

United Nations Environment Assembly Bureau meeting
Friday, 9 December 2022,
16:00 – 18:00 (GMT+3)
Online meeting

Agenda item 2: Consideration of a theme for the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

This revised options paper has been prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Presidency to support the consultation on the theme for the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. Based on the discussion at the joint meeting of the UNEA and the CPR Bureau on 17 October and at the informal consultation held on 15 November 2022, and at the request of the UNEA-6 Presidency, the document includes two revised options for further consideration. The two options are as follows:

- **Option A (revised from original Option 1): “Environmental multilateralism fit for the future”**
- **Option B (revised from original Option 3): “Multilateral solutions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution”**

The note outlines a brief rationale for options A and B for your consideration.

Due to the limited support expressed by many Member States for the original option 2 entitled “Towards the implementation of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”, this option has been removed, with some substantive elements of that option reflected in the new options A and B.

In addition, this paper also includes the title of a tentative consolidated proposal proposed by UNEA Presidency which reads as follows:

- **“Environmental multilateralism for future solutions to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and to achieve a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”**

Bureau Members may wish to indicate their preference between the two options and reflect on the title of the tentative consolidated proposal proposed by UNEA Presidency, including with respect to the need for effective communication with the general public. The Bureau Members may also wish to provide guidance on which substantive elements from options A and B should be incorporated into the tentative consolidated proposal.

In accordance with paragraph 9 of [UNEA decision 5/4](#), the UNEA-6 Bureau is requested to define a theme for the sixth session of the Environment Assembly no later than twelve months in advance of the sixth session, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives. After the UNEA Bureau meeting on 9 December and based on the guidance to be provided by Bureau Members, the secretariat will support the Presidency to further develop the consolidated option, as a basis for further consultations with Member States in view of a final consideration of this matter at the joint retreat of the UNEA and CPR Bureaus to be held in Morocco at the end of January 2023.

Option A (revised from original Option 1)

Environmental multilateralism fit for the future

The Secretary General's [Our Common Agenda Report](#) and the [Stockholm+50 international meeting](#) have launched a global call to reinvigorate the multilateral system to overcome the multiple social, economic and environmental crises that put the very viability of life on earth at risk. Finding effective solutions to these crises calls for a transformative, inter-generational approach that can look at present and emerging risks with inclusivity and global solidarity, whilst promoting trust in global and national governance systems and increased rights-based societal participation in environmental decision-making, harnessing the actions and contributions of Member States and Stakeholders.

As the centerstage of environmental multilateralism, UNEA-6 can provide effective and timely solutions to increase resilience to global risks and accelerate the achievement of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda through a reinvigorated governance that accounts for the interests of present and future generations. Investing in tangible, science-based solutions that can promote peace, and access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions and reverse inequalities are all indispensable preconditions to enable an effective multilateral response fueled by increased confidence and collective representation. Similarly, leveraging the transformative opportunities offered by digital cooperation, bridging the digital divide and strengthening the sharing of knowledge and access to emerging technologies are important elements to meaningfully connect economies and societies towards truly networked and inclusive common goals.

UNEA-6 can build on and scale up its past achievements while maintaining a focused look to the future that identifies key environmental spillover risks, enhances anticipatory action and preparedness to related future crises and advances the realization of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to deliver long-term, inter-generational sustainable development. Possible focus areas under this theme could include: advancing solidarity-based responses, such as the generation and provision of timely and predictable public and private finance, capacity building and technology transfer to help countries implement internationally agreed global and environmental goals, emphasizing South-South and triangular cooperation for increased adaptation and resilience, social protection and consideration for the most vulnerable; improving access to relevant data, science, and information to stimulate technological innovations and enable evidence-based and inclusive policymaking; delivering solutions that guarantee and enhance societal participation, access to information and access to justice and effective remedies for environment-related matters, with emphasis on women, youth, indigenous peoples and local communities and persons in vulnerable situations; re-shaping economic governance models to account for the environment in measuring progress beyond GDP; enhancing strategic foresight and horizon scanning capacities at all levels to encourage long-term, anticipatory environmental decision-making; investing in environmental education and behavioral change towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production to shape the social norms and values that can ensure the handover of a healthy legacy to future generations; unlocking meaningful youth engagement and the role of youth as agents of change for sustainable development and the recognition of inter-generational equity in national and international justice systems.

