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Joint Retreat of the Bureaux of United Nations Environment Assembly  
and the Committee of Permanent Representatives  
6 July 2023, 15:00 - 18:00 (GMT+1)  
7 July 2023, 09:00 - 12:00 (GMT+1)  
Tangier, Morocco  
Hybrid meeting

## **Summary of the Joint Retreat of the Bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

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

1. H. E. Ms. Leila Benali, President of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) and Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco welcomed the participants and opened the meeting, followed by opening remarks by H. E. Mr. Firas Khouri, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) and Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Kenya and Permanent Representative to UNEP, and Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The meeting was co-chaired by the President of UNEA and the Chair of the CPR. A list of participants is provided in Annex 1.
2. The [agenda](#) was adopted.
3. The members of the UNEA Bureau congratulated the newly elected Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2025.

### **Agenda item 2: Preparations for UNEA-6.**

#### **Agenda item 2 (a): Draft ministerial declaration for UNEA-6.**

4. The President of UNEA updated the joint Bureaux on the process of the draft ministerial declaration for UNEA-6, including an [update on the written inputs received](#) and the informal consultations held on 20 June, summarizing as follows:
  - Delegations expressed appreciation for the concise but thorough zero draft and support to keep the text simple, easily accessible and well-understood to the wider public.
  - Suggested that the draft should give action-oriented guidance on how the environmental multilateral system can be strengthened to implement its recommendations.
  - Suggestions have been provided for alternative formulations on some expressions such as three planetary crises, the reference to “advancing the attainment of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for all”, the reference to Loss and Damage Fund as well as “Least greenhouse gas emitters and the most vulnerable” and “developing middle-income countries”, etc.
  - Call for explicit references to regional cooperation and the related need to strengthen UNEP and its Regional Offices.
  - Suggestion for references to desertification, land degradation and drought, sustainable consumption and production, circular economy, resource use, the recognition of pollution as

- a major driver of climate change, biodiversity and ecosystem loss, as well as “a just and sustainable energy transition” and water scarcity.
- Call to add references to strengthening the science-policy interface, including through collaboration with existing science-policy platforms, and to include a reference to UNEP support and assistance in the implementation of MEAs.
5. Upon the invitation of the President of UNEA for the two Bureaux to provide further guidance to ensure an ambitious and balanced final document based on an inclusive and transparent consultation process, the following comments were reiterated, noting that written inputs have been provided as well as comments during the first informal consultations:
- Thanked the Government of Morocco for convening this joint Bureaux retreat in the city of Tangier and thanked the President and her team for making sure that the process of drafting the ministerial declaration for UNEA-6 is convened in a highly participatory and inclusive manner.
  - Commended the President and her team on the brevity, action-orientation and accessible language used in the zero draft of the ministerial declaration for UNEA-6.
  - Welcomed the incorporation of a clear reference to the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, ‘The Future We Want’, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
  - Suggested that the reference to the relationship between biodiversity loss, pollution and climate change as systematic threats to security as well as the outcome of the Summit of the Future should be deleted.
  - Proposed that the draft should refer to the following: adequate level of support to developing countries to mitigate and adapt to climate change; commitment to prioritize equity, climate justice, social justice and inclusion to achieve sustainable outcomes; strengthening of UNEP’s engagement with the MEAs; water, food and energy nexus in the context of climate change; circularity and circular economy; issue of environmental pollution from zones of conflict and wars; attainment of human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all; recognition of traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples and local communities; nature-based solutions; means of implementation; access to information and social participation; new and innovative climate finance instruments such as carbon markets, green bonds, climate taxonomy, biodiversity credits and contingent debt mechanism; and engagement of youth.
  - Requested the extension of the deadline to submit comments on the first draft, which is to be circulated end of July, from the end of August to mid-September.
  - Noted the importance of respecting the responsibility of the penholder to lead the process of drafting and negotiation of the ministerial declaration.
6. The President summarized the discussion and presented the way forward as follows:
- Comments, including those provided at the first informal consultation and the written inputs, would be taken on board to prepare the first draft of the ministerial declaration, to be circulated to Member States and Stakeholders by the end of July.
  - The deadline for submission of comments and inputs on the first draft would be revised to early September, and the revised first draft will probably be circulated by the third week of September.
  - The second informal consultations will be convened by the Permanent Representative of Morocco in Nairobi, His Excellency Abderrazzak Laassel, on the revised first draft in September.
  - The second draft of the ministerial declaration will be circulated by the end of September; however, the timelines might be adjusted as the process moves forward.

