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**Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme
159th meeting**
Nairobi, 29 September 2022

Draft minutes of the 158th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 26 May 2022

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting, which was held in Nairobi in a hybrid format, was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Thursday, 26 May 2022, by Mr. Pirkka Tapiola, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.
2. The meeting was attended by 74 participants representing 73 members and 1 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Ms. Gabriela Martinic (Argentina); Mr. Dominique Vigie (Australia); Mr. Tareque Muhammad (Bangladesh); Mr. Christopher Thornley (Canada); Mr. John Nyakeru Kalunga (Democratic Republic of the Congo); Mr. Zemenu Azene Emirie (Ethiopia); Mr. Barlybay Sadykov and Mr. Talgat Ketebayev (Kazakhstan); Mr. Laassel Abderrazzak (Morocco); Ms. Ana Filomena Rocha (Portugal); Mr. Yeo Sung-Jun (Republic of Korea); and Mr. Jaime Fernández-Rúa Mateo (Spain).
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Aidan Regan (Australia); Ms. Lisa Stadelbauer (Canada); Mr. Ado Lohmus (Estonia); Mr. Zerubabel Getachew (Ethiopia); Ms. Luisa Fragoso (Portugal); Mr. Choi Yeongham (Republic of Korea); Ms. Amanda Mkhwanazi (South Africa); and Mr. Carlos Moreno (Spain).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/158/1).

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 157th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 157th meeting, held in a hybrid format on 1 February 2022, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/158/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

7. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report entitled “Quarterly report to the 158th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives: January–March 2022”, noting that it provided an update on key developments between the months of January and March of 2022 of relevance to UNEP.

8. In her oral briefing, Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP, drew attention to two meetings recently held in Nairobi in a hybrid format, namely, the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme, held from 28 February to 2 March 2022, and the first special session of the Environment Assembly, held on 3 and 4 March 2022 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP, known as “UNEP@50”. The resumed fifth session had secured an ambitious outcome for people and the planet, including a ministerial declaration on strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (UNEP/EA.5/HLS.1), and 14 resolutions that together would help to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

9. She expressed appreciation to Member States for their hard work in ensuring that the resumed fifth session had been a resounding success, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and said that UNEP would do its utmost to secure the implementation of all the resolutions adopted at the session. Stressing that the implementation of the resolutions and the UNEP programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022–2023 would require resources, she thanked the 40 Member States that had made their contributions to the Environment Fund early in 2022, 20 of which included developing countries and small island developing States, and had contributed their full share based on the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

10. At its resumed fifth session, the Environment Assembly had sent a clear message that a healthy environment equalled healthy people and healthy animals. In that spirit, UNEP had recently joined a tripartite alliance between the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) to promote the “One health” approach. In the months ahead, UNEP would update Member States on the progress achieved under the now quadripartite alliance.

11. Looking ahead, the ad hoc open-ended working group called for in Environment Assembly resolution 5/14, entitled “End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument”, to prepare the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee tasked with drafting a new international instrument on plastic pollution, would convene in a hybrid format in Dakar from 30 May to 1 June 2022. Shortly thereafter, on 2 and 3 June 2022, the Governments of Kenya and Sweden would co-host an international meeting to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”. Stockholm+50 would provide world leaders and other stakeholders with an opportunity to reflect on 50 years of global environmental action, and on the bold actions and commitments needed to steer humanity away from the path of self-destruction to secure a healthy planet and a better future for all. From 21 to 26 June 2022, the fourth meeting of the open-ended working group on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework would convene in Nairobi to work on the framework, focusing on the issue of data derived from genetic resources, which was still under negotiation ahead of the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, scheduled to take place later in 2022. Lastly, from 27 June to 1 July 2022, the Governments of Kenya and Portugal would co-host in Lisbon the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, which was expected to launch a new chapter in global oceans action.

12. In closing, Ms. Andersen briefed Member States on recent developments related to the ongoing war in Ukraine, which had not been included in the quarterly report. The Secretary-General of the United Nations had established a Global Crisis Response Group on Food, Energy and Finance, in

order to identify the threats posed by the war to global food, energy and financial systems, and to prepare assessments, alerts and policy recommendations for coordinated action to address such threats. At the request of the Secretary-General, UNEP was co-leading the Group's work on food systems, together with WHO. Furthermore, in January 2022, UNEP had received a formal request from the Government of Ukraine to assist in the mapping and assessment of the environmental damage caused by the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, and to provide technical assistance to the Ukrainian authorities to mitigate and remediate such damage. The provision of such support was part of the UNEP core mandate, as reflected in the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 and programme of work for the biennium 2022–2023, and in Environment Assembly resolution 2/15, on the protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict, and resolution 3/1, on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict and terrorism. In response to the request, UNEP was supporting remote monitoring with partners to build a picture of, and identify solutions to, the environmental impacts of the war, as well as providing technical assistance on methodological approaches to the assessment work. In anticipation of changes in the security situation of Ukraine, UNEP was preparing for pre-assessment work, including through the identification of priority areas to undertake initial scoping work in collaboration with other United Nations agencies. Lastly, at the request of the Ukrainian authorities, the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine and the United Nations country team in Ukraine, UNEP planned to deploy a senior environmental affairs officer to Ukraine who would support the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator on the environmental dimensions of the crisis.

