

Agenda Item 4: Preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5

(a) Consideration of key areas of importance in accordance with mandates from previous UNEA resolutions

Position of the EU and the 27 MS

- The EU and its MS wish to thank the Secretariat for the document "Consideration of key areas of importance in accordance with mandates from previous UNEA resolutions".
- The EU and its MS would like to recall its contribution and interventions on the 155th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives regarding the consideration of key areas of importance.
- The EU and its MS remain committed to ensure a substantive resumed session of UNEA-5 (UNEA-5.2) which will deliver tangible, positive and ambitious outcomes.
- The EU and its MS considers the adoption of a ministerial declaration, with a strong focus on the UNEA-5 theme and that reflects upon important milestones from the past year, a key priority for the resumed session of UNEA-5.
- On the outcome of the ad hoc expert group on marine litter and microplastics, as mandated by UNEA resolution 4/6, the EU and its MS welcome and co-sponsor the draft resolution by Peru and Rwanda to launch an Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC) for a Global Agreement on Plastics at the resumed session of UNEA-5. It is imperative to initiate negotiations on an international legally binding instrument to combat the acute crisis of plastic pollution.
- In that sense, the EU and its MS find it crucial to address the entire plastics life-cycle with a circular approach to plastic as a material as well as a waste. Therefore, the approach must not be only limited to marine litter, one has to also address both the Sustainable Consumption and Production patterns of plastics as well as the leakage of plastic litter and micro plastics into the environment.

- The EU and its MS see the need to ensure the most efficient preparations and negotiations of resolutions and decisions to be adopted at the resumed session, while we maintain openness to discuss proposals submitted by other Member States on issues related to the UNEA-5 theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”, provided they are streamlined and can generate support, and the number of resolutions remains manageable, keeping in mind that the resumed session of UNEA-5 will be a three-day meeting.
- The EU and its MS would like to recall its intention to table two resolutions, and is pleased to present concept notes regarding these resolutions:
 - One on Nature based Solutions, aiming for a common understanding on the concept of “Nature based Solutions” and to step up their implementation as a vital component that has significant potential for climate change adaptation and mitigation, multiple co-benefits for biodiversity, water and people, as well as food security and
 - One on accelerating climate adaptation for water quality and aquatic ecosystems also in cross-border cooperation in river basin areas and regional sea areas shared by different countries.
- The EU and its MS would also like to recall the General Assembly resolution 75/280, inviting UNEA and other United Nations bodies to provide input to Stockholm+50. The EU and its MS consider the ministerial declaration from the resumed session of UNEA-5 to be a good opportunity for UNEA to contribute to Stockholm+50. *[We would suggest to focus key messages on the theme and related key discussions, as well as on key international environmental governance debates and outcomes (e.g. COP, CBD, UNEP@50, Stockholm+50)].*
- Moreover, the EU and its MS remain convinced that UNEP@50 constitutes a way of raising awareness on UNEP’s capability to drive the international environmental agenda and environmental and sustainability governance and take note of the proposal by the Secretariat and look forward to further discuss this issue under agenda item 5.
- The EU and its MS would like to thank the Co-facilitators for the draft political declaration, and would like to recall the Decision 5/3 of UNEA-5.1 inviting UNGA to consider the appropriate event “in the context of the commemoration of the creation of the United Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment” for the adoption of the Political Declaration negotiated in the follow-up of the UNGA 73/333 process. Considering the synergies between the objectives of UNEP@50 outlines in the document and those of the political declaration to be prepared in follow-up to UNGA resolution 73/333, we remain convinced that such political declaration would constitute the most adequate outcome for UNEP@50, as a way to strengthening international environmental law and governance and the role of UNEP.

- Furthermore, the EU and its MS consider the following decisions necessary from an organizational perspective for UNEA and UNEP, and to follow up on our mandates:
 - *Provisional agenda, date and venue for UNEA-6.*
 - *Election of a President and Bureau for of UNEA-6.*
 - *Finalization of the preparation of a draft political declaration pursuant to General Assembly resolution 73/333.*
 - *Input to the International meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”.*
 - *The outcome of the ad hoc expert group on marine litter and microplastics.*
 - *The future of the Global Environment Outlook process.*
 - *The future of the GPA for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities.*
 - *Consideration of the outcome of the Process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as mandated by UNEA Decision 4/2 (assuming swift finalization of this process (as much as possible before the OECPR).*

- We also believe the resumed session of UNEA-5 offers a realistic possibility to recommend the extension of the 10 Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP).

- Assuming a lot of work can be done before the OECPR, we recognize that the resumed session of UNEA-5 could also decide on other subjects.

