



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

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
155th meeting**
Nairobi (online), 16 September 2021

**Draft minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 23 June 2021**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. The meeting, which was held online, was opened at 4.05 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 June 2021, 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. In her opening remarks, the Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen, thanked members for their commitment to the work of the Committee. She drew attention to the recent celebration of World Environment Day, on 5 June, hosted by Pakistan, which had seen the successful launch of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030, with strong engagement by many Heads of State and an extraordinary mobilization of the international community. Thanking Pakistan for its leadership, she said that the event had been celebrated in countries around the world and had reached millions of people by means of print articles, social media platforms, and television and radio broadcasts, among others.
3. The meeting was attended by 58 participants representing 58 members.
4. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/154/1/Add.2).

Agenda item 2

Election of officers

5. Introducing the item, the Chair recalled that, owing to a lack of consensus among representatives on the election of officers during the meeting of the Committee held on 20 May 2021, the election had been deferred. At the request of two regional groups, the Bureau of the Committee had established a contact group comprising two representatives from each region to draft a decision on the election of officers, as set out in document UNEP/CPR/154/2/Add.1, which had been circulated to representatives on 21 June after consideration by the regional groups and the Bureau. Thanking representatives for their efforts and commitment to reaching consensus, he said that the draft decision was a faithful representation of the interests of all the regional groups.
6. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the Chair for facilitating the discussions of the contact group and attributed the need for additional consideration of the item to the use of online meeting platforms. He said that it was not optimal that representatives from the same regional group should chair the Bureau of the Committee and the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly at the same time, a matter that should be

discussed to avoid having the situation arise again. Nonetheless, in a spirit of compromise, he accepted the draft decision, which ensured no overlap in the regional makeup of the bureaux during the preparations for the second part of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly and those for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of UNEP. He sought clarification regarding whether the outcome document of the contact group could be adopted as a chair's summary rather than as a decision. He suggested that the recommendations of the text be framed as an agreement rather than as a recommendation and said that the issue with the cycle of the term of office of the Bureau of the Committee in relation to that of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly should continue to be dealt with in the context of the review process for the Committee. Regarding paragraph 6 of the draft decision, it should be made clear that the exceptional basis referred to therein related to the year in which the sixth session of the Environment Assembly would be held rather than to the presidency of its Bureau. He proposed the inclusion of an additional paragraph in the draft decision, reading: "Also requests the co-facilitators of the review process of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to continue the discussions about the problems regarding the cycle of the term of office of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in relation to that of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly".

7. Three representatives, all of whom spoke on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the Chair and the representatives who had participated in the contact group for their work and said that they were prepared to accept its outcome document.

8. Responding to a question, the Chair said that document UNEP/CPR/154/2/Add.1 was a draft decision of the Committee and would not be considered by the Environment Assembly. He recommended that the decision be annexed to the report of the present meeting. With regard to the question on the chairing of the joint meetings of the bureaux, the responsibility for agreeing on the agendas of such meetings fell within the purview of the bureaux themselves and agreement was reached through a consultation process. The practical arrangements set out in the draft decision would guide the organization of work of the joint meetings. Regarding the informal consultations on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333, a representative from the Eastern European States had been nominated as the Vice-Chair and a representative from Asia-Pacific States had been nominated as the Rapporteur for that process, paving the way for the continuation of the consultations. Regarding paragraph 6 of the draft decision, on the scheduling of the Environment Assembly session, he confirmed that the text stating that no precedent had been created referred to the number of years elapsed between sessions of the Environment Assembly and not to the presidency of the Assembly by a representative from the African States.

9. Subsequently, the Committee adopted decision Ex/1, as set out in annex I to the present minutes. It was agreed that the decision should be read in conjunction with the Chair's summary of the current extraordinary meeting of the Committee, held on 23 June 2021, as set out in annex II to the present minutes. The summary is presented without formal editing.

10. By decision Ex/1, the Committee elected the following representatives by acclamation as members of its Bureau for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023:

Chair:	Ms. Luísa Fragoso (Portugal)
Vice-Chairs:	Ms. Selma Malika Haddadi (Algeria)
	Mr. Ado Lõhmus (Estonia)
	Mr. Erasmo Martínez (Mexico)
Rapporteur:	Ms. Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan)

11. In the ensuing discussion, the incoming Chair thanked the members of the Committee and the outgoing Chair, as well as the secretariat, the Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, and expressed her intention to serve in a spirit of building trust and hope, with full transparency and accountability and in close cooperation with representatives. Thanking the outgoing Bureau members for their work, she congratulated the Chair on his excellent leadership during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. She expressed the hope that the work of the Committee would lead to the positive breakthrough required to address the multiple environmental crises facing humanity and, in that regard, called for urgent action from all on behalf of future generations.

