature. His country would host the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change from 1 to 12 November 2021, and Italy would host a summit in advance of the session, from 30 September to 2 October 2021, as well as a youth event entitled "Youth4climate: driving ambition". The United Kingdom and Italy, which currently held the

Presidencies, respectively, of the Group of Seven and the Group of Twenty, would collaborate to promote agreement on ambitious global action to tackle climate change and preserve the planet in the lead-up to the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Food Systems Summit, among other upcoming multilateral meetings and events.

8. The twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change would bring leaders together to work towards stronger commitments on climate change mitigation, adaptation and finance, more ambitious nationally determined contributions, and long-term strategies to reach zero carbon emissions as soon as possible. The joint Presidency would work to strengthen the focus on protecting people and nature from the impacts of climate change and to enhance international collaboration between policymakers, investors, the business sector, young people, indigenous peoples and civil society. The challenges of enhancing adaptation and resilience, promoting clean energy and transport, and financing climate action while protecting and restoring natural habitats and ecosystems could only be met through multilateral action to address climate change and biodiversity loss with a clear focus on nature-based solutions.

9. In her oral briefing, the Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen, said that the early weeks of 2021 had not been as positive as had been hoped. Despite some progress made in addressing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, countries were still struggling to contain the spread of the disease, while the many extreme weather events of 2020 could only be expected to continue. It was imperative for humanity, after years of promises but insufficient action, to heed those warnings and decisively address the three-pronged crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the proliferation of pollution and waste.

10. In that regard, 2021 was also a year of hope. People were relying on science to overcome the pandemic, and the development of COVID-19 vaccines represented a historic process of collaboration and innovation. A strong belief in the role of multilateralism remained and the work of the Committee was significant in uniting fragmented environmental governance, which would contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the transition towards a more just and sustainable future for all.

11. The challenges of the world could only be faced through inclusive multilateralism and global solidarity and leadership such as that shown at the adoption in 2015 of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Novel approaches adapted to current conditions were needed to realize the promise of an effective, networked and inclusive multilateralism, in a year in which it was crucial for science to lead and for finance flows and resources to be diverted from the toxic economy.

12. The allocation of pandemic recovery stimulus funds could accelerate the transition to sustainability in wealthier countries, but that opportunity was not currently being seized. The *Production Gap Report 2020*, published by leading research institutions and experts with support from UNEP, had revealed that fossil fuel production needed to be decreased by approximately 6 per cent per year until 2030 to maintain planetary warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Instead, an annual increase in hydrocarbon production of 2 per cent was projected and almost no progress was being made in funding climate adaptation, a failure which would have the most severe impact on the world's poorest and most vulnerable.

13. There was still an opportunity to rise to the challenge, one which required UNEP to regroup and the countries of the world to unite their strategies and actions, and, in that regard, UNEP aimed to ensure complete clarity on the function, form and financing of its operations to be ready to implement its medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025. That approach entailed remaining true to the aims of UNEP while retooling its delivery model to serve Member States better in the context of a reformed United Nations development system, with stronger analytics and advocacy for a meaningful contribution to enhancing science-based policies and actions.

14. In a rapidly changing world, UNEP would be ready to seize the opportunities of the unstoppable digital transformation that was under way and would focus on engagement across the industry value chain in an effort to ensure that the needed financial and economic transformations were commensurate with the three planetary crises. That also meant boldly and systematically stepping up on gender equality and women's empowerment and creating a strong culture of excellence and collaboration to ensure agile and transparent operations for strong project execution.

15. The fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly would involve two meetings, one to be held online in February 2021 and the second to be held in-person in 2022. At the online meeting in 2021, the Environment Assembly was expected to adopt the medium-term strategy for the

period 2021–2025 and the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022–2023. The online meeting would present an opportunity for the world’s environment ministers to provide their guidance on building an inclusive and sustainable post-pandemic world. The willingness of Member States to participate in a fully online session of the Environment Assembly was a signal of strong commitment to multilateral environmental action. She looked forward to discussion at the current meeting on the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP, based on the revised strategic plan, expressing the hope that the Committee would provide the needed guidance on the launch of the commemoration in 2021 and its culmination in 2022.

