

AFRICAN GROUP INTERVENTIONS DELIVERED

BY

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HIGH COMMISSIONER OF THE REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

**AT THE MEETING OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT
PROGRAMME**

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Agenda item 2 on Consideration of the cycle of term of office of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Chairperson,

It is my honour to deliver this intervention on behalf of the African Group.

The African Group welcomes the outcome on this proposal as per decision 3 of UNEA-5.1 online session held in February 2021. The decision to consider this matter further within the CPR has ensured that our interaction remains consultative and guided in order to achieve a common approach. This is the same spirit we are encouraging on some of the issues that we believe need further deliberation as we continue to share ideas and positions through virtual interaction.

Chairperson,

As may be recalled, the African Group's support for extending the term for UNEP CPR Bureau remains a policy issue drawing from the same understanding that has allowed for UNEA-5 Bureau to be able to finalise the session that started in February 2021. Based on the very same circumstances, the term for the current UNEP CPR Bureau should carry on until the second part of UNEA-5 in 2022 is concluded, in the same vein as the UNEA-5 bureau which is still expected to carry on the bulk of its work for what will essentially be the "main" UNEA in 2022. It may be recalled that the CPR Bureau has an integral role to play in the preparation for the Assembly as stated in the Governing Council Decision 19/32, therefore; its current Bureau should continue to serve based on the decision of UNEA-5 to adjourn and resume in February 2022.

The African Group is in full respect of the Rules of Procedure that govern the UNEP CPR as the intersessional subsidiary body for UNEA. We also remain fully aware that the conduct of business of the CPR is also guided by decisions of the previous relevant Governing Council sessions. Nevertheless, it is our view to take the same approach of the process used for UNEA-5 Bureau when it was agreed to have it serve until the second part of UNEA-5. In this way, we can therefore avoid using unique approaches and remain in line with the Rules of Procedure. We have heard that UNEA could give a green light on this hence the support for the proposal at the recently adopted UNEA decision 5/3.

Chairperson,

The African Group has taken note of the secretariat paper proposing three options. Our view is that these options, and indeed any other that may come to the table, should be considered

in view of our stated position. In this regard, while we reiterate our stance to fully abide by the Rules of Procedure, we are encouraged by an approach towards an outcome that takes into account the principles of rotation and equitable representation for the sake of geographical representation. The Group also wishes to emphasize the member state ownership of this decision, taking into account the Secretariat's paper which does not capture all elements as we have heard them regarding this matter.

We also take note that, as per the relevant rules of procedure, elections for the CPR bureau should be held regularly on a biennial basis and hence we support Option B of the options paper, which calls for the holding of said elections on time to re-elect the current bureau members until the conclusion of UNEA-5 part 2 in February 2022. UNEA can thereafter give guidance once again to the CPR to hold exceptional elections once UNEA 5 has concluded in order to elect new members for the CPR bureau on the basis of the upcoming regional rotation.

Furthermore, the Group is of the view that this arrangement, which was necessitated due to exceptional circumstances, is not expected to - in itself - have serious long-term implications on the future cycles/rotations of the CPR bureau. In fact, it is a response to a situation that has already been disrupted as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

Chairperson,

While the Group acknowledges that the overlap in the Bureaux has happened previously, based on various circumstances, this should not prevent the CPR from addressing the immediate matter at hand based on necessitating circumstances of the day. Furthermore, it is the Group's view that in addition to allowing the current CPR Bureau to finish its work on UNEA-5, further discussions on how to address systemic problems should be undertaken in the context of the CPR-led review. It may be recalled that this process is one that we have agreed to conclude at the second part of UNEA-5. We have also said that we want to use the intersessional period to further discuss this and many other outstanding reports that will be finalised when we meet in-person. In this regard, we have an opportunity to further discuss the alignment of the two Bureaux should we wish to do so within the existing rules of procedure.

Chairperson,

In essence as the African Group, we believe that since the UNEP CPR Bureau facilitated UNEA-5.1 they should therefore conclude it accordingly at UNEA-5.2 in 2022 just like the UNEA-5 Bureau has been necessitated to do so through the decision to adjourn and resume

in 2022. The role of the two bureaus should continue with the clear understanding that balanced geographic representation is a cardinal principle of our work in the multilateral system and that each of the geographic regions should be expected to shoulder their responsibilities, adapt to the circumstances and cooperate to deliver optimum results for the upcoming UNEA sessions and UNEP's work more broadly. We also wish to thank all Bureau members for their willingness to serve.

Lastly chairperson,

On a related note, the African Group also wishes to once again emphasize the importance of the Africa region serving its full term as upcoming UNEA President for the 6th session of the Assembly. The Group requests for the Secretariat to shed more light on the options available in this regard and looks forward to a constructive engagement on the matter in an open, inclusive, transparent and participatory and timely manner within the CPR.

I thank you!