12. All the representatives who spoke thanked the outgoing Bureau members and other representatives departing the United Nations Office at Nairobi for their work and welcomed the incoming Bureau members.

13. The outgoing Chair thanked representatives for their support and excellent work over the preceding two years, in particular in the face of the constraints imposed by the pandemic, and said that representatives had struck a delicate balance between ensuring business continuity and recognizing the inherent limitations of online diplomacy, including in the context of inclusivity and transparency. Despite those constraints, much had been achieved, including the adoption of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 and programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022–2023, the launch of the review process for the Committee and the consultations on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333. He thanked the secretariat for its work and said that UNEP was at the centre of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

14. Speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, a representative of the secretariat extended a warm welcome to the incoming members of the Bureau, thanked the outgoing members of the Bureau and said that the secretariat would continue to support the preparations for the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly and those for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of UNEP.

Agenda item 3

Other matters

15. No other matters were raised.

Agenda item 4

Closure of the meeting

16. The meeting was declared closed at 5.45 p.m. on Wednesday, 23 June 2021.

Annex I

Decision Ex/1 of the Committee of Permanent Representatives¹

The Committee of Permanent Representatives,

Recalling rule 63, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly which requires each subsidiary organ of the United Nations Environment Assembly to elect its own officers,

Recalling also Governing Council decision 19/32, paragraph 9, which states that “the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall elect a Bureau composed of a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, for a period of two years, taking into account the principles of rotation and equitable geographical representation”,

Recalling further that the Committee of Permanent Representatives last elected members to the Bureau at its 146th meeting, held on 20 June 2019, and that there should be an election of members to the Bureau whose term of office will begin on 1 July 2021,

Recalling decision 5/3 of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session, entitled “Adjournment and resumption of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly”,

1. *Elects by acclamation* the following representatives as members of its Bureau for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023:

Chair: Luísa Fragoso (Portugal)

Vice-Chairs: Selma Malika Haddadi (Algeria)

Ado Lõhmus (Estonia)

Erasmus R. Martínez M. (Mexico)

Rapporteur: Saqlain Syedah (Pakistan)

2. *Reaffirms* that the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall conduct its work in a collaborative manner and, in the light of the tasks expected of it, recommends that it adopt, under the leadership of its Chair and in a balanced manner, practical arrangements for the sharing of responsibilities among the Chair, the Vice-Chairs and the Rapporteur;

3. *Recommends* that the Vice-Chair representing the Latin American and Caribbean States be tasked with the coordination of the negotiating processes of draft decisions and draft resolutions to be submitted for the consideration of the Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session, including during the resumed fifth session of the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, and that the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly consider designating a representative of the Latin American and Caribbean States to chair a committee of the whole, if established, at the fifth session of the Environment Assembly;

4. *Also recommends* that the Vice-Chair representing the African States be tasked with facilitating the preparations within the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme;

5. *Further recommends* that the Vice-Chair representing the Eastern European States and the Rapporteur representing the Asia-Pacific States continue to be entrusted with the co-facilitation of the informal consultations, under the auspices of the Committee, on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333 of 30 August 2019;

6. *Recommends* to the Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session that it decide that, on an exceptional basis and without creating a precedent, its sixth session shall be held no earlier than February 2024 to ensure a full two-year term for the Presidency of the sixth session.

¹ This decision should be read in conjunction with the Chair’s summary of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 23 June 2021, as set out in annex II to the minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/155/2). The summary is presented without formal editing

Annex II

Chair's summary of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held on 23 June 2021

This Chair's summary complements the detailed minutes of the meeting developed by the Division of Conference Services of the United Nations Office at Nairobi. The draft decision of the Contact Group is set out in annex I to the minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/155/2) as adopted and amended by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at the meeting. All pre-meeting and post-meeting documents, including written statements by delegations, are available here.

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, opened the meeting.
2. Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP, provided introductory remarks and a brief update on the successful activities, engagement and media presence related to the 2021 World Environment Day and the launch of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration that took place on 5 June 2021, and expressed her appreciation to the government of Pakistan for their leadership as host of the World Environment Day as well as the support provided by many member States to the activities of the Day and the launch of the Decade.
3. The meeting agenda was adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Election of Officers.

