

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 23 September 2021
2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. (GMT+3)
Online Meeting

Agenda Item 4: Update on regional preparations for the resumed session of the UNEA-5 and UNEP@50.

This document serves as a background note for consideration of Agenda Item 4: Update on regional preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5 and special session on UNEP@50. It has been prepared by UNEP's Regional Offices and it summarizes the regional preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5, to be held from 28 February to 2 March, followed by a special session on UNEP@50, to be held on 3 – 4 March 2022.

Member States are invited to review and provide feedback to UNEP's Regional Offices with regard to regional preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5 and special session on UNEP@50.

Asia Pacific Office

1. UNEP Asia and the Pacific Office has been working closely with the Member States and other stakeholders to provide regional inputs to UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 Celebration.

2. Political Engagement in Asia and the Pacific

- The fourth session of the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (4th Asia Pacific Forum) will take place both on-site and virtually from 6 to 7 October 2021, organized jointly by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Korea and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The high-level segment of the Forum will be convened both on-site and virtually: at the Senior Officials' Meeting on 6 October, followed by the Ministerial Segment on 7 October at the Suwon Convention Center, Suwon City, Republic of Korea.
- The Forum serves as a platform for the Member States and other stakeholders to contribute regional perspectives to the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) to be held from 28 February to 2 March 2022 as well as to the Special Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to mark the 50th anniversary of UNEP (UNEP@50) on 3-4 March 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya.
- The Forum will focus on UNEA-5's theme: Strengthening Actions for Nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The Forum Provides regional inputs to the UNEA-5.2 theme and its draft outcome documents, as well as Regional Inputs to the Special Session of United Nations Environment Assembly to mark the 50th anniversary of UNEP.
- The Forum is also an occasion for Member States, UNEP partners, UN agencies, private sector representatives, scientists, academia, and civil society to bring their perspectives and ideas to achieve the environmental dimension of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
- UNEP Asia Pacific Office has been working closely with the Secretariat of the Governing Bodies to organize briefing sessions on UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 celebration with agenda and expected outcome at the sub-regional level with Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) Members and Processes.
- UNEP Asia Pacific Office will also reach out to Member States in the region to disseminate the UNEP@50 related documents and promotional materials prepared by HQ.

3. Stakeholder Engagement in Asia and the Pacific

- Prior to the 4th Asia Pacific Forum, the Asia-Pacific Youth Environment Forum will be held on 2-3 October 2021. The youth forum will provide regional inputs and voice to the high-level segment of the 4th Asia Pacific Forum as well as Global Youth Assembly, UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50.
- Asia Pacific Major Group and Stakeholders Forum will also be held on 4 Oct 2021 prior to the 4th Asia Pacific Forum. The forum will provide regional inputs, including voices of

marginalized sectors and grassroots, to the high-level segment of the 4th Asia Pacific Forum as well as Global Major Group and Stakeholders Forum, UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50.

- Asia-Pacific Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment is also scheduled on 5 October 2021 prior to the 4th Asia Pacific Forum. The regional platform aiming to catalyze a more dynamic interface between science, policy, business and society for science-based solutions towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals and providing regional inputs to the high-level segment of the 4th Asia Pacific Forum as well as Global Science, Policy, Business Forum, UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50.
- Besides, prominent civil society representatives from the region will contribute to special edition of Perspectives "50 years of UNEP - 50 voices from Civil Society" to commemorate 50 years of UNEP.
- In addition, major group and stakeholders including youth groups are planning to organize wide consultations and develop promotional materials to commemorate 50 years of UNEP.

4. Engagement with UN System on UNEP@50 Celebration

- UN Reform: Regional Office has focused on strengthening UNEP's engagement within the UN system. UNEP is now represented in all UN Country Teams (UNCT) in the region, which is allowing us to strengthen the environmental dimension of UN programming at country level. Regional Office will engage with UNCTs to share the agenda and outcome of the commemoration of UNEP@50.
- UN's Issue-Based Coalitions in Asia and the Pacific: UNEP is co-chair for the Issue Based Coalition (IBC) on Climate Change Mitigation and Air Pollution, which seeks to streamline and align the UN response to challenges of climate change and air pollution in the region. UNEP will also share the outcome of the UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 commemoration with UN's Issue-Based Coalitions in Asia and the Pacific.
- UNEP Asia Pacific Office will work with other UN organizations to promote the commemoration of UNEP@50 at various regional forums, including ESCAP's Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.