16. Turning to programmatic highlights in 2021, those included scaling up and accelerating work on promoting a just transition to a circular economy and sustainable consumption and production and on rebuilding value chains to be green and inclusive, guided by the insightful findings and messages of the International Resource Panel and the One Planet Network task group on catalysing science-based policy action on sustainable consumption and production, and in response to Environment Assembly resolution 4/1 on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production.

17. The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a unique opportunity to kickstart a global movement to rebalance the relationship between people and nature, would be launched on 5 June 2021, World Environment Day. Securing human health required securing the health of the environment and, in that regard, UNEP would continue its work on risk analysis and on antimicrobial resistance, working closely with Member States to strengthen the institutional structures to support the One Health approach.

18. Strengthening environmental health meant fixing food systems. It had been highlighted in a recent briefing to Member States on the United Nations Food Systems Summit that food security could not be attained without a stable climate. The United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development had begun on 1 January 2021; UNEP would work closely with its partners to support countries in developing sustainable “blue” economies, technologies and solutions in order to tackle marine litter and land-based pollution, including by supporting the follow-up process to the work undertaken by the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

19. To effectively deliver on its environmental law mandate, UNEP would continue to work with partners in the United Nations system to realize the right to a healthy environment for all, including by implementing the Secretary-General’s call to action on human rights made on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations. Work in that regard had been delayed in 2020 by the pandemic, but would continue during the fifth decade of action on environmental law, launched in January 2020, under the Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law. In addition, the 2020 synthesis report, “Making Peace with Nature: a scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies”, which would be introduced during the current meeting, made the strongest scientific case yet for the peoples of the world to apply their collective determination to protecting and restoring the planet.

20. Turning to staffing, she said that UNEP had completed the recruitment for the positions of Chief Scientist, Deputy Director of the Science Division and Deputy Chief Officer of the Secretariat of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. Recruitment was under way for the positions of Assistant Secretary-General of UNEP in New York, executive secretaries of the Ozone Secretariat and of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, Director of the Policy and Programme Division of UNEP, and Director of the UNEP Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. Concerted outreach efforts would continue to be made at regional forums and through career development platforms to enhance the gender and geographical diversity of UNEP staff.

21. In closing, she said that, with collective action from individuals and societies, 2021 could be remembered as the year in which the human tragedy of the pandemic had been overcome. Through a renewed commitment to ambitious multilateral action for people and the planet, 2021 could also be remembered as the pivotal moment when safeguarding the health of the planet had been prioritized as the only means of safeguarding the health and well-being of current and future generations of humankind.

22. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, the secretariat, the Bureau of the Committee, the President of the Environment Assembly and its Bureau for their efforts to prepare for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly under the extraordinary circumstances that continued to prevail owing to the pandemic. He expressed appreciation for the engagement of the Committee in preparing the medium-term strategy for the period 2021–2025 and the programme of work and budget

for the biennium 2022–2023, and for the more than 20 substantive reports prepared in a timely manner by the secretariat for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its fifth session.

23. Emphasizing the importance of recognizing the link between the pandemic and environmental degradation, and expressing strong support for the efforts of the President of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly to gain the Committee's assent on the issuance of a political message during the online meeting of the session in February 2021, he noted that it was more important than ever for a strong message to be issued to guide the countries of the world towards a green pandemic recovery and to mobilize ambition to tackle the problems of biodiversity loss; climate change; chemicals, waste and pollution; and unsustainable food systems. The absence of such a message would reduce the relevance of the Environment Assembly and cast a shadow over UNEP and the United Nations Office at Nairobi, negatively affecting the environment and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

24. Welcoming and supporting the communications strategy prepared by the secretariat, he called upon the Executive Director to spare no effort in reaching the widest possible audience to promote the theme and messages of the fifth session and in underlining the relevance of key areas of UNEP work to support action on climate, nature and pollution.

