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**Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme
163rd meeting**
Nairobi, 31 October 2023

Draft minutes of the 162nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 16 June 2023

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting, which was held in person, was opened at 10.20 a.m. on Friday, 16 June 2023 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 96 participants representing 93 members and 3 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mahi Boumediene (Algeria); Joaquín Elías Salzberg (Argentina); Sultan Aami Oglu Hajiyev (Azerbaijan); Andrew Onalenna Sesinyi (Botswana); Adriana Telles Ribeiro (Brazil); Evelyne Habonimana (Burundi); Savvas Vladimirov (Cyprus); Jose Blanco (Dominican Republic); Antonios Sgouropoulos (Greece); Bevon McDonald (Guyana); Mariko Kimura (Japan); Marcelo Scappini (Paraguay); Mirosław Gojdz (Poland); and Jennifer Harwood (United States of America).
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Selma Malika Haddadi (Algeria); Sebastian Lucas Nicolino (Argentina); Duke Lephoko (Botswana); Tatiana Gomes Bustamante (Brazil); Dimitrios Zavoritis (Greece); Sotirios Demestihias (Greece); Nagaosa Daisuke (Japan); Jacek Bazanski (Poland); Richard Masozera (Rwanda); Sasirit Tangulrat (Thailand); and Bill Lehmborg (United States of America).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/162/1 and UNEP/CPR/162/1/Add.1, respectively).

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 161st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 161st meeting, held in a hybrid format on Thursday, 9 March 2023, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/162/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

7. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report entitled “Quarterly report to the 162nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives: January–March 2023”, noting that it provided an update on significant developments during the first quarter of 2023 of relevance to UNEP.
8. In her oral briefing, the Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, bidding farewell to the outgoing Bureau members, said that the world was at a critical halfway point for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. However, many people were being left behind, and there had been regression or no progress made in the fulfilment of some of the Goals. According to predictions, almost 700 million people would be living with hunger, around 500 million people would be living in extreme poverty and over 600 million people would be living without electricity by 2030. Inequality gaps in terms of gender, wealth and education were not closing and too little action had been taken to address the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and desertification, and pollution and waste. Against that backdrop, solidarity, financing and action must be increased at the high-level political forum on sustainable development in September 2023.
9. Climate change and war could dash hopes of achieving sustainable development. Humanity could only attempt to end hunger and poverty, build peace and stability, ensure clean energy and green jobs, and deliver equity and justice by creating a world free of pollution with net-zero emissions, which was the aim of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 and must be the aim of the next strategy for the period 2026–2029. In April 2023, UNEP had submitted its largest ever Global Environment Facility portfolio, for \$350 million spread across 54 proposed projects. She expressed her deep appreciation to the Governments of Belgium, Finland and Norway for contributing to the three new thematic funds to address issues related to climate, nature and pollution, and stressed the need for countries to contribute based on the voluntary indicative scale.
10. The next session of the United Nations Environment Assembly would be crucial. The presidency would soon hold its first informal consultations on the zero draft ministerial declaration and the secretariat was drafting progress reports, preparing guidelines on the submission of draft resolutions and decisions, and undertaking other preparatory work to allow Member States to take meaningful decisions for sustainable development.
11. On climate action, the synthesis report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which had been released in March 2023, had highlighted the urgent work required before, during and after the annual meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The General Assembly of the United Nations had passed a historic resolution requesting an opinion from the International Court of Justice on States’ obligations under international law to combat climate change. UNEP supported Kenya as it prepared to co-host the African Climate Action Summit with the African Union in September 2023, which presented an important opportunity to shape the continent’s climate response. Work had begun on creating a new UNEP division dedicated to climate action with the aim of improving coherence in its action for mitigation, adaptation and loss and damage, providing better and stronger support to Member States in addressing the climate emergency, and enhancing oversight of strategies to tackle climate change.
12. On action for nature, UNEP had chaired the first meeting of the Quadripartite alliance on One Health and had set out a four-pillar strategy to strengthen collaboration between UNEP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH), and had promoted the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution on sustainable lake management at the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028. Continued efforts were needed to ensure the effectiveness of funding for biodiversity, to make national strategies and action plans focused and comparable through the use of digital technologies, and to take full advantage of the common approach to biodiversity.
13. Regarding action on chemicals and pollution, the Chair of the second meeting of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution had been given a mandate to prepare a zero draft of an international instrument for the committee’s third meeting, which would allow for real progress on eliminating unnecessary plastic, redesigning products, packaging and processes, and ensuring a just transition to recognize the rights of the 20 million waste pickers worldwide. She expressed her gratitude to Côte d’Ivoire for