Africa Office

Over the last 50 years, the environment has occupied a central place in national and regional development plans and strategies and is key to the social and economic transformation of Africa region. The Africa Regional Group has always supported UNEP, as the global voice for the environment. They take pride of UNEP being hosted in the global south and make sure regional consensus on environmental affairs is the guiding principle in their participation in regional and global forums. African countries, with support from UNEP, speak with one voice at regional and global forums on environmental matters. This is mainly so in the deliberations of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), and various regional and global Conferences of Parties, among others.

In its several discussions on UNEP@50, the Africa Regional Group has reiterated that commemoration activities of this event are aligned to the aspirations of the Africa Agenda 2063, “**the Africa we want**” as well as the broad programmes that support the continent to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective: To support African countries commemorate UNEP@50 by engaging in activities at national, regional and global levels.

Theme: The commemoration will be organised under the overarching theme: “**The Environment Africa Wants.**”

The theme will guide African countries in celebrating 50 years of UNEP by customizing it into their national contexts. This will certainly raise their interest in the commemoration activities.

Activities: Given the current COVID19 situation, it is expected that the commemorations will be held virtually with limited physical presence, wherever its possible. A mixture of dialogues, media briefings and other events will be held. Some of the activities will be decentralized to countries, UNEP Offices, major groups and civil societies to manage. The events are divided into pre- and during the commemoration.

The commemoration will be held in full collaboration with UN sister agencies as well as regional economic communities and development partners in the region.

Key Events

1. Regional dialogues

African countries will be invited to regional dialogues that will reflect on the instrumental role UNEP has played over the last 50 years to advance the environmental agenda in Africa. The dialogue will include the role of UNEP, as the host of AMCEN Secretariat, in supporting African countries to recover from COVID-19 through the African Green Stimulus Programme. Speakers will include people with vast knowledge of UNEP’s history as well as partners who have supported UNEP’s programmes and initiatives in Africa. The dialogues are:

- a) Regional dialogue led by Member States;
- b) Regional dialogue led by Major Groups and stakeholders;
- c) Regional dialogue with participation of the private sector;

- d) Regional dialogue with focus on the women and the young people.

The four regional dialogues are expected to come up with statements reflecting on the last 50 years of UNEP at national, regional and global levels as well as an outlook on the role UNEP should play in the next 50 years to respond to the aspirations of Africa.

2. Media Outreach to build awareness of UNEP@50

A Media outreach campaign has been rolled out to publicize and build momentum for the commemoration of UNEP@50 in the region.

3. Youth Actions

- The Youth will create an online campaign on plastic pollution with messaging to country leaders
- Youth will be working with small scale farmers to build more climate-smart agriculture in rural communities, complementing the effort of UNEP.
- Youth want to advocate for their increased involvement in decision makings in countries that are most affected by climate change.
- Youth want to advocate for more youth to get accreditation with UNEP for more involvement and decision making.

4. The ongoing AMCEN18.1 outcomes as well as the stakeholders' forum

The on-going African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN¹) provides an opportunity for the African ministers of environment to discuss how they should engage in UNEP @50 commemoration at regional and country levels.