13. In the ensuing discussion, all those who spoke thanked the Executive Director for her comprehensive report and oral briefing. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, congratulated UNEP and all the Member States for a remarkably successful resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly, which had delivered outstanding results worthy of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP. One representative highlighted as key reasons for the success of the session the overwhelming political will of Member States to advance the international environmental agenda, the timely submission of draft resolutions by Member States, the good preparation of the logistics and content of the session by the secretariat, and the preparatory work of the Committee, which had played a crucial role in generating political support and ownership of the session and its outcomes through the preparatory process, and in obtaining a clear understanding of all the issues on the agenda for the session.

14. Turning to the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the resumed fifth session, many representatives urged UNEP to give equal attention to all the resolutions and exert equal efforts to ensure their implementation. They noted that the Committee should be kept apprised of the status of that implementation to ensure that it was able to fulfil one of its principal roles.

15. On the implementation of the resolution on the establishment of a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, one representative called on UNEP to communicate with relevant actors, including WHO, the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, and the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals, to encourage and enable their active participation in the process, noting that such close collaboration would be key to the new panel's success. Another representative enquired what arrangements, if any, UNEP had made to ensure that the panel would include views that were as broad as possible from a multidisciplinary group of scientific experts.

16. Regarding resolution 5/14, many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked Senegal and UNEP for their organization of the upcoming meeting in Dakar of the ad hoc open-ended working group called for by the resolution to prepare for the negotiating process, to which they said that they were strongly committed. One representative, noting that his country had made a financial contribution to the preparatory process and would represent a regional group in the ad hoc open-ended working group, said that the working group must, at the Dakar meeting, establish an enabling environment for successful negotiation of the new international instrument. Another representative expressed interest in joining the Bureau of the working group.

17. The representatives of Canada, Costa Rica and the Republic of Korea expressed their interest in hosting in their respective countries a session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee that would be tasked with negotiating the instrument on plastic pollution. Several representatives emphasized the need for UNEP and the Committee to be closely engaged in the negotiation of the new instrument in order to strengthen the role of UNEP as the leading environmental body within the United Nations system.

18. On resolution 5/12, on environmental aspects of metals and minerals management, one representative expressed appreciation to the secretariat for facilitating the consultations and

intergovernmental meeting mandated by the resolution, and stressed that, in order to develop proposals to enhance the environmental sustainability of minerals throughout their life cycles, it was important to build on existing initiatives and identify opportunities for further international cooperation and collaboration that added value to such initiatives.

19. One representative asked the secretariat to provide by the end of the current meeting a full list of the scientific reports that UNEP planned to publish in 2022, as well as a schedule of its planned consultations with the Committee on the preliminary versions of such reports, expressing the view that Member States should have an opportunity to consider all scientific reports prior to their official publication.

20. With regard to Stockholm+50, many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the co-hosts and the secretariat for their efforts in preparing for the meeting and associated events, noting that Stockholm+50 would present an opportunity to engage with open and creative minds to devise bold ideas and recommendations for the transformative actions that were needed to achieve a healthy planet and shift to a new way of living, which was necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, on which the world had fallen far behind. Many representatives said that Stockholm+50 would provide an opportunity to strengthen multilateralism and support enhanced actions by all stakeholders to tackle the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. They expressed the hope that the Presidents' summary of the international meeting would provide guidance and clear recommendations for Member States and other stakeholders to act on the triple crisis. Several representatives suggested that Stockholm+50 should complement and reinforce, and not duplicate, the outcome of the first special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, held in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP.

21. One representative said that, 50 years after the creation of UNEP, the main challenge in striving to achieve a healthy planet for all was that imbalances in available financing, technical capacity and access to technology continued to work against progress in tackling the triple planetary crisis and achieving sustainable development. A number of representatives said that Stockholm+50 should help to strengthen the means of implementation to deliver on environmental commitments and to revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development.

22. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that World Environment Day 2022 would also provide an opportunity to achieve tangible progress in scaling up action to address the triple planetary crisis.

23. Drawing attention to the section on digital transformations in the quarterly report, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the plans to develop, in collaboration with several partners, a "digital 4 sustainability" training programme for the public sector on the intersection between digital technologies and environmental sustainability. She suggested, however, that UNEP should engage with Member States, as the main beneficiaries of the training programme, in designing the programme, in order to ensure their buy-in.

24. On the resource mobilization strategy, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that she was encouraged by the ongoing work by UNEP on the three thematic funds to address the interconnected strategic objectives of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 of climate stability, living in harmony with nature and achieving a pollution-free planet, which sought to move away from tightly earmarked funding to open up opportunities for the provision of softly earmarked funding by different kinds of funding partners. Another representative asked the secretariat to provide more detailed information on the strategy and action plan under development for resource mobilization from the philanthropic sector.

25. On the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2022–2023, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that UNEP should ensure greater participation of scientists from the global South in the processes related to the science-policy interface and the Global Environment Outlook processes.