25. Turning to the intersessional work between the online and resumed meetings of the fifth session, he said that Member States should take the lead in following up on the reports to be presented in February 2021 and that efforts should be made to ensure that discussions were not reopened on work that had been concluded, in particular with regard to the work of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

26. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/153/1/Rev.1).

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 152nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

27. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 152nd meeting, held on 19 November 2020, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/153/2).

Agenda item 4

Preparations for the online fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives

28. Introducing the item, the Chair said that the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives was scheduled to take place online on 15 and 16 February 2021, before the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly. He drew attention to document UNEP/OECPR.5/1, containing the draft agenda, the draft annotated agenda and a proposed programme of work for the two-day online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee, noting that it was owing to the pandemic that the extraordinary structure had been proposed and that a decision would be made on the date and venue of the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives during the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly. He invited the representative of Norway to present, on behalf of the President of the Assembly, the status of preparations for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

29. Thanking the Committee, the secretariat, and the bureaux of the Committee and of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly for their work, the representative of Norway noted that despite the challenges in 2020 and 2021 matters were in order for the online meeting of the fifth session of the Assembly. One aim of the political message proposed by the President of the Environment Assembly for issuance by the Assembly at its fifth session was to show that, within the limitations of online meetings, the Assembly was taking all possible action to fulfil its mandates. It had been suggested that, to avoid confusion with the ministerial declaration mandated under General Assembly resolution 73/333, the proposed message should open with "We, the online United Nations Environment Assembly". The message had been revised based on input from Member States and submitted to

representatives for their consideration on 15 January 2021. It was to be hoped that the discussion scheduled to take place during the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives would lead to consensus on the message, subject to clarification of its legal status. That status and the precedent that might be set by issuing the message were the source of much of the scepticism of representatives rather than its content, which simply highlighted the work of UNEP and of the Environment Assembly at its fifth session, and underscored the urgency of fulfilling its mandate and the relevance of prioritizing the environment in actions taken in the context of pandemic recovery. Support for the message was growing on all fronts and, if approved, it would be annexed to the proceedings of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly. She welcomed the efforts of the secretariat to facilitate as much discussion as possible during the leadership dialogues and invited representatives to view the letter of the President and contact her with any questions or concerns.

30. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the secretariat for preparing the draft agendas and said that they supported the draft programme of work for the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

31. A number of representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, underscored the importance of limiting the work of the Environment Assembly at the online meeting of the fifth session to the consideration of procedural draft decisions. One representative noted that the reluctance of many representatives to engage in online negotiations was linked to the suboptimal Internet connectivity that prevailed in many regions of the world, which could affect the inclusivity of proceedings.

32. Many representatives said that they had taken note of the letter of the President of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly on the proposed political message and that they looked forward to further discussion on the matter during the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed strong support for the issuance of a political message, particularly in the light of the fact that, owing to the evolution of the pandemic, it remained difficult to foresee how soon it might be possible to resume in-person meetings, while other representatives expressed reservations regarding the message, in particular with regard to the process for Member States to contribute to its drafting, its legal status and whether its issuance would set an undesired precedent, as well as its relationship to the ministerial declaration mandated under General Assembly resolution 73/333.

33. Regarding the contribution of the Environment Assembly at its fifth session to the 2021 meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, one representative underscored the need for a clear, seamless and timely process for the preparation of the contribution to avoid the pitfalls experienced previously, while another representative noted the importance of a consultative and inclusive preparatory process.

34. Responding to the comments, the representative of Norway said that it was important to recall the extraordinary and unique circumstances under which the proposed political message would be issued. Its purpose was to raise the profile of UNEP as the leading global environmental authority that set the environmental agenda. She invited representatives to refer to the letter of the President of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly for further details.