¹ Expert Segment of AMCEN is on 13-14 September 2021; the Ministerial Segment is on 16 September 2021

West Asia Office

1. The Regional Office for West Asia considers the preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5.2 as an ongoing process and therefore aspects of UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 are brought to the attention of governments and partners during our country and regional meetings and deliberations.
2. The most notable progress in the region when it comes to environment policy setting is the West Asia Ministerial Forum for Environment. The First meeting of the Forum will take place virtually on 29 September 2021 and will be dedicated to the endorsement of the Forum's Charter and the Ministerial Statement. The Forum is proposed to be an inter-governmental platform to cooperate on environment action in West Asia. The Kingdom of Bahrain has called for the establishment of the Forum and governments confirmed their participation in the first meeting. The proposed Charter of the Forum and the Ministerial Statement will be reviewed during a technical meeting on 21-22 September 2021. It is expected that outcomes of this Forum and its subsequent sessions, as so decided by the governments, will feed into UNEA meetings, along other regional and global platforms.
3. The preparatory meetings for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 for West Asia is planned to take place in mid-January 2022. Consultations and inputs to the reports on UNEA resolutions have already been concluded in 2020 and 2021, as listed in Annex 1 below.
4. Countries (Qatar, Palestine, Yemen) from West Asia participated the ministerial conference on marine litter held on 1-2 September 2021. The Conference offered a platform for informal consultations in the lead up to UNEA-5.2, building on the mandates from the 3rd and 4th sessions of UNEA (UNEA 3/7 and 4/6) on tackling marine litter and microplastics and the findings of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics.
5. The Regional Office for West Asia will update the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) during its 32 Session to be held on 14 October 2021, in accordance with the resolution 3 of the last CAMRE session. UNEP will provide written information note about UNEA-5 to the CAMRE's Secretariat and the Technical Committee meeting 10-12 October. Further, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, its strategy, objectives and activities will be presented by the Regional Offices of UNEP and FAO.
6. The regional Consultation Meeting for the Major Group and Stakeholders will be held in mid-November to prepare the regional statement to UNEA-5.2.
7. The Regional Office is proactively engaging with the UN Country Teams and the Regional Collaboration Platform to strengthen the environment dimension of country cooperation programmes and bring to the attention of the UN System issues and resolutions of UNEA.
8. UNEP will be participating in EXPO 2020 in Dubai, UAE, starting October 2021 through four major events related to Biodiversity, Food Waste and Climate. This provides a global platform to create awareness and advocate for UNEP@50 and the upcoming UNEA 5.2.

Annex 1

List of consultations held for the implementation of UNEA resolutions:

- General Briefing for West Asia on UNEA Resolution 4/19 on mineral resource governance that took place on 23 July 2020, with over 35 participants from the region. The Regional consultation on the same resolution took place on 26 August 2020.
- The Regional Consultation on UNEA Resolution 4/5 Sustainable Infrastructure for West Asia took place in 27 July 2020. With over 40 participants, the region provided its feedback on the sustainable infrastructure Good Practice. Guidance Framework. examples and good practices shared by countries as well.
- The regional consultation meeting on UNEA Resolution 4/1 “Innovative ways to achieve sustainable consumption and production” took place in 30th of September with over 40 participants. Feedback and experiences have been collected from 11 countries during the interactive discussion.
- In response to UNEA Resolution UNEA/4/7 on environmentally sound management of waste, we launched the first Regional Waste Management Outlook on the World Environment Day 2020. The Outlook reviews and assesses current waste and environmental management legal and legislative systems in the 12 West Asian countries and highlights the potential of the circular economy, in which waste serves as a resource and as a driver of regional economic growth.
- West Asia Office, in close consultation with Member States, is preparing a regional assessment report on national actions taken by Member States in West Asia to improve air quality as per UNEA resolution 3/8 on preventing and reducing air pollution to improve air quality globally.
- Expert Group Meeting on “Resource Efficiency in the Arab Region: Monitoring Progress of SDG 12 and Building Back Better from COVID-19 took place on 7-8 October 2020 organised jointly with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ECSWA) and the League of Arab States.

Europe Office

Europe Office has been working very closely with the Member States, sister UN agencies and Major Groups and Stakeholders to brief and engage them on both the outcomes of UNEA5 and its implications at the regional level, and preparations for UNEA5.2.

Our Europe Office Director, Bruno Pozzi has recently had bilateral discussions with Greece, Luxembourg, Poland, Spain, Croatia, Georgia, Poland, Russia and Romania to discuss issues of mutual interest and possible collaboration. Work is continuing in Geneva to engage with other UN agencies and multilateral institutions, including the ECE, FAO, ITU, and IUCN, to mainstream the environmental dimension in all multilateral and development work.