26. On the issue of human resources, many representatives welcomed the progress made by UNEP in achieving gender parity and greater geographical diversity within its ranks, and the statistics and degree of detail provided in the quarterly report on such efforts.

27. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the fact that appointments to senior positions within UNEP were closer to achieving a balanced representation of all the regions, but lamented the fact that almost half of all UNEP staff members at the professional levels and above came from one region, and called for additional efforts to ensure geographical diversity of its workforce at those levels in the near future. One representative asked UNEP to take concrete steps to achieve greater geographical diversity, such as the conduct of tailored

training sessions directed to underrepresented regions on application to positions within UNEP and steps of the UNEP recruitment process. Another requested the secretariat to provide details on the new talent acquisition programme being developed to achieve greater geographical representation within UNEP, including information on its anticipated effects.

28. One representative requested additional information on plans to reformulate the UNEP resource efficiency subprogramme into a new subprogramme; the activities of UNEP in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean; and the implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 5/3, on the future of the Global Environment Outlook. Another representative suggested that the seventh iteration of the Global Environment Outlook should be included on the agenda of the Committee meeting scheduled for 9 June 2022.

29. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the decision by UNEP to formally join the alliance between WHO, FAO and OIE on the One health approach, which would help to strengthen the environmental dimension of the work of the alliance, helping to protect the health of people, animals, ecosystems and the environment. They requested that the secretariat keep the Committee apprised of the work carried out thereunder, including the development of a joint plan of action that was expected to analyse the relationship between the health of humans, animals and the environment.

30. Many representatives highlighted the importance of specific environmental meetings referenced in the quarterly report. One representative drew attention to the second segment of the first meeting of the focal points of the fifth Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law, which would be held in Nairobi in a hybrid format from 6 to 9 June 2022 and would set priorities for the implementation of the Programme, but was not referenced in the quarterly report. Another representative asked the Executive Director to include in the quarterly report a brief summary of advances made at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, held in Abidjan from 9 to 20 May 2022.

31. A number of representatives welcomed the inclusion in the quarterly report of efforts made by their respective countries or regions to tackle the crises of climate change and wildlife loss. One called for further collaboration between UNEP and the joint European Union and African Union Commission Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa programme, given that the effects of climate change were a driver of conflict on the African continent.

32. The representative of Ukraine expressed gratitude to UNEP and the Executive Director for the rapid response of UNEP to the request by his Government, and its readiness, within the scope of its mandate, to help Ukraine to address the environmental threats arising from the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, including through its decision to deploy an environmental officer to Ukraine. He drew attention to a report prepared by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, which had been distributed to the Committee through the secretariat of Governing Bodies and Stakeholders and documented the unprecedented threats that the invasion presented to the environment of Ukraine and countries in the region, including threats to biodiversity from damage caused to forests, and to water resources, including the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, from the destruction of the water supply and sewerage systems. He urged Member States to stand with Ukraine in helping to resolve environmental issues caused by the invasion, and not to tolerate attempts by the Russian Federation to use UNEP as a forum to spread propaganda and fake news.

33. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed their full support for the work of UNEP in response to the request by Ukraine, including work to undertake an in-country assessment of the environmental impacts arising from the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, underscoring that such work was fully in line with the Programme's mandate and was vital to understanding the environmental impacts of the invasion and to support evidence-based environmental remediation efforts in the country. One representative suggested that, in order to help Member States to support the work of UNEP in conflict settings, UNEP should develop technical assistance programmes on matters other than monitoring. Representatives asked the Executive Director to continue to report on UNEP activities in Ukraine as planning progressed.

34. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the Government of Ukraine had documented 231 crimes against the environment by the Russian Federation, including both nuclear and traditional threats, attacks on infrastructure and industrial sites causing pollution of natural resources and protected ecosystems, increase of forest fires, damage to freshwater resources and pollution of the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. UNEP expertise in monitoring and evaluating environmental damage would deliver a scientifically sound assessment that would create a sound basis for rebuilding Ukraine in a green, resilient and healthy manner. Another representative said that, given

the breadth of the environmental damage caused by the invasion of Ukraine, which extended to neighbouring countries, he expected UNEP to continue to dedicate ample resources and technical expertise to address such damage. A third representative encouraged UNEP to promote means and activities to remedy negative environmental consequences of the invasion and to coordinate its activities with the United Nations country team in Ukraine, adding that his country was fully committed to supporting the reconstruction of Ukraine while Russian aggression in the country was still ongoing.

35. One representative drew attention to this Government's initiatives in support of Ukraine.

36. The representative of Belarus drew attention to the construction by Poland of a fence along its border with Belarus, which he said was unjustified, violated a number of international and bilateral agreements, and posed significant threats to the environment, including through its effects on groundwater levels, which posed risks to both flora and fauna. Emphasizing that the issue had not been resolved despite assistance provided by the UNEP Regional Office for Europe, he requested UNEP to provide further support to address the issue.