hosting an event marking World Environment Day on 5 June 2023, which had focused on plastic pollution, and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for its support to the event. UNEP social media channels had received an estimated 200 million views and its videos had been watched 5 million times. Hundreds of official events had been held around the world to celebrate the first International Day of Zero Waste on 30 March 2023, and 54 significant decisions had been taken at the meetings of the conferences of the parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, held in Geneva from 1 to 12 May 2023, to strengthen the sound management of chemicals and waste. Great progress was expected at the fifth session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, which was set to take place in Bonn in September 2023.

14. On the ways in which UNEP sought to enhance its response to the triple planetary crisis and promote the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, a strategic foresight approach was being adopted to anticipate developments and disruptions, with horizon scanning as a first step. A survey had been sent to 5,000 specialists in a range of fields, as well as to Member States, major groups and other stakeholders and UNEP staff, and a global foresight report would be produced in 2024. To strengthen its work on data, UNEP had reassigned responsibility for the World Environment Situation Room to its Chief Digital Officer. UNEP would continue to share evidence-based environmental information to assist with policy and financing decisions and strengthen its ties with other bodies in the United Nations system and the resident coordinators. UNEP had updated its delivery model to clearly divide roles between regions, avoid overlap and improve accountability and responsiveness to Member States. It had implemented the Young Talent Pipeline to recruit young professionals from underrepresented regions, and over 4,000 applications had been received during the first round. She had discussed employment opportunities at UNEP and the United Nations system as a whole during a recent visit to the Western Balkans.

15. In closing, she said that UNEP was working hard to fulfil the promises of a healthy planet as a prerequisite for peaceful, cohesive and prosperous societies made at the international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity” and the “UNEP@50” special session of the Environment Assembly celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP. She expressed her profound appreciation to Member States for their continued support to UNEP. She looked forward to working with the incoming Bureau members.

16. In the ensuing discussion, most of the representatives who spoke, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed their appreciation to the Executive Director for her quarterly report and to the outgoing Bureau members for their work. One representative encouraged the Executive Director to explore opportunities and lessons learned in greater detail in future reports.

17. Several representatives highlighted the importance of the regional offices in facilitating and coordinating activities between UNEP and Member States. Some representatives said that the implementation of the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean could provide useful input to the work of UNEP on the protection of environmental human rights defenders. One representative said that the regional meeting of Latin American and Caribbean States on topics related to minerals and mining, which had taken place in Santiago in May 2023, could provide valuable contributions to discussions within UNEP. Another representative called for closer cooperation between UNEP and the regional offices.

18. A number of representatives said that the first meeting of the platform of environmental protection agencies in Africa, held in Kigali, had presented an opportunity to share experiences, knowledge and best practices, enhance the science-policy interface, mobilize partnerships and address technical and operational challenges. One representative said that the meeting had reaffirmed the important role of regional offices in assisting with the implementation of programmes and capacity-building within UNEP. Another representative said that delegates from only 33 African countries had attended the meeting and his Permanent Mission had not received any invitation. He requested the secretariat to provide details on the organization of the event and the channel of communication used to inform African Member States of meetings. Another representative welcomed the outcomes of the meeting and expressed her support for the strategic initiatives for the next five years. She called for the swift implementation of the outcomes and finalization of the blueprint and action plan, and recommended that the secretariat organize consultations with African permanent missions on the blueprint and action plan, preferably before the upcoming nineteenth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment.

19. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Sustainable Development”, 2018–2028, which had been held in New York from 22 to 24 March 2023. One representative, thanking Tajikistan and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for co-hosting the event, said that the Conference had served to increase voluntary contributions and had encouraged stakeholders in all sectors to take action to realize Sustainable Development Goal 6, on ensuring access to water and sanitation for all. A global response was needed to address the water crisis. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the Conference had demonstrated the critical role of water as an enabler for the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals, and called for the commitments made at the Conference to be implemented without delay. The issue of water should be given adequate attention within the United Nations system and at the sixth session of the Environment Assembly in particular. A third representative said that the Conference on water and the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries were key drivers in achieving the decisions and resolutions adopted at the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

20. One representative said that the third International Conference on Water and Climate, which would be held in Fez, Morocco, on 6 and 7 July 2023, on the theme “Basin management, the key to adaptation and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, would provide linkages between the United Nations Conference on the Midterm Comprehensive Review of the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Decade for Action and the twenty-eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

21. Several representatives commended UNEP for making the Environment Assembly monitoring and reporting portal public, which made the organization more transparent and accountable. One representative said that he would appreciate more information about the strategy presented by UNEP at the meeting of the Quadripartite alliance on One Health, the outcomes of the inventory of data platforms and related application programming interface frameworks – which could facilitate more effective preparation for the next session of the Environment Assembly by preventing overlap between initiatives for new resolutions – and the role of UNEP in the implementation of pillar 2 of the Early Warnings for All initiative.

22. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that she was pleased to see progress on the first draft of the seventh Global Environment Outlook report, and underlined the importance of the support and capacity-building services provided in the areas of data monitoring and management and the use of science to inform and develop policy. She encouraged UNEP to continue that work and recalled the need for a more strategic approach to expanding the donor base, taking into account the useful suggestions that had been made at the ninth annual subcommittee meeting.

23. Some representatives welcomed the successful negotiation of the agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. One representative said that she hoped for a swift adoption of the agreement for cleaner oceans and highlighted the need for a robust financial mechanism for its implementation.

24. One representative said that accelerating biodiversity loss and climate change could jeopardize the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the related targets. It was essential to align sources of financing to address biodiversity and climate change and fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals, with indicators to measure progress. Another representative asked the Executive Director to explain how action taken by UNEP to combat climate change would be coordinated among its various divisions in the future.

25. One representative recalled that the planetary crises were not limited to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Flooding, desertification, land degradation and drought affected developing countries in particular and, in some cases, impeded their socioeconomic development. Another representative, drawing attention to the considerable environmental, social and economic consequences of desertification and the urgent need for multilateral action, suggested that future quarterly reports of the Executive Director should provide further details about the work of UNEP to address desertification and drought. A third representative requested additional information on the action taken by UNEP to combat desertification and climate change, and proposed placing discussions on a strategic road map in that regard on the agenda for future Committee briefings. One representative said the need to preserve desert environments and ecosystems should not be overlooked.

26. Some representatives, taking note of the 73 organizations newly accredited to UNEP, requested the secretariat to specify the area of expertise of all new organizations in order to promote

interaction with Member States. One representative sought clarification regarding how UNEP would involve and consult Member States in the development of early warning, monitoring and horizon scanning initiatives, and where the submissions by UNEP for the Global Digital Compact could be accessed. He also requested further information about the work on trade policies to support the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

27. Several representatives, including a representative of major groups and stakeholders, welcomed the launch of the Young Talent Pipeline initiative to increase to the involvement of skilled young people in solving the triple planetary crisis. One representative asked what channels had been used by the secretariat to inform Member States of the initiative's launch. Another representative said that further action was needed to ensure that the inability of certain countries to support interns financially did not deter young people in those countries from taking full advantage of the initiative.

28. Several representatives said that although efforts to achieve balanced regional representation among its staff were commendable, certain countries and regions continued to be underrepresented. One representative said that, while he appreciated efforts to achieve a gender balance within UNEP, he was disappointed that the quarterly report contained no information about action taken by the secretariat to ensure a balanced geographical representation among UNEP staff.

29. Some representatives commended UNEP for its implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and encouraged it to continue efforts to meet or exceed the requirements under all the Action Plan indicators. One representative, welcoming efforts to raise awareness of gender issues and equality, urged UNEP to focus on issues affecting women and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer persons.

30. A representative of major groups and stakeholders, stressing the importance of engaging with children and youth, called on countries to create enabling environments that supported and empowered children and youth organizations working on environmental issues, given that young people continued to encounter problems when registering such organizations. She expressed great appreciation for the report entitled "Turning the tide on youth-washing: five ways to effectively engage young environmental leaders", which drew attention to the issue of greenwashing. Welcoming the efforts of UNEP to engage young people during the tenth Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, she encouraged cooperation with regional coalitions that actively engaged with and supported young people.

31. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, strongly condemned the racist remarks made by the Ambassador of Romania towards the group of African States at a meeting held in Nairobi in April 2023, and expressed concern at the reaction of certain colleagues to the remarks. Another representative called on all parties to adhere to the spirit of article 2 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which required States to condemn and seek to eliminate racial discrimination. One representative, expressing solidarity with the representatives of the group of African States who had been present at the meeting, noted that two senior UNEP officials had been present at the meeting. The Chair, emphasizing that racist language had no place in meetings of United Nations bodies or any entity, stressed the need for vigilance in addressing such situations. He expressed his sympathy for those delegates affected by the racist remarks and commended the Government of Romania for announcing that action would be taken regarding the individual concerned.

32. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked UNEP for its role in dealing with the environmental consequences of the unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. One representative welcomed the decision by UNEP to allocate a senior adviser to Kyiv as part of the United Nations country team and condemned the recent terrorist attack by the Russian Federation on the Kakhovka dam on 6 June 2023, which had caused extensive flooding and had led to oil contamination. A request had been made for the Executive Director to dispatch an urgent assistance mission to the areas affected by the disaster to identify risks and support efforts to reduce the environmental impact, in accordance with paragraph 8 of Environment Assembly resolution 3/1, on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked UNEP for its contributions to the second Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment Report for Ukraine, reiterated its commitment to the rules-based international order and expressed its unwavering support for Ukraine, its independence and full territorial sovereignty.

33. The representative of Belarus said that he wished to know what action UNEP had taken over the past year to address the environmental impact of the wall constructed by Poland along its border, since his country had received no response to the communication that it had sent to the secretariat. By

building the wall, he said, Poland had acted in violation of a number of conventions on biodiversity and the protection of migrating wildlife.

34. The representative of the Russian Federation said that the Executive Director's visit to Ukraine was an act of political solidarity and was unrelated to the protection of the environment. He said that he wondered why the Executive Director and other high-level UNEP officials had not visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Syrian Arab Republic or Yemen to assess the environmental damage caused by conflict there. That was a clear example of pro-Western bias within UNEP. The failure of UNEP to investigate the wall built by Poland along its border with Belarus and to publish a position paper in the wake of the attack on the Kakhovka dam, which had been carried out by Ukrainian forces to achieve a military advantage and intimidate and kill civilians who had chosen to be part of the Russian Federation, were further examples. He asked when UNEP would investigate the issue of nuclear dust that was circulating around Europe, which had come from ammunition containing depleted uranium that had been supplied to Ukrainian forces.

35. Responding to the remarks, the Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments and pledges of funding. She said that racist language was completely unacceptable and had no place in the United Nations system, and she and the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi had contacted the Ambassador responsible. Had she been present at the meeting, she would have intervened.

36. She noted the importance attached to the seventh Global Environment Outlook report and data monitoring and management, and said that UNEP would seek to expand the donor base in the future.

37. The recruitment process under the Young Talent Pipeline initiative had been carried out in partnership with United Nations Volunteers, which had conducted a mass media advertising campaign. Although the campaign was considered a success, a review would be carried out to identify areas for improvement and strengthen the recruitment process. The initiative was intended to prevent internships from providing a shortcut to jobs, make recruitment fair and ensure diversity among candidates. Drawing attention to the information on geographically balanced recruitment in the report, she recognized that UNEP had not yet achieved its goals regarding the geographical diversity of its staff. However, significant progress had been made and, at present, 86 per cent of newly recruited staff were from underrepresented regions.

38. UNEP was engaging with the authorities in Belarus. The organization was not responsible for conducting individual environmental impact assessments of infrastructure such as the border wall, but it was working in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), since the wall was located in a world heritage site, to identify measures to minimize impact on wildlife and ensure the free movement of animal populations.

39. She agreed that providing an updated list of organizations accredited to UNEP, with their respective areas of expertise, would facilitate the Committee's work. UNEP had provided input on environmental aspects to the intergovernmental process under the Global Digital Compact, which was being co-facilitated by Rwanda and Sweden. Consultations had been held from January to June 2023 in New York.

40. Initial consultations had been conducted with Member States on the new approach to identifying potential environmental challenges through early warning, monitoring and horizon scanning. It was also seeking to obtain as much feedback as possible from Member States, scientists and non-governmental organizations. Much had been learned from UNESCO, which was following a similar approach.

41. UNEP was working closely with the parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, ahead of the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in December 2024.