The 27th session of the Committee on Environmental Policy for UNECE Region (3-5 November 2021) will have a standing agenda item on UNEA and an opportunity to brief and discuss with member states on the resumed fifth session of UNEA-5 and the Special Session on UNEP@50.

The Regional Major Groups and Stakeholders consultation will take place in November 2021 and a significant number of MGS for the region are already engaged in UNEA processes, including UNEP@50.

The Geneva Environment Network (GEN) will organize briefings to Geneva-based Member States on the resumed fifth session of UNEA-5 and the Special Session on UNEP@50.

EU is very supportive of the UNEP@50 process and to have the UNEP@50 celebration as powerful as possible. There are no particular ideas/proposals from the EU at this stage but looking forward to seeing UNEP's proposal and ready to discuss and cooperate.

Italy and UK, G7, G20 and COP26 Presidency are putting climate and nature at the heart of their political agenda, supporting UNEP's work on climate and biodiversity and strengthening the call to raise ambitions for national climate plans and deliver on the promise of the Paris Agreement and post-2020 biodiversity framework.

Through the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA) we have reached out to UN Associations to promote UNEP@50 and replicate what they have done for UN75 in promoting the value of global cooperation to solve the social, economic, and environmental challenges of today, and the need for a reinvigorated multilateralism.

Key messages from partners on UNEA5:

- EU Recovery and Resilience Facility is successfully being used to support circular and green economy.
- Use Decade of Action to speed up global environmental decision-making and increase the pace and scale of implementation efforts.
- Link UNEP@50 and Stockholm+50 to leverage synergies.
- Keep the momentum towards UNEA 5.2 to adopt a mandate to start negotiations for a legally binding instrument to tackle plastic pollution.
- Use UNEA5 to identify and recognize emerging environmental challenges and threats and address that are so far not regulated through global governance: sustainable and equitable governance of our natural resources and raw materials; deep-sea mining, oil and gas exploitation and transport; soil protection; sustainable land management.

North America Office

1. Interviews with North American Business Leaders on Nature Positive Business Models in the Food and Beverage Sector.

As part of the regional process in preparation for UNEA 5.2., UNEP's North America Office facilitated a series of interviews with selected North American Business Leaders in the Food and Beverage Sector to delve into opportunities and constraints for companies in adopting more nature-positive business models/solutions.

This initiative builds on the consultation with [North American business leaders that was held in October 2020 in preparation for UNEA 5.1.](#) Executives from Canada, Mexico, and the United States shared examples of innovative, nature-based solutions in their businesses, examined success factors and challenges, and formulated messages to policy makers about the enabling conditions needed to scale best practices. The consultation had revealed significant potential to scale nature-based solutions if stakeholders work together to develop standards, build cross-sector partnerships, and leverage the private sector's capacity for innovation and capital investment.

UNEP's North America Office in partnership with the World Environment Center (WEC) conducted interviews between April and September 2021 with 10-15 executives in food, beverage, retail, agribusiness, and finance companies regarding their North American operations and value chains.

The research analyzed how companies, within their own operations and in their value chains, can implement nature positive business models, including investment in nature-based solutions and elimination of adverse impacts on nature. It explored the specific incentives, constraints, and cultural dynamics in these companies that inhibit or support progress toward more nature-positive business practices.

A report will be produced in October 2021 and will be presented at UNEA 5.2. as an information document, to complement the [2020 stakeholder consultations report *Strengthening Actions for Nature in North America Regional Input to UNEA-5.1.*](#) The report will summarize key messages from the interviews and recommendations for policymakers on addressing barriers and providing incentives for companies to adopt nature-positive business models.

2. Social media and media outreach to build awareness of UNEP@50

A social media and outreach campaign will be rolled out starting in November 2020 to publicize and build momentum for the commemoration of UNEP@50 in the region.