37. Exercising his right of reply, the representative of the Russian Federation objected to the use by Committee members and the Executive Director of the terms "war" and "aggression" to describe the situation in Ukraine, which he described as a "special military operation", in relation to which UNEP had no mandate. He voiced his opposition to UNEP deploying an environmental officer to Kyiv and conducting an assessment of the environment in Ukraine prior to the cessation of armed activities in the country. He said that while UNEP could evaluate the environmental damage caused by conflicts upon the request of Member States, such assessments should be concluded only once the conflicts had ended, or else the assessments could not be considered to be scientifically sound. He further suggested that the work of UNEP in Ukraine was unprecedented, and that the food supply, financial and energy crises to which the Executive Director had referred had been caused by the illegal sanctions imposed against the Russian Federation, and not by the actions of the Russian Federation.

38. Exercising his right of reply to the statement by Belarus, the representative of Poland said that Poland had been forced to construct a fence along its border with Belarus in response to unsolicited provocation by Belarus, which had allowed groups of refugees who had attacked Polish border guards to amass along the border. He noted that Poland was engaged in efforts to mitigate the environmental effects of the fence.

39. Exercising his right of reply to the statement by the Russian Federation, the representative of Ukraine said that the actions of the Russian Federation in Ukraine had been recognized as aggression by the General Assembly of the United Nations, and to characterize them as a "special military operation" was nothing more than propaganda produced by the Kremlin. He suggested that Ukraine did not support any discussions at UNEP that did not relate to its mandate, but the misrepresentation of the facts by the Russian Federation required a response by his Government.

40. The representative of the Russian Federation replied that the current meeting had undermined the status of UNEP as a global non-politicized platform for the discussion of global environmental challenges. He urged all representatives to refrain from discussing the topic of armed conflicts in future UNEP meetings.

41. Responding to remarks, the Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments and said that the secretariat would provide any information she had not already provided directly to Member States, or through the next quarterly report. She noted that UNEP staff had been very busy preparing for the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly, so a number of key activities that had taken place in April and May 2022 had not been included in the quarterly report, but would be included in the following report.

42. On questions related to the establishment of the new science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, UNEP was indeed reaching out to relevant partners, and had encouraged wide consultation from across the nine major groups and stakeholders within the ad hoc open-ended working group called for in resolution 5/8, on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, including by inviting them to engage in the process through the nomination of regional representatives. The secretariat also recognized the need for highly specialized technical expertise from diverse voices in the chemicals, waste and pollution sectors to support the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group to deliver on the request to establish the panel by the end of 2024. With that in mind, she had created a technical advisory group reflecting gender and geographical balance and drawing on experts from academia, civil society and the private sector across the

chemicals, waste and pollution sectors to provide her with advice. The group's terms of reference, which were being developed, would be shared with Member States in due course.

43. On the issue of the mobilization of resources from the philanthropic sector, through its private sector strategy and the work of the Corporate Services Division, UNEP was seeking to understand the sector better in order to craft a resource mobilization strategy tailored to it. Thus far, it had mapped out the existing foundations and gained an understanding of how their interests and priorities overlapped with the UNEP medium-term strategy and programme of work, and would report to Member States on the strategy.

44. As for the new talent acquisition programme that would target young graduates from underrepresented regions, it stemmed from a recognition of the fact that UNEP had not recruited sufficiently diverse talent, and that true geographical diversity would be achieved only once it was reflected at all levels. The programme was still under development, but UNEP would provide further details to the Committee at its next meeting. With regard to the suggestion that UNEP conduct training sessions aimed at underrepresented regions on the UNEP application and recruitment process, the secretariat had conducted outreach sessions in a number of countries to attract potential candidates and would be happy to organize information sessions for interested Committee members and regional groups.

45. On the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, the Conference of the Parties had adopted 38 decisions, including on land tenure, migration and gender, and highlighted the role of terrestrial land degradation in multiple crises, agreeing to accelerate action to achieve the restoration of one billion hectares of land by 2030. With regard to the alliance on the One health approach, other alliance partners had conducted seminars in Geneva and Rome, and UNEP expected to do the same in Nairobi.

46. Lastly, on the issues raised concerning the mandate of UNEP in areas affected by armed conflict, she referred the Committee to Environment Assembly resolution 2/15, which stated that the work of UNEP was encouraged in countries affected by armed conflict and countries in post-conflict situations. Regarding the work of UNEP in conflict and post-conflict situations, UNEP had conducted environmental assessments in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Iraq, Kosovo, Lebanon, Montenegro, Serbia and the State of Palestine, and was currently active in Colombia, Iraq, Somalia, the Sudan, and Yemen. Since 2010, UNEP had responded to 54 disaster-related environmental emergencies, some of which had conflict dimensions, and 21 conflict-specific environmental emergencies in which there were active or semi-active military activities.

Agenda item 5

Assessment of and lessons learned from the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly and the special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme

47. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document on the assessment of and lessons learned from the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly and UNEP@50 (UNEP/CPR/158/7), which had been prepared by the secretariat taking into account the views expressed by representatives of Member States and major groups and stakeholders during subcommittee meetings held on 11 April and 5 May 2022, and by the Bureau of the Committee at a meeting held on 4 May 2022. The document was a revised version of an earlier draft presented to the subcommittee at a meeting held on 5 May 2022.

48. The representative of the secretariat provided an overview of the main elements of the document, drawing attention to those sections of the report that the secretariat had revised on the basis of the feedback provided by Member States during the subcommittee meeting of 5 May 2022.

