



**INTERVENTIONS BY
SOUTH AFRICA'S PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED
NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP)
AT THE 155TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES (CPR) FOR UNEP**

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NAIROBI

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Thank you, chair for giving me the floor.

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you once more for your confirmation as the Chair of the CPR and to extend my congratulations to your Bureau. Let me assure you of my delegations' commitment and valuable contribution during your term, particularly as we prepare for UNEA-5 part two and the 50th commemoration of UNEP in 2022.

Agenda Item 4: Report by the Executive Director

My delegation wishes to thank the Executive Director for her report covering activities and highlights of the last quarter. We also wish to congratulate Pakistan for the successful hosting of the World Environment Day 2021. When it comes to restoration of ecosystems, every action matters. Be it from the local communities or traditional leadership, Government or state entities, civil society organisations, business or individuals. Restoring ecosystems carries substantial benefits for the people.

These sentiments were also expressed at the virtual meeting of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC) held on 08 June 2021 and chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa; calling for efforts to curb the loss of ecosystems and biological diversity through sustainable land management programmes, combatting desertification and climate change, restoration of natural habitats, strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks, including the monitoring and prevention systems.

Madam Chair,

South Africa remains committed to addressing environmental challenges based on equity, science and sustainable development. There is further

a clear opportunity to ensure that the recovery effort from the COVID 19 pandemic contributes towards a more sustainable and equitable future. In this regard, and in building back better – the innovative Africa Green Stimulus Programme adopted by African Ministers on the environment has the potential to support a recovery that is green, sustainable and inclusive. Such a recovery is forthcoming in creating opportunities for entrepreneurship, income generation, jobs and growth, particularly for women and the youth, and at the same time, to accelerate action on attaining short, medium and long-term environmental goals; nationally, regionally and globally.

As can be recalled, the recent 18th Ordinary session for AMCEN saw a launch of the online platform for the Programme consisting of a website, an administration portal and a data management system and has been developed in order to share information on the portfolio of projects and initiatives within the Programme. Therefore, the Platform is designed to ensure that information about the African Green Stimulus Programme can be accessed publicly and updated on a regular basis and to serve the Continent well in supporting the green recovery and sustainable development of Africa.

Madam Chair,

Addressing increasing global environmental challenges such as climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, ocean degradation, and inefficient resource use has become even more important as developing countries seek to rebuild their economies and enhance resilience against future blows. The COVID 19 pandemic has increased public consciousness of the fragility of natural systems and their importance for human well-being. As a contribution in creating

awareness and education, the South African Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment hosted clean-up activities across the country on 18 September 2021 for International Coastal Clean-up Day. This year the day was commemorated under the theme: “Keep Trash in the Bin and Not in the Ocean”. The ‘Clean-up and Recycle South Africa Week’ is an annual initiative by the local plastics industry, supported and endorsed by the various packaging and retail streams and retailers. The clean-up activities take place along roadsides, rivers, schools, residential and illegal dumping areas. South Africans of all ages, races and backgrounds participate in support with municipalities, environmental organisations, businesses, schools and communities. This serves as a clear demonstration that the challenge of saving our planet for future generations is very much in our hands and it begins with simple actions.

The sustainable use of our natural resources in the development of our economy, and the upliftment of the lives of our people, should not be such that it destroys the environment we live in.

I thank you!

Agenda item 5: Preparations for the commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP@50)

My delegation wishes to thank Madam Inger for conducting regional consultations on this topic to share ideas on UNEP@50.

On the updated Strategic Plan for UNEP@50

The document prepared by the secretariat can be used as an improved good basis to this discussion. My delegation has always called for the preparations and all the discussions including outcomes of the commemoration to be underpinned by the pillars for sustainable

development as agreed in the two RIOs and Johannesburg Conferences. In this regard, this inextricable link should be reflected in the Strategic plan and discussions on UNEP@50. Furthermore, madam Executive Director, South Africa is of the view that the messages for the commemoration should include and call for support towards the strengthening of the UNEP Headquarter as the only UN Headquarter in the developing world and Africa.

- **Communication initiative**

My delegation is of the view that feedback from the secretariat on the outlined outreach activities, including in the meetings relevant MEAs, and the key messages being conveyed on UNEP@50 should constantly be shared with member States. This also applies to information such as, how the initiative to consult secretaries of relevant MEAs to solicit broader ownership for UNEP@50 has been going? It may be recalled that the effectiveness of this event is better placed when these outreach activities involve the role by regional and country offices – as this will encourage interaction with people on the ground.

- **Stakeholder engagement for UNEP@50**

My delegation welcomes the role played by various stakeholders on UNEP@50. A lot of conversations have been held around the globe including earlier this month for the UNEP@50 Africa Youth Dialogue. Such discussions are important and should be based on geographical representation and balance of stakeholders engaged.

In addition, geographical representation and Africa's voice is called for in the science-policy input on the global environment for UNEP@50. This also applies to the consultations around the Global Assessments Synthesis Report coordinated by the Executive Director as it seeks to

address key focus areas such as climate change, nature loss and pollution. Areas that are key to UNEP's strategic plan and certainly key to the agenda of discussion by African Ministers on the Environment. In this regard, clear guidance on how this particular report links to the preparations and outcomes of UNEP@50 would be appreciated.

We have taken note of additional information shared by the ED on UNEP@50 during her presentation. In this regard, my delegation wishes to highlight AMCEN's call for a theme for the commemoration that has a focus on implementation and strengthening UN headquarter function.

Madam Chair,

Allow me to now comment on some important elements that can be included in the Strategic plan for UNEP@50, and these could be summarised as follows:

- **Predictable means of implementation**

Madam Chair, the issue of implementation remains imperative in order for the work of UNEP to be further appreciated and felt by people through their livelihoods. That is why my delegation remains in full support of the implementation of the plan of action on paragraph 88 of the "Future we Want" document. In this regard, as this delegation we call for a clear, concise and prominent feature of the element on the means of implementation and support by developed countries when developing the strategic plan for UNEP@50.

This approach will not only position UNEP as an authoritative organization for the environment but would also highlight in actual terms,

the opportunities presented by the organisation in positively impacting on people's daily lives.

- **Lastly, on UNGA 73/333 as one of the outcomes for UNEP@50**

We are of the view that if a Political Declaration is to be prepared under UNGA 73/333 for consideration at UNEP@50, some of the key elements to be taken on board should include, means of implementation and the Rio principles, in particular of Common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR), with an aim of strengthening environmental law and the UN HQ in Nairobi. In this regard and as per the decision of UNEA-5 part 1, my delegation would appreciate any information on the status of the associated resolution to be tabled in New York. We would also like to find out when the draft text of the Resolution would be made available. However, my delegation's views on this proposal remains the same in that we cannot decide on the outcomes of UNEP@50 is silos.

My delegation remains committed to finalising this discussion in a consultative, transparent and inclusive manner. We lastly look forward to regular updates by member States from various regions on activities for the commemoration organised, at national and local levels.

Thank you, chair for allowing me an opportunity to share my delegations' statement.