Agenda item 5

Preparations for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme

35. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to document UNEP/CPR/153/4, setting out a strategic plan for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNEP, and recalled that the preparations for the commemoration had been the subject of much discussion, including during a subcommittee meeting on 10 December 2020.

36. The Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Joyce Msuya, said that she trusted that the revisions made to the proposal for the launch of the commemoration and the related intersessional activities, in response to input from representatives, would meet with the approval of the Committee.

37. A representative of the secretariat said that the scope of formal outreach activities in the context of the commemoration of “UNEP@50” had been revised to take into consideration major environmental events. It had been clarified that the main political event for the commemoration would take place at the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in 2022. The

secretariat looked forward to receiving clear guidance and a decision from Member States on the scope, timing and format of the series of commemorative activities.

38. Representatives of the secretariat introduced the brand identity and logo of the UNEP@50 commemoration and noted that the design team had taken inspiration from the designs used during similar anniversary commemorations for other United Nations entities.

39. A representative of the secretariat introduced the 2021 synthesis report, “Making peace with nature: a scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies”, which had been drafted in response to paragraph 7 of Environment Assembly resolution 4/23, entitled “Keeping the world environment under review: enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science-policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook”. The synthesis report was one of the initial responses to the request, in that resolution, for the Executive Director of UNEP to prepare a proposal for science-policy input on the global environment, in consultation with Member States and making use of contributions from relevant stakeholders, in commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme, in line with the recommendation of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment.

40. The report synthesized the findings of the latest global environmental assessments with a view to presenting scientific knowledge in succinct and clear messages that could be acted upon by global leaders. The report had been drafted through an iterative process with feedback from Member States. It made reference to the COVID-19 pandemic, reiterated the scientific basis for the “build back better” approach espoused by the United Nations with regard to pandemic recovery stimulus spending, highlighted the crucial importance of taking action on the environment during the present decade, and had served as the foundation of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2021–2025. The report would be launched on 22 February 2021 during the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

41. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the secretariat for the revised version of the strategic plan for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP. They said that they supported the launch of the commemoration at the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in 2021, although a number enquired why the commemorations were scheduled to conclude before the actual anniversary date.

42. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the decision on the proposal to hold the culmination of the commemoration activities either during the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in 2022, or back to back with it in the context of a special session under the leadership of the President and Bureau of the sixth session of the Assembly, should be made through an open, participatory and transparent process, keeping in mind the budgetary implications of each option. Several representatives voiced strong opposition to holding a special session due to the additional cost it represented, noting that doing so could create an expensive precedent for future anniversary commemorations in the United Nations system.

43. Other representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for a special session to be held back to back with the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Assembly, and requested clarification on the logistical, administrative, procedural and budgetary aspects of each option. A number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that a one-day high-level commemorative event either during the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in 2022 or back to back with it could enhance high-level participation in both events. Many representatives underscored the need for the celebration to strengthen the role of UNEP as the global authority on environmental governance, while several representatives noted the need for the celebration to take stock of both successes and failures while focusing on the way forward. One representative said that the commemoration should not be by the United Nations for the United Nations, but rather should emphasize stakeholder involvement, in particular the involvement of young people, who would have to live with the consequences of the choices made by current leaders. In that regard, the commemoration should be forward-looking and should serve as a road map for a better future.

44. Several representatives expressed support for the commemoration 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”. Regarding the process mentioned in General Assembly resolution 72/277 of identifying and assessing possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments to strengthen their implementation, one representative noted that the greatest barrier to strengthening implementation was operational and related to the lack of capacity,

technology and resources in developing countries. In that regard, a number of representatives reiterated the centrality of the need for means of implementation to be provided to developing countries, while one representative recalled the importance of continuing to focus on poverty reduction in those countries as a means of protecting the environment.

45. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the synthesis report, emphasizing their support for placing greater emphasis on the central role of UNEP in strengthening the science-policy interface. Several representatives called for more equitable regional representation in that regard and for information on initiatives to enhance regional participation to be provided in a timely manner to enhance transparency, ownership and participatory decision-making. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested exploring how the work done on the synthesis report could feed into the deliberations on the future of the Global Environment Outlook series of publications. Another said that major groups and stakeholders also had a role to play in strengthening the science-policy interface and called for UNEP to explore partnerships with the private sector to build scientific knowledge, including traditional knowledge.

46. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed their full support for the proposal by Sweden to host an event from 1 to 3 June 2022 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted the complementarity and synergy between the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNEP and that of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries noted that an enabling resolution for the celebration in Sweden was under consideration in New York and said that, although the events were and should be kept distinct, they were interrelated, complementary and mutually reinforcing.

47. The representative of Sweden said that the anniversary event would aim for an action-oriented and transformative outcome to catalyse the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. It would focus on humanity's relationship with nature and on achieving a green and sustainable pandemic recovery through accelerating the shift to sustainable consumption and production to leave no one behind. A more detailed proposal would be presented shortly and Sweden looked forward to robust, inclusive and active participation in the informal consultations to follow.

48. Responding to the comments, the Deputy Executive Director thanked representatives for the constructive feedback. Pledging to keep Member States updated on all relevant developments, she said that it was their role to decide on the timing and format of all commemorations and on the role and outcome of the process under General Assembly resolution 73/333 and its interplay with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNEP and that of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment. She said that she had taken note of the importance of regional representation in scientific bodies.

49. A representative of the secretariat recalled that, with regard to the ministerial declaration mandated under General Assembly resolution 73/333, the outcomes of the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly would be sent to the General Assembly for endorsement. Additional consultation would be conducted with Member States on the process to implement Environment Assembly resolution 4/23.

Agenda item 6

Consideration of draft decisions on administrative and budgetary matters of the fifth session of United Nations Environment Assembly

50. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to document UNEP/CPR/153/4 on the draft decisions on administrative and budgetary matters to be considered at the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, setting out three draft decisions on: the programme of work and budget for the period 2022–2023 and the medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025; the management of trust funds and earmarked contributions; the date and format of the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly and of the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

51. A representative of the secretariat said that the draft decisions had been revised based on input from Member States and that, to avoid confusion, the text of the sections that had been amended had been bolded. The Bureau and the Committee had agreed that line-by-line consideration of the draft decisions would be reserved for the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

52. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, underscored the importance of avoiding online negotiations. Several representatives welcomed the proposal to consider the draft decisions line by line at the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, while others urged members to avoid hindering progress and keep in mind that the draft decisions had already been amply considered. One representative urged the secretariat to ensure that the language used in the draft decisions conformed to that used in decisions of the multilateral environmental agreements and to avoid language that could appear to pre-judge the outcome of negotiations currently under way.

53. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that some suggestions made by his delegation had not been taken on board in the amendments to the draft decisions. He nevertheless expressed the hope that draft decisions could be approved on the medium-term strategy and programme of work and budget during the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives in a spirit of compromise and without reopening matters that had already undergone extensive deliberation. He requested the intervention of the Legal Advisor on the possibility of including, in paragraph 5 of document UNEP/CPR/153/4, a recommendation to adopt the political declaration called for under General Assembly resolution 73/333 during the culmination of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP in 2022, in a special session held back to back with the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

54. One representative noted that, in the draft decision on the adjournment and resumption of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, it would be useful to include a paragraph on the intersessional work between the online and the resumed meetings.

55. Responding to the comments, the representative of the secretariat invited representatives to submit any further comments in writing. The Chair said that further suggested amendments would be clearly indicated in subsequent drafts, which would be made available to representatives by the following week. Representatives would still have the opportunity to present suggestions during the online meeting of the fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Agenda item 7

Report of the subcommittee

56. The Committee took note of the document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/153/5).

Agenda item 8

Other matters

57. There were no other matters.

Agenda item 9

Closure of the meeting

58. The meeting was declared closed at 7.20 p.m. on Tuesday, 26 January 2020.