49. Noting that the document sought to identify what had worked well and what could be done better in future sessions of the Environment Assembly, he said that there was widespread agreement that the resumed fifth session had been a success, and had perhaps been the most successful Environment Assembly session to date, despite the significant challenges imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization of the session as a hybrid meeting and its ambitious agenda. That success could be attributed to the strong political will of Member States to make progress; the open, transparent and inclusive nature of the process; the preparatory work of the Committee; the strong guidance and leadership from Member States; and a committed and hard-working secretariat. A key lesson learned from the resumed fifth session was that hybrid meetings were more complex, both

logistically and technically, to organize, and required more preparatory work than both fully in-person and fully virtual meetings. He then provided an overview of the main sections of the document, highlighting the changes from previous versions, which were marked in bold letters.

50. The Executive Director thanked Member States and stakeholders for their feedback on previous versions of the document under review and expressed the hope that the Committee would endorse the document, which had been prepared by the secretariat on the basis of that feedback.

51. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including a number speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the secretariat for consulting with Member States on previous versions of the document, which now captured their key recommendations regarding the intersessional period and other feedback, and would serve to improve future sessions of the Environment Assembly. Many representatives expressed their support for endorsing the document as presented.

52. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for endorsing the document, but proposed including therein the recommendation that, when tabling draft resolutions for consideration by the Environment Assembly, Member States should immediately provide the contact information of focal points to facilitate consultations on the draft resolutions, noting that in the past no such information had been provided, complicating consultations. Another representative suggested the inclusion in the document of a specific reference to the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly in a section related to enhancing the participation of major groups and stakeholders in Environment Assembly and Committee meetings.

53. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that although the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly had undoubtedly been a success, more could be done to improve the quality of the outcomes of future sessions. Specifically, no more than two meetings should be held in parallel; despite the concerns expressed by many representatives, and the fact that multilateralism was about ensuring the participation of all interested parties in major decision-making processes, numerous parallel meetings had been held at the resumed fifth session and the preceding meeting of the Open-ended Committee, making it very difficult for small delegations to participate in all the negotiations. She also suggested that in-person meetings should be resumed as soon as possible, stressing that online negotiations should not be considered the “new normal”; all draft resolutions tabled by Member States should be given equal treatment and efforts made to reduce the total number of resolutions should involve integrating resolutions, rather than requesting some proponents to withdraw their draft resolutions; ministerial declarations should be comprehensively negotiated in order to ensure full Member State ownership of the political outcomes of Environment Assembly sessions; and equal attention should be given to the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly.

54. Many representatives highlighted specific elements that would contribute to the success of future Environment Assembly sessions. Such elements included the submission of all the draft resolutions at least 10 weeks prior to the opening of the session at which they were to be considered, in order to make the best use of the intersessional period and ensure that negotiations started as early as possible; ensuring that no more than two negotiating groups met in parallel in order to ensure inclusive participation, especially by small delegations; ensuring that online participation was a complement to, and never a substitute for, in-person participation; streamlining the number of draft resolutions and consolidating proposals in order to avoid duplication and enable all delegations to participate in all negotiations, thereby ensuring more impactful discussions and outcomes; and ensuring that financial assistance provided to developing countries was not channelled to specific authorities, so that each country could decide how the assistance should be allocated.

55. One representative voiced her support for using a hybrid format for the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, which, despite its financial implications and the fact that in-person attendance was still required for the negotiation of substantial matters, would guarantee greater inclusivity and participation in the session and its preparatory meetings. She also expressed support for the translation of all the draft resolutions into the six official languages of the United Nations, which would facilitate engagement with capitals on drafts and enable all Member States to participate in the process. Another representative said that all negotiations should benefit from interpretation services from English into the other five official languages in order to enable representatives who did not speak English fluently to participate actively in the discussions.

56. One representative suggested that there should be a strict deadline for the submission of draft resolutions, and that all draft resolutions should be negotiated early and go through a first reading several months before the opening of the relevant Environment Assembly sessions. He further stated that meetings of the Open-ended Committee should be extended from the current five days to ten days,

which, despite the higher cost involved, would help to avoid late-night negotiations and parallel meetings and would make it easier for representatives to consult with their capitals.

57. One representative said that he could not support the proposal to restrict to two the number of negotiating sessions convening in parallel in future Open-ended Committee meetings and Environment Assembly sessions. He suggested that the number of meetings needed would depend entirely on the number of resolutions and political documents under consideration. The successful adoption of 14 resolutions and a ministerial declaration at the resumed fifth session had only been possible because the secretariat had demonstrated flexibility in relation to how many negotiating meetings could convene in parallel.

58. One representative made three suggestions to improve future Environment Assembly sessions, asking that they be reflected in the present report, rather than in the document under discussion (UNEP/CPR/158/7). First, with regard to side events, the themes of which were selected by the Bureau, there could be greater transparency on who Member States could contact should they wish to contribute to specific side events; second, while the practice of combining the Science-Policy Forum and the Sustainable Innovation Expo with Environment Assembly sessions appeared to be a successful format, she expected the secretariat to prepare a proposal for an alternative format, based on the lessons learned from the previous session; lastly, the secretariat should examine how it could improve the transmission of logistical and organizational information to Member States.

59. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat thanked representatives for their contributions. He noted that the secretariat was in no way suggesting that online meetings should be the “new normal”, yet, recognizing that hybrid meetings might be, it had identified in the document the implications of using a hybrid format. Hybrid meetings would expand, rather than restrict, participation, because all representatives would have the option of attending meetings in person or virtually. With regard to the implementation of resolutions, which was not specifically addressed in the document, he assured representatives that the secretariat did not discriminate between resolutions. However, implementation depended to some extent on whether resolutions had clear timelines and follow-up processes, and on available resources. Some resolutions were funded, whereas others were not, and the programme of work might not cover all the implementation aspects of specific resolutions. The issue of the implementation of all the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Environment Assembly at its resumed fifth session, and possibly previous sessions, could be further discussed at the ninth annual subcommittee meeting, scheduled for October 2022.

60. With regard to the issue of parallel meetings and late-night negotiations, the secretariat had taken note of the divergent views expressed. Given the current lack of consensus, it had reverted to the language used in the outcome of the stocktaking meeting for the process for review by the Committee of the Environment Assembly and its subsidiary bodies, which highlighted the need to minimize the number of meetings held in parallel. As the discussion on the issue continued, the secretariat was in the hands of Member States as to how many meetings could be held in parallel. On the issue of documentation, aside from one or two exceptions, all the pre-session documents of the fifth session had been available six weeks in advance of the session. As for draft resolutions, the secretariat had translated into the six official languages all the draft resolutions presented well in advance of the Open-ended Committee meeting, but some delays in translation had occurred with regard to the final versions of the resolutions. The secretariat would endeavour to avoid late translations at future Environment Assembly sessions. Lastly, Member States would receive information on the role of stakeholders in the process in the Environment Assembly handbook for delegates being prepared by the secretariat, which would be shared with the Committee in due course.

61. With regard to the changes proposed to document UNEP/CPR/158/7, the secretariat could include, in section IV, a reminder that, when tabling a draft resolution or shortly thereafter, Member States should provide a focal point with whom the secretariat and other Member States could engage; and, in section IX, a clarification that the increased participation of stakeholders should be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly. The secretariat was also considering producing a booklet or brochure on the outcome of the stocktaking meeting for the process for review by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, so that all delegates could use it as a reference.

62. Following the discussion, the Committee agreed to endorse document UNEP/CPR/158/7, as orally amended.

Agenda item 6

Briefing on the preparations for the Stockholm+50 international meeting and World Environment Day 2022

63. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the secretariat entitled “Briefing on the preparations for the Stockholm+50 International Meeting and on the World Environment Day 2022” (UNEP/CPR/158/6). The note provided information on the preparations for the celebration of World Environment Day 2022, with a focus on the communications strategy. Stockholm+50 would be co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Sweden and would be held in Stockholm on 2 and 3 June 2022, while World Environment Day 2022 would be hosted by Sweden on 5 June 2022.

64. At the Chair’s request, the Committee was briefed on the preparations for Stockholm+50 and World Environment Day 2022 by the Executive Director; Mr. Dan Cooney, UNEP Director of Communications; Ms. Ligia Noronha, Head of the UNEP New York Office; Ms. Caroline Vicini, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sweden to UNEP; and Ms. Rose Makena Muchiri, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNEP.

65. The Executive Director expressed appreciation to the Governments of Kenya and Sweden for their strong leadership in preparing for Stockholm+50, and their efforts to ensure broad inclusion of stakeholders, including young people and indigenous peoples, in the process. The meeting was expected to focus on and deliver outcomes that would lead to transformative actions, providing a platform for all voices to be heard. It would bring together the entire United Nations system, and UNEP was working closely with all United Nations entities, both directly and through the Environment Management Group, in order to ensure impactful outcomes.

66. The main expected outcome of Stockholm+50 would be a summary of the discussions by its co-hosts, Kenya and Sweden, which would contain key messages, legacy actions and concrete commitments from Member States, partners and other groups. Stockholm+50 was also expected to launch a data-driven environmental solutions hub to support developing countries in the implementation of actions to address the triple planetary crisis through access to digital and technological solutions, and to augment the outcome of UNEP@50, including by expanding and supporting the UNEP environmental situation room. With regard to World Environment Day, which in 2022 was returning to Stockholm, its birthplace, UNEP was repurposing the slogan used in 1972, “Only one Earth”, which still rang true and would be used as a social media hashtag for both Stockholm+50 and World Environment Day. UNEP would work to make the latter a truly global day of advocacy for the environment, in which millions of people were expected to take part.