4. The Chair recalled that following a series of informal consultations and several Bureau meetings, a set of draft elements for a CPR decision to be considered in the context of the election of officers for the next Bureau of the Committee had been prepared by a contact group comprising of two representatives from each region, and made available to all delegations in advance through the online meeting portal.
5. The representatives of three regional groups expressed support for the draft elements of a decision and for the election of officers to the new CPR Bureau as per the announced nominations, and expressed their readiness to work collaboratively with the new Bureau.
6. The representative of another regional group noted that while the draft elements provided a good basis to move forward, it constituted a significant step away from their original position to avoid that the same regional group would chair both the CPR and UNEA bureaux at the same time. The representative furthermore asked for clarifications on if the outcome could be reflected in a Chair's meeting summary instead of a CPR decision, on the modalities to decide the chairmanship of joint bureau meetings; on possible implications for the process to implement General Assembly resolution 73/333, and on the meaning of the term "exceptional" in paragraph 6 of the draft. The representative also proposed to include a new paragraph referring to the process for review by the CPR to consider systemic problems in relation to the cycle of term of office of the bureaux of the CPR and of UNEA.
7. Following the statements by delegations, the Chair clarified:
 - (a) That the compromise proposal was purposely drafted as a CPR decision as the best means of capturing all the various points of view;
 - (b) That while it is the prerogative of the two Bureaux of UNEA and of the CPR to define the organization and agendas of their joint meetings, the practical arrangements of those meetings are guided by the relevant recommendations in the draft CPR decision;
 - (c) That the nomination of Mr. Ado Lõhmus and H.E. Saqlain Syedah as Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the new CPR Bureau, thanks to their dual capacity as co-facilitators for the process of the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 73/333 under the auspices of the CPR, paves the way for a smooth continuation of this process;
 - (d) That the reference "exceptional basis and without creating a precedent" in paragraph 6 of the draft decision refers to the time period between the sessions of UNEA-5 and UNEA-6 and not to the Presidency of the African region;
 - (e) That further consideration of possible systematic problems related to the cycle of the term of office of the CPR Bureau in relation to that of the UNEA Bureau may be undertaken within the process for review by the CPR, as mandated by UNEA decision 4/2.

8. The Chair also proposed to add a footnote to the decision, which reads "*This decision should be read in conjunction with the meeting summary of the extraordinary meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 23 June 2021*".

9. Upon recommendation by the Chair, the Committee decided to adopt the draft decision, as amended, and to include it as an annex to the meeting summary and meeting report.

10. Furthermore, the Committee agreed that, in accordance with the mandate outlined in paragraph 7 of UNEA Decision 5/3, the process for review by the CPR should, as appropriate, further consider "*in view of systemic problems and in a comprehensive manner, the cycle of the term of office of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in relation to that of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly*", under the leadership by the new CPR Bureau.

11. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the UN Environment Assembly, which apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Committee elected new members of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives by acclamation for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023, as follows:

(a) **Chair:** H.E. Ambassador Luísa Fragoso, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Portugal

(b) **Vice Chairs:**

H.E. Mrs. Selma Malika Haddadi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria

H.E. Mr. Erasmo R. Martínez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico

Mr. Ado Lõhmus, Permanent Representative of Estonia

(c) **Rapporteur:** H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan

12. The newly elected Chair and Members of the Bureau thanked delegations for their support, committed to work in a cooperative, inclusive, open and transparent manner, and recognized the strong dedication and leadership of the outgoing CPR Bureau, especially during this time of an unprecedented pandemic. The Members of the Bureau also expressed their readiness to work collaboratively with the secretariat and looked forward to their continued assistance.

13. Members of the outgoing Bureau thanked all delegations as well as the Executive Director and the Secretariat for all the support provided during the past two years, and committed to continue to contribute constructively to the work of the Committee towards a successful UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 and towards full implementation of UNEP's programme of work.

14. Several delegations as well as the Executive Director of UNEP congratulated the newly elected Members of the next CPR Bureau, thanked the Members of the outgoing CPR Bureau for their hard work and valuable contributions during their tenure, and gave special recognition to H.E. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, for his exemplary leadership as Chair of the Bureau.

15. The Chair also congratulated the new CPR Bureau and thanked delegations for their words of appreciation, noting that it was his last meeting as the Chair of the Committee. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the other Members of the outgoing Bureau, the CPR, the presidency of UNEA, the Executive Director, and the secretariat for the excellent support and collaboration over the past two years. The Chair recognized that the willingness by delegations to work online during the pandemic demonstrates a strong commitment to UNEP and the environmental dimension of sustainable development, and expressed hope that the UN compound in Nairobi will open soon to allow for in-person meetings.

Agenda Item 3: Other matters.

16. No other matters were raised.

Agenda Item 4: Closing of the meeting.

17. The meeting closed at 5.30 PM (GMT+3).
