

Future UNEA sessions and related consequences for UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work and Budget

CPR Subcommittee Meeting, 18 July 2023

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Background

UNEA Decision 5/4

Decides, that the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly will be held in Nairobi from 26 February to 1 March 2024;

Urges the Environment Assembly at its sixth session, when considering the date and venue of its seventh session, to keep in mind UNEA2/22, on the review of the cycle of the Environment Assembly and rule 1 of its rules of procedure concerning the recommended time between sessions of the Environment Assembly, and the need to approve the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027 in 2025.

RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT ASSEMBLY: *The United Nations Environment Assembly shall normally hold one regular session every two years (Rule 1)*

RESOLUTION 2/22 decided: *to hold its regular sessions in odd numbered years commencing with its third session in 2017 (to minimize time between UNEA approval of MTS and MTS implementation)*

Background (2)

UNEA Decision 5/4

Also decides, to extend the programme of work for the period 2022–2023 by two years, to the end of 2025, with the budget and targets being pro-rated accordingly.

UNEP's Medium-term Strategy (MTS)

Four-year strategy.

*Currently in the first biennium of 2022-2025
MTS approved at UNEA5.1 in February 2021*

Programme of Work and Budget –

normally on biennial cycles with two POWs and Budget approvals as part of the four-year MTS cycle.

The POW and Budget for 2022-2023 was extended to include 2024-2025

Options to get “back on track”

Option 1:

UNEA 6 decides to change the UNEA cycle to even years.

- Organize a special session in 2025 to approve the 2026-29 MTS and 2026-27 POW. The special session would be done either: 1) hybrid, 2) fully virtual, or 3) by seeking approval of the MTS and PoW/Budget through silence procedure
- UNEA 7 will take place in February 2026

Option 2:

UNEA 6 decides to change the UNEA cycle to even years.

- Extend the current MTS and POW/Budget for one more year to end 2026.
- MTS and POW/Budget move to an odd year cycle.
- UNEA 7 takes place in February 2026 to approve the 2027-30 MTS and the 2027-28 POW/Budget.

Options to get “back on track” (2)

Option 3:

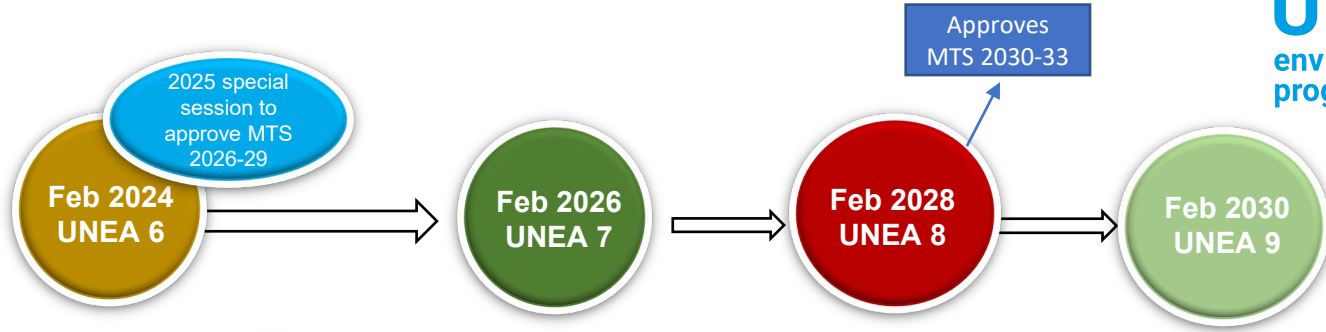
UNEA 6 decides to uphold UNEA 2/22 and return the UNEA cycle to odd years.

- UNEA 7 will take place at the end of 2025.
- The 2026-2029 MTS and PoW/Budget would be approved before the current one expires.

COMPARATIVE TIMELINES

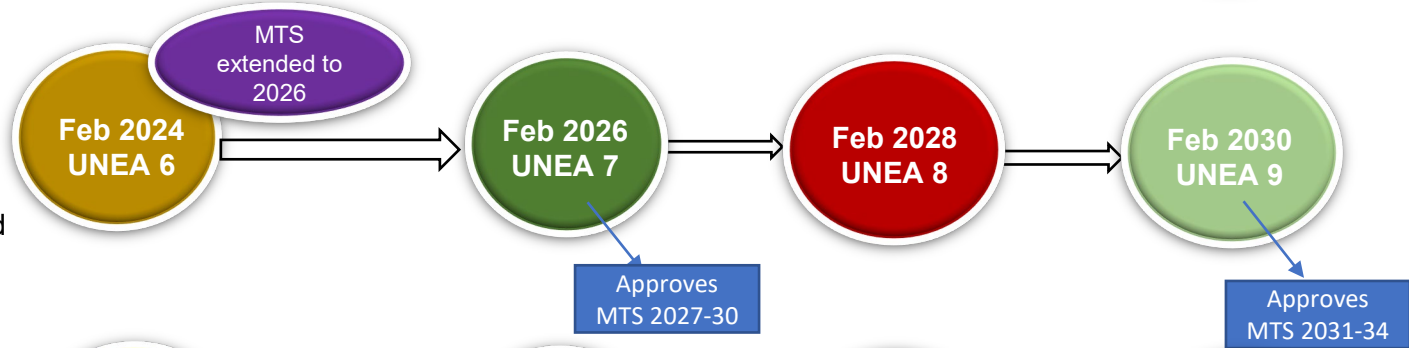
Option 1

New even year cycle for UNEA Regular Sessions and maintain even year cycle for MTS and POW/Budget