67. Mr. Cooney presented an update on the communications strategy for World Environment Day on 5 June 2022, which centred around a social media campaign under the hashtag #OnlyOneEarth, with the theme “Living sustainably in harmony with nature.” World Environment Day 2022 would amplify the messages of Stockholm+50, help position environmental action to address the triple planetary crisis as a global priority, and support the mobilization of a mass movement to encourage individual behaviour change. The previous week, UNEP had started to roll out various campaign assets, which centred around a dedicated World Environment Day website. Through the website, any group could download a practical guide with substantive suggestions on how to act in support of the environment on 5 June and beyond, join a global conversation on the environment, and register actions they had taken to protect the environment and obtain an innovative auto-generated digital card. More than 1,000 activities had been registered to date, and those involved had obtained digital cards and joined the global conversation on social media. Other campaign assets included the launch of a social media campaign that featured stories from Sweden and elsewhere, the activation of a roster of ambassadors from UNEP and other United Nations entities in support of the celebrations, and the organization of activities by the UNEP regional and country offices and other United Nations entities.

68. UNEP had released a curtain-raiser video on the World Environment Day website, which had already been viewed over 10,000 times, and launched a space where organizations could register events, with several dozen events already registered. A number of partners had provided high-profile pro bono advertisement spaces for the campaign, including at the Beijing Capital International Airport, Times Square in New York, and Piccadilly Circus in London, and, thanks to a partnership with transport sector partners, World Environment Day 2022 would be advertised in more than 1,000 transport networks across the world. The official event would take place on the morning of 5 June 2022, presided over by the Executive Director and the Swedish Minister for Climate and the Environment. The Government of Sweden had also launched its own dedicated World Environment Day website and had spent months raising awareness about World Environment Day in Sweden, with hundreds of events planned across the country.

69. On behalf of Ms. Noronha, the Executive Director presented an update on the preparations for Stockholm+50. She said that the meeting was expected to feature an in-depth conversation on how to rebuild relationships of trust on the global environmental compact, how to accelerate a system-wide, inclusive and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, how to reconnect the environment, development, children and health agendas, and how to rethink concepts and measures of well-being and progress. Stockholm+50 would not be a decision-making meeting, but it would bring together decision makers to consider sustainability transitions, environmental rights, the rights of nature, and the mainstreaming of alternative knowledge systems reflecting the views of indigenous people, youth and women. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/280, on an international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”, Stockholm+50 would feature plenary sessions and three leadership dialogues, each presided over by two co-chairs, under the three agreed themes of “Reflecting on the urgent need for actions to achieve a healthy planet and prosperity of all”; “Achieving a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic”; and “Accelerating the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development”. The co-chairs of the dialogues were, respectively, the representatives of Canada and Ecuador, Germany and Indonesia, and Egypt and Finland.

70. The first dialogue would consider how to reframe sustainable development with equity in mind, how to achieve fair and effective multilateralism, and how to deliver on aspirations on rights through joint and integrated approaches, recognizing that a healthy planet was essential to social and economic progress. The second dialogue would focus on how to achieve urgently needed system-wide transformations in key sectors that had a large environmental footprint but were also economic engines that drove poverty reduction; how to achieve circularity and embrace more sustainable consumption and production patterns; how to channel investments towards an environmentally sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, aligned with social, climate, biodiversity and pollution objectives; and how to improve access to digital technologies to bridge the digital divide between and within countries. Lastly, the third dialogue would focus on how to accelerate the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which had been derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, by mobilizing and scaling up financing, reforming and strengthening governance mechanisms, ensuring policy coherence and transparency for the 2030 Agenda, and strengthening multilateralism.

71. In parallel to the preparations for the three leadership dialogues, a series of regional multi-stakeholder consultations had been held in New York. Some of the key messages from the consultations included that there was a need to find new metrics, other than gross domestic product, to measure prosperity; to mainstream indigenous knowledge and rights as part of the solution for a healthier planet; to develop new narratives and paradigms that offered positive and feasible visions for the future; to rebuild trust among Governments and stakeholders; to move economies towards green sectors and green jobs, including for young people and vulnerable groups; to ensure that the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises, fulfilled their environmental, social and intergenerational responsibilities; to adopt circularity and sustainable consumption and production patterns; to achieve financial sustainability; and to criminalize “ecocide”, a notion that had not yet been mainstreamed in the United Nations system, but which Swedish President, Mr. Olof Palme, had highlighted at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972.

72. The United Nations Development Programme had held consultations with stakeholders in the 58 countries in which it had a presence. During the consultations, stakeholders had called for, among other things, strengthening of environmental governance at all levels; radically improved financing for the environment; the adoption of solutions that improved resilience and addressed not only environmental and climate concerns, but also mitigated risks related to food, energy, debt exposure, poverty and inequality; and stronger drivers for more inclusive economic transitions within and between countries, and within and between generations.

73. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 75/280 and resolution 75/326, on modalities for the international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity”, the preparatory process had involved consultations with Member States and stakeholders, including a consultation held in March 2022, on the basis of which a background paper for each of the leadership dialogues had been revised. Further consultations in May 2022 on the key messages and recommendations reflected in each paper would ultimately feed into the main outcome document of Stockholm+50, a Presidents’ summary of what had transpired during the meeting.

74. In closing, she drew attention to the Stockholm+50 website, which provided detailed information on the programme and the schedule of the meeting and associated events.