Several key international processes taking place throughout 2023 would contribute to defining the scope of the outcome under a theme that focuses on environmental multilateralism fit for the future under UNEA-6. These include: the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Secretary General's Climate Summit and SDG Summit, the G20 Leaders' Summit, COP28 and the continuing negotiations towards a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and Post-2020 Chemicals and Waste Framework and many more. This theme will also provide an important contribution to the SG's Summit of the Future that will take place in 2024.

Option B (revised from original Option 3)

Multilateral solutions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution

Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution are jeopardizing our collective economic and social well-being and profoundly undermining opportunities to reduce poverty and improve lives and livelihoods, yet we still have a window of opportunity to reverse them.

The [Making Peace with Nature](#) report, presented to the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, highlights the interconnectedness of these three environmental crises and the urgent need to address them in conjunction with related economic and social issues. This requires a strong multilateral response that can accelerate the implementation of existing commitments to reverse negative worldwide trends, enact a transformation towards sustainable patterns of consumption and production and drive sustainable development, including for our food and energy systems, towards a climate-stable, nature-positive, and pollution-free future where no one is left behind. Responses need to consider the many crises and their adverse impacts on progress achieved towards sustainable development.

Multiple international processes and outcomes, within and outside the intergovernmental space, such as past UNEA-3 and 5, focused on how to achieve a pollution-free world and strengthening actions for nature, respectively, and the most recent [Stockholm+50 international conference](#), have built a strong momentum and a call for action. In these and other multilateral fora, both Member States and non-state actors have committed to take action to address the root causes and drivers of the three crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and turbocharge the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. Building on previous UNEA resolutions and the recent United Nations General Assembly [resolution](#) 76/300 (A/76/L.75), a strong foundation in environmental rule of law, grounded in science and inclusive public participation, can accelerate the implementation and enforcement of national environmental laws and policies. It can strengthen the capacity of duty bearers and rights holders at all levels of society. It can also shape the discourse around how financial and material flows can prevent or account for negative environmental impacts while holding businesses increasingly accountable for their environmental harm.

The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6) is an opportunity to leverage these existing commitments and mobilize the necessary political resolve around these three environmental crises, with increased trust and transparency, and with collective, effective, and shared ambition and solutions that can catalyze a just and inclusive transition. Possible focus areas of this theme could include: strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerabilities to support sustainable development while scaling up South-South and triangular cooperation; accelerating system-wide and structural transformations of economic and social protection models, engaging financial and economic actors and leveraging digital transformations; accelerating system-wide transformations of high impact sectors, such as food, energy, water, buildings and construction, manufacturing, and mobility, promoting circularity, resource efficiency, regenerative production approaches and nature-based solutions in value chains; transforming food systems by promoting regenerative farming and fisheries approaches that provide healthy diets and minimize food waste, including investments in the ocean economy; promoting targeted gender-based actions; environmental sustainability and equitable resource management in peacebuilding; reducing environmental injustices to effectively protect those who defend nature; the role of future generations and widespread societal engagement in environmental leadership, drawing on the capacities of civil society and the youth, regions and cities, businesses, academic and scientific institutions.

This UNEA theme would provide a platform for Member States to engage with the private sector, financial institutions, civil society, women, academia, Indigenous Peoples, children and youth, farmers, and local and regional authorities, amongst others. Leveraging the comparative advantage of these allied actors, including through existing platforms such as the Science-Policy Business Forum and

the UNEA Youth Assembly, will multiply bridges, opinions and insights to define innovative approaches, increase a collective resolve and inspire the needed action on all levels.

Several key international processes taking place throughout 2023 would contribute to defining the scope of the outcomes under an overarching theme that focuses on solutions to overcome the climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution crises at UNEA-6. These include: the Secretary General's Climate Summit and SDG Summit; UNFCCC COP28, and the ongoing negotiations towards a Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and towards a Post-2020 Chemicals and Waste Framework.

Tentative consolidated proposal from the UNEA Presidency

Environmental multilateralism for future solutions to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and to achieve a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”

[Bureau Members to provide guidance on the elements to be incorporated]