- On the topic of the Executive Director's Reports the EU and its MS express their gratitude for the reports and commend the Secretariat on its important work. The EU and its Member States take notice of the reports and their conclusions, acknowledging that their timely availability allowed Member States to prepare for a serious debate at the resumed session of UNEA-5.

Specific comments on the Executive Director Reports:

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/1 on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production*

In relation to the progress on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production, the EU and its MS recognize the importance of the work developed with partner organizations, representatives from science and the private sector, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of resolution 4/1. The EU and its MS restate their commitment to a climate-neutral, resource-efficient and circular economy transition to achieve sustainable consumption and production, and as a contribution to addressing the Covid-19 pandemic challenges, and we share the observations that more can be done to promote ‘upstream’ innovations and that financial incentives and market development need to be scaled up, to achieve SDG12 and facilitate the transition to a circular economy.

- *Resolution 4/4 on addressing environmental challenges through sustainable business*

The EU and its MS thank UNEP for the report and for presenting the lessons learned which can guide further work, such as that sustainable business practices should be combined with enabling policy framework, where cross-ministerial collaboration is key.

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/6 on marine litter and microplastics: Report of the Executive Director*

The EU and its MS note the progress made on inventory and technical discussions, and that the mandate of the AHEG has been completed and that it is time to move towards policy discussions. Therefore, we do not see a need to establish a further technical expert group to continue the discussion on an expert level.

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/8 on sound management of chemicals and waste*

The EU and its MS stress their commitment with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and sound management of chemicals and waste Beyond 2020 process. The EU+MS look forward to engage in further work as well as to the forthcoming edition of the Global Waste Management Outlook and would like to express openness to extending the Special Program. Concerning the progress report, the EU+MS would like to recall that UNEP has a leading role in SAICM and, by managing the SAICM Secretariat and providing staff resources, has been performing important tasks in the field of international chemicals policy since 2006. We would therefore suggest the reformulation of the sentence on page 42 accordingly: “(b) Acknowledging the efforts undertaken, to consider highlighting the need to continue to enhance support to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the new framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste and its implementation, including with sufficient staff and resources for the secretariat”.

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/17 on the promotion of gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance*

The EU and its MS welcome the efforts to increase knowledge concerning the gender-differentiated impacts of COVID-19. The current “The Gender Policy” implementation period was extended to 2020, and the policy provides the framework for integrating gender perspectives into programmes and projects in MTS 2018-2021. We would like clarification on the revision/update of the strategy, or if UNEP will further extend the implementation period. On a more detailed note, we note that both the concept of “gender-sensitive” and “gender-responsive” are used intermittently in the ED’s report. We would in this case prefer the stronger formulation “gender-responsive” instead of “gender-sensitive”.

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/19 on Mineral Governance*

The EU and its MS welcome the report, its recommendations and the recent update by the Secretariat on the implementation and the planned consultations facilitated by the Secretariat to follow up on some of the recommendations to work towards more coherent governance in this space building upon other relevant resolutions, reports by the UNEP, the International Resources Panel, the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development, as well as other initiatives.

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/22 on implementation and follow-up of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions*

The EU and its MS welcome the work of UNEP with regards to the implementation of resolution 4/22 on implementation and follow-up of UNEA resolutions. Although the UNEA monitoring and reporting portal gives a good insight on how this monitoring tool would function, there is still a need to enrich it with further information on the links between the resolutions and implementation of the POW. We look forward to the further development of the portal, including the integration with other UNEP platforms such as Open Data and PIMs (as is mentioned in the report). We are convinced that it will improve decision making at future UNEAs and allow for enhanced transparency and we hope that it will contribute to our preparations for UNEA5.2.

- *Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/23 on keeping the world environment under review: Enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science-policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook*

The EU+MS recognize the importance of UNEP's efforts to assist Member States, in developing national environmental data management capacities and environmental monitoring systems and to enable them to use data analysis to support evidence-based decision making and encourage to continue this important work. Furthermore, we look forward to the updated report on the future of GEO to the Assembly, as a basis for UNEA to take an informed decision on the function, products and governance of the GEO process.

- *Action plan for the implementation of subparagraph (a)-(h) of Paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as mandated by UNEA Decision 4/2*

The EU and its MS welcome the draft action plan that provides a good basis to implement paragraph 88. The EU and its welcome a discussion with UNMS on the best possible and pragmatic way forward to finalize its implementation, also taking note of the possible connection with other related discussions in the context of the follow-up on UNGA resolution 73/333 and UNEP@50.]