75. Ms. Vicini provided brief updates on the preparations for Stockholm+50 and World Environment Day 2022, which Sweden would host. With regard to Stockholm+50, it was to be hoped that the meeting would mark a turning point and bring about collective action by Governments, civil society, business and many others to secure a healthy environment for all, within the small window of opportunity that was available to reverse the business-as-usual practices that were posing severe threats to humanity's well-being, prosperity and future. Stressing that the Presidents' summary by Kenya and Sweden would build on the recommendations from delegations, she urged Member States to devise strong messages for Stockholm+50 and to ensure that their voices were heard. Thus far, more than 10 Heads of State and 100 ministers and other high-level participants had registered for the meeting. The full list of speakers for the plenary meeting had just been distributed to representatives in New York, and the list for the leadership dialogues would be posted shortly on the Stockholm+50 website, which also contained useful information on logistics and the multiple parallel events to be held during and prior to the meeting, which she invited all to attend. She encouraged those who could not travel to Stockholm to participate in hybrid events.

76. Ms. Makena Muchiri said that Stockholm+50 would be mutually supportive of, and reinforce, the messages of UNEP@50, guided by General Assembly resolutions 75/280 and 75/326. As had been mentioned by the Executive Director, 10 Heads of State had registered for the event, including the President of Kenya, who would preside over the last plenary session on 3 June 2022. Kenya would also co-host two in-person side events during the meeting, on action towards green and blue financing on 2 June and on building partnerships for blue economy, sports and the environment on 3 June. She encouraged all Member States to call for the strengthening of UNEP and its mandate at Stockholm+50, and not to create parallel tracks that duplicated the mandate of UNEP, in line with the political declaration adopted at UNEP@50, and to support actions that contributed to addressing the triple planetary crisis, in line with the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025.

77. Turning to World Environment Day 2022, Ms. Vicini said that the celebrations would convene under the "Only one Earth" slogan and set out opportunities for the transition to a cleaner and greener lifestyle, calling on all to live sustainably in harmony with nature. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency was coordinating the day's activities and communications and would measure the impact of its campaign. Activities were planned all over Sweden, including litter clean-up events led by children and other residents, the swapping of used clothes, science centres exhibiting new technologies for a circular economy, the deployment of electric chargers along a street in Stockholm, and a children's fun run co-hosted by Kenyan and Swedish athlete groups that would focus on clean air. Since the celebrations were to take place immediately after Stockholm+50, a key objective of World Environment Day 2022 was to disseminate the messages of Stockholm+50 to young people, including through social media, and alleviate climate anxiety by raising hope and showing what people could do to live a more sustainable lifestyle.

78. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the secretariat and the representatives of Sweden and Kenya for the document and information presented under agenda item 6, and for their tireless efforts to ensure the success of Stockholm+50. Many representatives announced that their countries would send high-level representatives to Stockholm+50, and drew attention to specific events that their countries would co-host, which they invited representatives to attend.

79. One representative said that Stockholm+50 reflected a recognition of the importance of multilateralism in tackling the triple planetary crisis in ways that accelerated the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement and the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, and that ensured a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Another representative, lamenting the absence to a significant degree of the urgent call for action that was needed to tackle the triple planetary crisis, said that the environmental challenges of 2022 were even more severe and daunting than those that had faced the planet in 1972; it was critical, therefore, that the outcome of Stockholm+50, despite being a Presidents' summary, be action-oriented and as specific as possible.

80. One representative said that there was a need to ensure that Stockholm+50 highlighted the particular challenges facing developing countries, which were often the most affected by environmental problems that forced people to relocate and deepened poverty and inequality. He suggested that developing countries must be given the means to implement multilateral environmental agreements, expressing the hope that Stockholm+50 would achieve an equilibrium between environmental protection and social and economic development, guided by the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and the idea that no one should be left behind.

81. A representative of major groups and stakeholders, emphasizing the need for real commitment and political will to tackle the environmental crisis, expressed the hope that Stockholm+50 would

create the momentum required to make the changes that were key to building a healthier and more equal planet, including by protecting environmental advocates. Another representative of major groups and stakeholders said that young people were deeply concerned about the state of the planet as illustrated by the fact that over 50 youth representatives from the global South would participate in Stockholm+50. He urged Member States to heed the recommendations and calls for action emanating from events organized by young people in the lead-up to Stockholm+50, and expressed the hope that Member States would continue to support the engagement of major groups and stakeholders in global environmental governance.

82. Responding to comments, Ms. Vicini, Ms. Mekena and the Executive Director thanked representatives for their remarks. The Executive Director remarked that Stockholm+50 was not strictly an environmental meeting; participants would examine and discuss a broad range of issues with a view to securing a healthy planet for the economic and social well-being of all its citizens.

Agenda item 7

Report of the subcommittee

83. The Committee took note of a document entitled “Chair’s report of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/158/4).

Agenda item 8

Other matters

84. The representative of Spain announced that, on 17 June 2022, Spain would host the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought, under the theme “Rising up from drought together.”

85. One representative reiterated his request that the secretariat provide a full list of the scientific reports it planned to produce in 2022, together with a schedule of the consultations planned around such reports. He further urged the secretariat to not focus on any particular country when assessing the impacts of conflict on the environment, but to adopt a more balanced approach whereby all relevant countries were considered.

Agenda item 9

Closing of the meeting

86. The meeting was declared closed at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 26 May 2022.