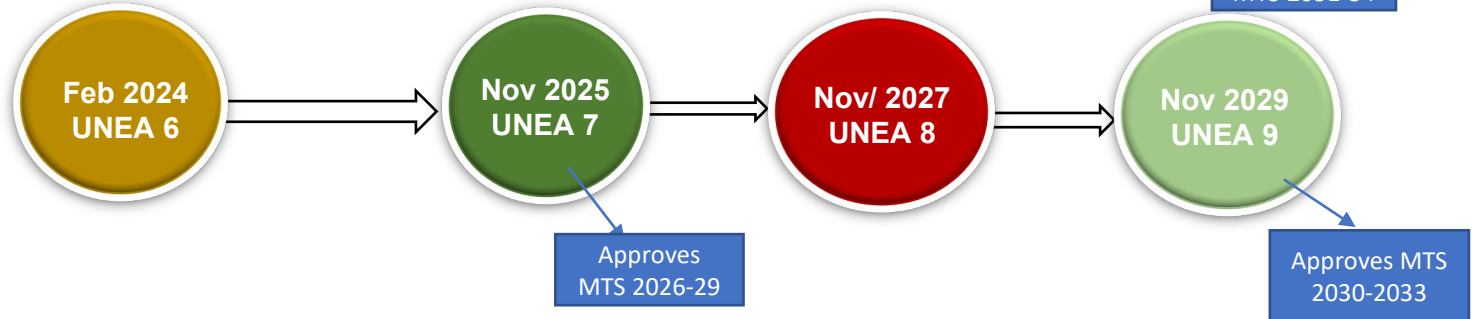
Option 2

New even year cycle for UNEA Regular Sessions and new odd year cycle for MTS and POW/Budget



Option 3

Revert to odd year cycle for UNEA Regular Sessions and maintain even year cycle for MTS and POW/Budget



Comparing the Options

	UNEA timing	Cycle	UNEA 6 and 7 Decisions Required	Pros	Cons
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA 6 in Feb 2024 • Special session/silence procedure in 2025 • UNEA 7 in Feb 2026 	Even years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA 6 in 2024 decides that a <i>special session is convened in 2025 or decides that a silence procedure</i> mechanism is utilized in 2025 to approve 2026-29 MTS and 2026-27 PoW and Budget. • UNEA 7 in 2026 to approve PoW and Budget 2028-29. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns and maintains the PoW/Budget with the MTS in a four-years cycle. • Presidency and bureau: Both UNEA 6 and UNEA 7 will have a two-year cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional workload and budget required for a special session. • If the silence procedure is broken, further consultation would be needed which will delay and incur additional cost. • UNEA 8 in 2028 would have to approve the 2030-2033 MTS and POW and budget – almost two years in advance of its implementation.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA 6 in Feb 2024 • UNEA 7 in Feb 2026 	Even years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA 6 in 2024 decides to extend MTS and PoW and Budget to 2026. • UNEP 7 in 2026 to approve MTS 2027-2030 and PoW and Budget 2027-28. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces time gap between PoW formulation and implementation. • Presidency and bureau: Both UNEA 6 and UNEA 7 will have a two-year cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEP cannot implement major changes to the MTS, PoW and Budget Programme before 2027.

Comparing the Options (2)

3	UNEA timing	Cycle	UNEA 6 and 7 Decisions Required	Pros	Cons
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA 6 in Feb 2024 • UNEA 7 end of 2025 	Odd years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA 6 in 2024 decides to hold UNEA 7 at the end of 2025 (November) • UNEA 7 at end 2025 to approve MTS 2026-2029 and PoW and Budget 2026-27. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complies with UNEA 2/22 • Aligns and maintains the four-year cycle for the MTS and two-year cycle for the PoW and Budget with the MTS in a four-year cycle. • Directly addresses concerns about QCPR alignment • Avoids extending the current MTS/POW/Budget for one additional year • Enables the secretariat/MS to make desired changes to its work earlier than 2027 • MTS/POW/Budget would be approved just 1-2 months before its implementation, making it timelier and more relevant • Could allow for an Annual subcommittee in June to review the Programme Performance Report, which aligns better with the release of the report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNEA7 Presidency and Bureau would be 22 months vs two full years (24 months)*. • Proximity to UNFCCC annual CoP • Budget implications need to be further explored

* NB: While UNEA has recently been held in the first quarter of the year, the timing of the UNEA Meetings has varied since UNEA1, due to a variety of reasons. The history is:

- UNEA 1: June 2014
- UNEA 2: May 2016
- UNEA 3: December 2017
- UNEA 4: March 2019
- UNEA 5.1 and 5.2: February 2021 and February 2022, respectively

Thank you