

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Tuesday 9 November 2021  
10:00 – 13:00, 15:00 – 18:00  
Conference Room 1, United Nations Office of Nairobi  
Hybrid Meeting

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

*The meeting agenda and supporting documentation are available on the [meeting page](#).*

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

1. H.E. Mr. Erasmo Roberto Martínez, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mexico, opened the meeting
2. The meeting [agenda](#) was adopted.

#### **Agenda Item 2: Consultations on draft decisions for the resumed session of UNEA-5**

##### **a) Draft decision on provisional agenda, date and venue of UNEA-6.**

3. The secretariat presented a [draft decision](#) and background note on the provisional agenda, date and venue of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly for further consideration and possible adoption by Member States at UNEA-5.2.
4. Delegations thanked the secretariat for the presentation and draft decision, and underlined the need to carefully consider and assess the pros and cons of the choice of date for UNEA-6, highlighting in particular the following aspects:
  - possible implications on the adoption of future UNEP Programmes of Work and the Medium-Term Strategies and budgetary cycle;
  - possible effects of moving the UNEA cycle from odd to even years;
  - possible consequences for the QCPR cycle under the UN General Assembly;
  - the need to ensure adequate timing and strong political momentum for future sessions of UNEA;
  - the impact on the future date for UNEA-7, also taking into account the time frame for possible negotiations on a future global instrument on plastic pollution;
  - the importance of identifying dates that will not be negatively impacted by national festivities and holidays taking place early in the year, especially in the southern hemisphere;
  - the possibility of including a reference to the efficient use of the intersessional period between UNEA sessions, for example in paragraph 7 of the draft decision; and,

- whether, in an alternative scenario, an interim session of UNEA-6 could be organized in 2023 with the sole purpose of adopting a new Programme of Work for UNEP for the period 2024-25, with a substantive UNEA-6 in 2025, and UNEA-7 in 2027.
5. Delegations also noted that more time would be needed for Member States to review the different alternatives and their consequences, and requested additional information and guidance from the secretariat regarding the different scenarios and options outlined in the secretariat's background note.
  6. The secretariat referred to the implication matrix in the annex to the background note and explained that the reason for shifting from an even to odd year cycle in 2017 was due to the biannual budget cycle of the UN regular budget, and that this consideration was no longer relevant since the regular budget had since changed to an annual cycle. Instead, the main implication of moving the date of UNEA-6 and/or subsequent UNEA sessions is that it may create a significant time gap between the formulation of the UNEP Programme of Work and its implementation. Furthermore, the secretariat confirmed that all three different scenarios presented have pros and cons, and that while some options may be less aligned with the spirit of the recent UN Reform, all three options are implementable from a secretariat's perspective. The secretariat also pointed out that holding an interim session of UNEA-6 with a limited agenda in 2023, with the full session taking place in 2024, would have significant budgetary implications and consequences, and increase the workload of the secretariat.
  7. The Chair concluded that more time would be needed to study the draft decision and the scenarios, and requested the secretariat to make a more detailed presentation at the next subcommittee meeting scheduled for 11 November 2021, to allow for further in-depth discussions towards an agreement that can enjoy the broadest possible support.

**b) Action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 of the Outcome document of Rio+20**

8. The secretariat provided a short recapitulation of the process leading up to the proposed [action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as mandated by paragraph 14 of UNEA decision 4/2](#), which was submitted as an official working document in advance of the online meeting session of UNEA-5, following a broad consultation process with Member States. The secretariat also presented a proposal for how UNEA may wish to take action on the action plan, through the inclusion of a dedicated paragraph in the draft UNEA-6 decision.
9. Delegations that took the floor thanked the secretariat for the presentation and the proposal to consider the action plan in the context of the draft decision on the provisional agenda, date and venue of UNEA-6, and acknowledged the significant amount of work and extensive consultations conducted by the secretariat in preparation of the action plan.
10. One delegation called for the secretariat to revise and update the action plan, noting that the text is at least one year old and should reflect recent important developments, for example, regarding issues relating to the financing of UNEP and the proposal to establish three thematic funds in support of the new Medium Term Strategy, the UNON proposal to upgrade of the UN conference facilities in Gigiri, the proposal to upgrade the World Environment Situation Room, and developments within the General Assembly to strengthening the UN Reforms – all of which are relevant to the action plan tabled by the secretariat. Furthermore, some of the elements in the action

plan were considered to be unbalanced and would thus not reflect a consensual document to be approved by the resumed session of UNEA-5.

11. Most of the other delegations that took the floor considered that the action plan represented a balanced outcome of the preparatory consultation process that should not be re-opened, supported the proposal that UNEA should take action on the action plan through a short decision within the UNEA-6 decision, and expressed unease with approaches that may lead to the negotiation of a secretariat document that builds on extensive consultations. One delegation suggested that the action plan should be endorsed as is, while another noted that if the text of the action plan were to be re-opened, it would take the opportunity to introduce language that places greater emphasis on the need for all countries to financially contribute to UNEP.
12. One delegation representing a political group proposed to endorse the action plan as is, with one exception in section II A, paragraph 5, which may be addressed in the context of the UNEA-6 decision.
13. One delegation representing a regional group thanked the secretariat for the action plan and reiterated that the implementation of para 88 must be done in a balanced manner and in a way that leaves no one behind, in line with the Rio principles.
14. Two delegations presented detailed comments and positions on the action plan, calling for deletion or revision of several paragraphs in the text, while others questioned the usefulness of negotiating a secretariat document.
15. One stakeholder representative raised questions about formulations relating to stakeholder's participation and proposed to add a reference to UNEP's new private sector engagement policy.
16. The secretariat thanked Member States for their comments and guidance, and underlined that the action plan is a secretariat document that responds in full to the request laid down in UNEA decision 4/2 and is based on a very thorough consultation process with Member States. In this process, the secretariat had already addressed, in a balanced manner, many of the positions that had now been repeated by some Member States. With regard to the new developments mentioned – such as the thematic funds, the digital hub and the possible refurbishment of the UN complex – it was noted that these issues are still under discussion and may not yet be mature to address in the action plan. Furthermore, none of the other 23 official working documents, submitted in advance of UNEA-5.1., and for consideration at UNEA-5.2 were to be revised. The secretariat suggested that it would now be up to Member States to consider the proposed action plan among themselves, and agree on possible further guidance to the secretariat in terms of its implementation, for example with regard to priority-setting and monitoring and reporting.
17. The Chair concluded that Bureau will be consulted on the possible way forward, given the lack of consensus. The Chair further proposed to resume consideration of the UNEA-6 draft decision at the next meeting of the subcommittee scheduled for 11 November 2021, followed by a discussion on the tabled draft resolutions and concept notes, and invited all delegations to submit written comments. He recognized that given the workload, Member States will need to reflect further to identify an appropriate and efficient decision-making process, and announced that he intended to raise the procedural aspect of this discussion at the next meeting of the CPR Bureau. He further informed that he would be reaching out to the Chairs of regional and political groups as well as to

the Chair of the CPR to discuss the way forward with regard to the nomination of facilitators for draft UNEA resolutions.

**Agenda Item 3: Other matters.**

18. No other matters were raised.

**Agenda Item 4: Closing of the meeting.**

19. The meeting closed at 1:00 pm.