42. She had recently visited Ukraine because she had been invited by that Member State to assess the significant environmental impact of the war. She had also recently visited countries in southern Africa, including Botswana, Malawi and South Africa, the Western Balkans and Côte d'Ivoire. She did not favour any location over another and she saw no political dimension to her visits. Her peers and colleagues had undertaken similar missions in Ukraine and other countries.

43. Invitations to the meeting of the platform of environmental protection agencies in Africa had been issued in January 2023, including to Algeria, with a copy to its Permanent Mission in Nairobi. UNEP strived to ensure full participation of Members in regional meetings and to continue coordinating its work with African environmental agencies.

44. A large number of staff members in the UNEP Ecosystems Division and the Industry and Economy Division were responsible for dealing with climate change. Given possible problems with coordination since the work was shared across two divisions, she supported the idea of having a division responsible solely for climate change and would submit a briefing on the matter at a future meeting of the Committee or subcommittee.
45. UNEP would endeavour to ensure that Member States were aware of the status of implementation of Environment Assembly resolutions, with regular updates. The publicly accessible platform would be helpful in that regard.
46. Speaking in exercise of the right of reply to the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation, the representative of Ukraine said that the terrorist attack on the Kakhovka dam and hydroelectric power plant had been discussed extensively by Russian occupation forces in Kherson, propagandists on Russian television and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, suggesting that the attack had been planned well in advance. The dam had been under Russian control for more than a year and it was impossible to destroy the dam by shelling it from the outside. The Russian occupiers had clearly attacked the dam from the inside using mines in an attempt to halt the Ukrainian counteroffensive and obstruct the supply of water to the surrounding region. The Russian Federation should provide compensation for the resulting loss of lives and infrastructure and environmental degradation. Several African leaders, including the Chairperson of the African Union and the President of South Africa, had taken shelter during their recent visit to Kyiv as a result of a ballistic missile strike on the capital by the Russian Federation. He called on all delegations to condemn the strike in the strongest possible terms.
47. The representative of the Russian Federation replied that the Ukrainian officials had failed to notify the Russian Government of the African leaders' visit. Russian forces had refrained from attacking the capital during visits by Western leaders when it had been duly informed in advance. The Ukrainian delegation once again sought to politicize the current meeting by raising issues unrelated to the agenda items. The current events were the direct outcome of the Russophobic policy that had been pursued by the Kyiv regime since it had come to power following a coup d'état in 2014. Thousands of people had been killed and disappeared since then. The Ukrainian armed forces were attacking civilian targets, carrying out terrorist attacks in the Russian Federation and had attacked the Kakhovka dam to interrupt the water supply to Crimea. The proxy war unleashed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Russian Federation must be stopped; the supply of arms would only prolong suffering and lead to further unnecessary casualties among the military and civilian populations.
48. The representative of Ukraine replied by noting that the African leaders had planned to travel to Moscow after Kyiv as part of an attempt to find a peaceful solution to the war. It was therefore ridiculous for the representative of the Russian Federation to claim that his Government had been unaware of their visit. It should be noted that the Ukrainian delegation sought to highlight the environmental consequences of the war of aggression by the Russian Federation at the present meeting, and had refrained from mentioning human rights violations or damage to infrastructure resulting from the war.
49. In his reply, the representative of the Russian Federation said that the Ukrainian delegation had in the past strayed from the agenda item under discussion by accusing Russian soldiers of committing crimes against humanity, including the rape of men, women and children. However, the Commissioner for Human Rights of Ukraine had admitted that she had spread false stories in the mass media regarding the rape of children by the Russian forces. The Ukrainian delegation should refrain from perpetuating such lies.

Agenda item 5

Election of officers

50. Introducing the item, the Chair noted that, since online voting was not permitted, the secretariat had been informed that the following representatives would act as proxies: on behalf of Bulgaria, Thomas Hansen (Denmark); on behalf of Iceland, Gunnar Andreas Holm (Norway); on behalf of Lithuania, Julia Keipi (Finland); on behalf of Luxembourg, Martin Röw (Germany); on behalf of Malta, António Miguel (Portugal); on behalf of Monaco, Clément Payeur (France); on behalf of New Zealand, Lewis Hirst (Australia); and on behalf of Peru, Alejandro Montero (Chile).
51. In accordance with rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the established pattern of rotation among the various regional groups of posts in the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the following officers were elected by

acclamation to the Bureau for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025, after nomination by their respective regional groups:

Chair:	Firas Khouri (Jordan)
Vice-Chair:	Wael Attiya (Egypt)
Rapporteur:	Jovan Bernard Reid (Barbados)

52. Noting that two candidates, Nicol Adamcová (Czechia) and Dmitry Maksimychev (Russian Federation), had been nominated by the Eastern European States for the position of Vice-Chair, the Chair invited Member States to elect the Vice-Chair by secret ballot in accordance with rules 56 and 57 of the rules of procedure. Mapopa Kaunda (Malawi), Maria Rosanna Josue (Philippines) and Lucianara Andrade Fonseca (Brazil) served as tellers in line with standard practice. The results of the secret ballot were as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	94
Invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	94
Abstentions:	10
Number of members voting:	84
Required majority:	43
Number of votes obtained:	
Nicol Adamcová	50
Dmitry Maksimychev	34

53. Having obtained the required majority, Nicol Adamcová was elected Vice-Chair of the Bureau for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025.

54. At the request of one representative, the Chair invited Member States to elect the Vice-Chair from the Western European and other States by secret ballot, with Gunnar Andreas Holm as the sole candidate. Mapopa Kaunda (Malawi), Maria Rosanna Josue (Philippines) and Lucianara Andrade Fonseca (Brazil) served as tellers. The results of the secret ballot were as follows:

Number of ballot papers:	93
Invalid ballots:	0
Number of valid ballots:	93
Abstentions:	13
Number of members voting:	80
Required majority:	41
Number of votes obtained:	
Gunnar Andreas Holm	80

55. Having obtained the required majority, Gunnar Andreas Holm was elected Vice-Chair of the Bureau for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025.

56. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives congratulated the incoming Bureau members on their appointment. Several representatives emphasized the importance of regional groups reaching consensus on the candidate to be nominated, and some sought clarification regarding whether it was possible for a candidate who had not been accredited to the United Nations Office at Nairobi to be elected to the Bureau. The election of Bureau members in absentia was unprecedented.

57. The Principal Legal Officer emphasized that a distinction was made within the United Nations between representatives who submitted credentials to an intergovernmental body, and permanent representatives who submitted credentials to the Secretary-General or his designated representative. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 257 A (III), a permanent representative presented his or her credentials, which were issued either by the Head of State or Government or by the minister for foreign affairs, to the Secretary-General. Under the Manual of Protocol, a permanent representative was defined as a person of the appropriate diplomatic rank who resided permanently at the seat of the Organization and was the head of an established permanent representation. In the Secretary-General's bulletin on the organization of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (ST/SGB/2009/3), the Secretary-General had delegated the authority to receive the credentials of permanent representatives who maintained permanent missions in Nairobi to the Director-General of the United Nations Office

at Nairobi. However, under the rules of procedure for the United Nations Environment Assembly, which applied *mutatis mutandis* to the Committee of Permanent Representatives and provided for a system of representation and accreditation for its meetings, credentials were not needed to participate in meetings, and representatives registered through the Indico platform. Accordingly, a delegate who had been designated by their Member State as a permanent representative could be accredited as a representative of that Member State through the Indico platform prior to submitting their credentials as permanent representative. Bureau candidates were also not required to be present during the election. In paragraphs 8 and 9 of decision 19/32, the Governing Council of UNEP had decided that the Committee of Permanent Representatives was to consist of the representatives of all the States Member of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies, and the European Community, accredited to UNEP, whether based in Nairobi or outside, and that the Committee was to elect a Bureau composed of a chair, three vice-chairs and a rapporteur, for a period of two years, taking into account the principles of rotation and equitable geographical representation. Formal endorsement of a candidate by a regional group was desirable but not required. For example, at the second session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, two representatives from the group of Eastern European States had been elected without the group's endorsement. Finally, rule 56 of the rules of procedure stated that all elections were to be held by secret ballot unless otherwise decided by the United Nations Environment Assembly or the Committee.

58. A representative of the secretariat clarified that, for accreditation to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Member States were required to send an official note verbale to the secretariat identifying their representative or representatives. Several delegations based in United Nations headquarters duty stations other than Nairobi or embassies in other locations had been accredited to the Committee and participated in Committee meetings either in person or online, according to the circumstances. The candidate from Czechia had been accredited to the Committee of Permanent Representatives and, in line with Governing Council decision 19/32, was not required to be present at the meeting in order to be elected. One representative said that, even if it was allowed under the rules, it was impractical to nominate a Bureau member who was not present in Nairobi, given the nature of the position. The representative of Czechia said that Ms. Adamcová was expected to arrive in Kenya in July and assume the role of Ambassador in early August 2023.

59. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted with regret that one Member State, in order to pursue its own political ends, had departed from the long-standing tradition and established practice of accepting unanimous nominations put forward by regional groups. The requested vote on a candidate that had been unanimously nominated by a regional group undermined the Nairobi spirit of multilateralism that Member States had forged through decades of dedication to compromise.

60. The representative of the Russian Federation said that his country had always supported the nomination of regional candidates by consensus in accordance with the Nairobi spirit. However, it had to retaliate after European countries, on orders from Brussels, had decided to block all nominations of Russian candidates since early 2022. He noted that when a representative had objected to the election of one Member State from among the Asia-Pacific States, no issue had been raised. He further noted that the secretariat had announced the possibility of voting by proxy less than two days before the start of the present meeting, which did not allow sufficient time for States' capitals to make the necessary arrangements. It was strange that the countries that had voted by proxy, which all supported candidates favoured by the West, had been able to do so, suggesting that the secretariat had informed them further in advance.

Agenda item 6

Financial outlook and funding challenges for UNEP – follow-up to the ninth annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

61. In her statement, Deputy Executive Director, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, said that during the ninth annual subcommittee meeting in October 2022, Member States and the secretariat had held an open and frank discussion on the funding challenges faced by UNEP and how to address them. It had been recognized that while the challenges were similar to those faced by the entire United Nations system, the role and mandate of UNEP had grown as environmental degradation had worsened to the point of a multiple planetary crisis. UNEP relied on a narrow base of funding partners and the contributions they made to the Environment Fund was insufficient to deal with the crisis.

62. The importance of joint action and the critical role of Member States had been highlighted at the ninth subcommittee meeting; action by the secretariat alone was not enough to bring about the

necessary shift from tightly to softly earmarked funding. She was grateful to Member States for their support, both financial and otherwise, but more was required. She encouraged all Member States to provide additional active support, including by increasing their contributions to core and softly earmarked funding for UNEP.

63. In her presentation, the Director of the Corporate Services Division, Sonja Leighton-Kone, said that the gap between core and earmarked funding had been widening over the past 20 years. At present, the Environment Fund and regular budget accounted for 20 per cent of funding, compared with the target of 30 per cent of total income as set out in the United Nations funding compact. Earmarked funds – most of which were tightly earmarked – and global funds had exceeded 80 per cent of total income in 2022.

64. The donor base had broadened slightly. However, less than half of Member States had contributed and over 90 per cent of funds were provided by the top 15 funding partners. At the ninth annual subcommittee meeting, a panel discussion had been held with panellists from Barbados, Indonesia, Norway and the United Republic of Tanzania, and Member States had provided further guidance and recommendations.

65. In the discussion under the present agenda item, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, underscored the importance for UNEP of stable, predictable and sustainable funding, and said that the five bold and comprehensive proposed actions to address funding challenges and opportunities merited consideration and should be supported by all Member States. Another representative said that his country was undertaking an assessment of its contributions with a view to paying its full share under the voluntary indicative scale of contributions.

66. The discussion on the item was deferred owing to time constraints.

Agenda item 7

Implementation of paragraph 41 (j) of the Chair's summary of the ninth annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

67. The discussion on the implementation of paragraph 41 (j) of the Chair's summary of the ninth annual subcommittee meeting was deferred owing to time constraints.

Agenda item 8

Report of the subcommittee

68. The Committee took note of the document entitled "Chair's report of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/CPR/162/8).

Agenda item 9

Other matters

69. The Chair recalled that the first informal consultation on the zero draft of the ministerial declaration of the United Nations Environment Assembly would be held on Tuesday, 20 June 2023, in a hybrid format.

Agenda item 10

Closure of the meeting

70. The Chair expressed his appreciation to the outgoing Bureau and welcomed the new members. He recalled the importance of upholding the values and principles of the international rules-based order that had been established in the aftermath of the Second World War.

71. The meeting was adjourned at 6.15 p.m. on Friday, 16 June 2023, to be resumed at a later date.