Latin America and the Caribbean Office

Political Engagement on UNEP@50 in Latin America and Caribbean

- The Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, the region’s most representative and longstanding political gathering on environmental matters, serves as the regional gathering for discussion and preparation of consolidated views and inputs from Latin America and the Caribbean the United Nations Environment Assembly Session (UNEA-5.2) to be held from 28 February to 2 March 2022 as well as to the Special Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to mark the 50th anniversary of UNEP (UNEP@50) on 3-4 March 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya. The latest roadmap of the LAC Forum of Ministers of Environment includes a week of regional virtual consultations on UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50 in October (week 18th-25th), one at ministerial level, and another to engage with civil society and stakeholders of the region.
- This year also marks the 40th Anniversary of the LAC Forum of Ministers of Environment. Its Presidency which is currently held by Costa Rica, has already proposed the Bureau to hold a Special Session of the Forum at ministerial level, instead of a regular intersessional meeting. It will be an occasion to signal the longstanding and remarkable contribution of the regional ministerial forum to environmental multilateralism. The meeting will be held on 20-21 January 2022, and the format of the meeting, hybrid or face to face will depend on the circumstances of the pandemic in the region at the time.
- UNEP’s Latin America and the Caribbean Office will be holding a preparatory meeting with high level officers in September 29-30th to revise the advances towards the Special session of the Forum, the regional consultations on UNEA and UNEP@50. It will also hold a subsequent meeting with the Bureau of the Forum of Ministers to agree and approve the agenda for the Special Session of the Forum of Ministers of Environment in the framework of its 40th Anniversary in alignment with the UNEP@50 framework.
- In this sense UNEP will be engaging in a number of activities and is beginning preparations for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Forum, one of the proposals to be considered is to engage a “Council of the Wise” in a regional dialogue including renown environmental actors with long trajectories, and personalities that have been involved in UNEP processes and analytics). This will provide inputs on the regional environmental agenda, long term sustainability, and the role of UNEP and the Forum, considering both the COVID recovery but also how to improve resilience, natural capital and inclusive wealth.
- UNEP LAC subregional and country offices are in the process of defining with some governments (e.g. Mexico, Brazil) national activities in commemoration of UNEP@50 that will be included in the process.

Key dates of the Roadmap of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC:

- 24 June: First meeting of the Bureau of the XXIII Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC.
- 29-30 September: Virtual Meeting of High-Level Officers.

- 18-19 (or 19-20 October): Regional Civil Society Consultations on UNEA 5.2 and UNEP @50.
- 21 - 22 October: Ministerial Regional Consultation on UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50.
- 3 December: Second meeting of the Bureau of the XXIII Forum of Ministers of Environment of LAC.
- 20-21 January: Intersessional meeting “Special session of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean in occasion of its 40th Anniversary of the Forum” (modality to be depending on the evolving situation of the pandemic).

Engagement of the UN System and other activities at regional and intergovernmental level

- UNEP is now represented in all UN Country Teams in the LAC region, with the objective to strengthen the environmental dimension of UN programming at country level. The activities towards UNEP@50 will be shared as well as the outcomes of UNEA 5.2.
- UNEP co-chairs with UNDRR the UN Issue Based Coalition on Climate Change and Resilience (16 agencies involved), which seeks to support a coherent and aligned implementation of the Global Agendas: the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the Sendai Framework. The group also serves as an entry point for the UN system at the regional and country levels to access general technical support. The activities towards UNEP@50 will be shared as well as the outcomes of UNEA 5.2.
- The XXII Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of LAC was held in February, with the support of Interagency Technical Committee (ITC) organizations: UNEP, UNDP, ECLAC, WB and IDB and the participation of PAHO/WHO and FAO. The agenda towards UNEP@50 has also been shared with all members of the ITC. A meeting will be held in October with the ITC members to discuss their contributions and collaboration with UNEP in this process.
- UNEP Regional Office is transmitting the information on the processes of UNEP@50 in the region during different regional meetings, dialogues and conference to promote greater engagement and participation of a wide audience and include all sectors. It will promote the commemoration of UNEP@50 at regional forums, including Regional Forum on Sustainable Development of the countries of Latin American and the Caribbean, to be organized by ECLAC with the support of the rest of the UNS in 2022.