

**United Nations Environment Programme**  
Committee of Permanent Representatives  
8th Annual Subcommittee Meeting – 25th to 29th October 2021

**Agenda item 1**  
Opening of the meeting

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**Statement by the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC)**

Madam Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor. It is my honor to address this Annual Subcommittee Meeting on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group. At the outset, I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to UNEP, as well as to UNON and our host country, for the practical arrangements for this hybrid meeting. We are indeed encouraged by the resumption of intergovernmental meetings in the Gigiri compound. At the same time, it seems important to keep in mind that the pandemic is not yet behind us. We trust that all in-person participants of this meeting will strictly abide by the UNON guidelines at all times.

Madam Chair,

This Annual Subcommittee Meeting will be an important milestone towards the resumed session of UNEA-5 and also towards the Special Session to commemorate, under the leadership of the Bureau of UNEA-6, the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNEP. As always, GRULAC looks forward to engaging constructively in both these processes.

At the same time, the Annual Subcommittee Meeting is also an occasion for the membership to collectively perform oversight and to review the implementation of UNEP's Programme of Work across all its subprogrammes. So that this exercise can be meaningful, it is crucial that Member States count with sufficient information well ahead of the meeting, in the form of written text, so that we can examine such reports thoroughly, with the support of our capitals. This is particularly true for smaller delegations, such as many in our region.

The document that was published in the meeting portal with a view to prepare Member States to perform our oversight and review functions unfortunately did not provide us with the information we needed. While the 112-slides presentation contains a number of graphs and charts, it does not form the comprehensive and cohesive set of data that Member States should have at hand to evaluate the performance of UNEP. It is not clear, for example, how the indicators have been calculated. Also, in the instances where the performance indicators have not been fully met, the document does not inform us why and what actions are being taken to address the shortcoming.

Last year, at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee Meeting, delegations had voiced frustration with this format of reporting. On that occasion, the Secretariat stated that the reporting had been done through slides because it covered a period of only six months, and added that the reporting for the period that we are examining now would - and I quote from the Chair's Summary - "contain more detailed information, demonstrating the interplay and synergies between subprogrammes, as well as assess progress against indicator and targets". This year, however, the information made available did not meet this threshold.

In this context, GRULAC would like to draw attention to the issue of geographical representation in the Secretariat. The presentation submitted to Member States ahead of this meeting indicates that there is a persistent and chronic imbalance in disfavor of some regions, in particular Latin America and the Caribbean. It would have been helpful to be informed, in that same document, of the concrete measures that have been taken to address this issue and whether, over time, they have been succeeding in making UNEP more representative. Our group understands that due to the regular intervals for staff turnover, this might be a medium-term goal. Yet, we reiterate that reaching equitable geographical representation would benefit UNEP by ensuring a diversity of perspectives - which, internally, would increase the creativity in the work environment and, externally, would address current perception challenges and further advance the universality of the Programme, as called for in Paragraph 88 on the "Future we Want", and would be in line with the obligation enshrined in Article 101(3) of the UN Charter.

Madam Chair,

As GRULAC highlighted in the 155th CPR, we are of the opinion that the Annual Subcommittee Meeting should not be the occasion for long presentations by the Secretariat. It should rather be a moment when well-informed delegations have a chance to engage in an interactive dialogue with the Secretariat, so as to identify where we can do better. This is the constructive spirit that inspires our delegations as we start this meeting.

Thank you.

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