## **Agenda item 2 (b): Draft annotated agenda and structure for UNEA-6.**

7. The UNEA and CPR Bureaux members were invited to consider the [draft provisional agenda](#) of UNEA-6, the [draft annotated provisional agenda](#) of UNEA-6, followed by a discussion on the concept note on the [supplementary item entitled “Cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements”](#). The Bureaux members also considered the [draft structure for UNEA-6](#), including the participation modalities for UNEA-6, based on a proposal from the Secretariat, bearing in mind the [Outcome of the Process for review by the CPR](#) as endorsed by resolution 5/4 and key lessons learned from previous sessions of UNEA. The Bureaux members were also briefed on a [handbook for delegates for UNEA](#).

### **Draft provisional agenda and draft annotated provisional agenda**

8. The Executive Director reminded that UNEA, in its decision 5/4 entitled “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the sixth session of UNEA”, approved the provisional agenda of the sixth session, which included 15 standard items except for the item “Cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements”, which is a new agenda item. She also reminded that the new item has been included in the provisional agenda at the request of the UNEA President and following a discussion at the joint UNEA and CPR Bureaux meeting held on 30 January. The request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of UNEA-6 has been issued as an official document with the symbol UNEP/EA.6/15. The Secretariat then presented the two documents.
9. The Bureaux members welcomed the documents presented by the secretariat. A Bureau member requested clarification on the timing of the submission of credentials. The Secretariat informed that the relevant information on the submission of credentials will be made available later, and additional information on the organization arrangements for UNEA-6 will be provided in the information note for participants, which will be posted on the UNEA-6 website.
10. The President summarized the discussion as follows:
  - The Bureaux endorsed the draft provisional agenda and the draft annotated provisional agenda of UNEA-6 as presented by the Secretariat.
  - The Bureaux requested the Secretariat to proceed with the issuance of the two documents in all UN official languages and to make available the advance version of the two documents on the UNEA-6 website.

### **Supplementary item entitled “Cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements”**

11. The Executive Director, in introducing the item, stated that, while it is important to respect the sovereignty of each MEA, it is hoped that UNEA would be seen as a space for dialogue with the MEAs; it is proposed that 28 February 2024 is devoted as the MEA Day with the participation of the Presidents of the Conference of the Parties; once there is clarity an invitation will be sent to the Ministers of Environment to participate in the MEA Day; and the thematic focus of the proposed high-level dialogues will be further elaborated in the background document to be prepared by the Secretariat. The Secretariat then presented the concept.
12. The Bureaux members provided the following comments:
  - Requested further clarification on what was envisaged for the supplementary agenda and how the outcomes will be taken forward by the Assembly, noting the independence of individual Multilateral Environmental Agreements and scope for strengthening communication, collaboration and synergies not only with UNEP but also amongst MEAs.
  - Highlighted that the proposed thematic focus of the second high-level dialogue, namely, “Fostering coherent implementation at the national level to address the three planetary crises through increased cooperation between UNEP and MEAs”, does not include means of implementation and suggested revising the thematic focus to read as follows: “Analyzing existing gaps on means of implementation across multilateral environmental agreements and means of enhanced cooperation between UNEP and MEAs”.
  - Welcomed the MEA Pavilion, which will inform participants about the work of the MEAs.

- Looked forward to receiving more information on the programme of the MEA Day and recommended the inclusion of an outline of the impact of MEAs on the work and strategy of UNEP in the background document.
13. The Secretariat informed that the summaries of the two high-level dialogues will be presented by the moderators at the closing plenary meeting on 1 March 2024, which UNEA will take note of and will be included in the proceedings report of UNEA-6 and explained that it would be up to Member States to propose a draft resolution/decision under the item for the consideration of UNEA.
14. The President summarized the discussion as follows:
- Noted that the Bureaux agreed with the concept note and, in particular, that the supplementary item will be considered on Wednesday, 28 February 2024 and that the item will have a formal opening, followed by two consecutive high-level dialogue sessions held on 28 February 2024, resulting in the summaries to be presented at the closing plenary meeting on 1 March 2024 to be included in the proceedings report of UNEA.
  - The Bureaux requested the Executive Director to encourage ministers attending UNEA to take part in the high-level dialogues on 28 February 2024.
  - The Bureaux welcomed the proposal to have an exhibition space or pavilion during the week of UNEA to showcase cooperation between UNEP and the MEAs, the other UN entities and the MEAs and looked forward to receiving an update on this at a later stage.
  - The Bureaux requested the Secretariat to provide a revised proposal on the thematic focus of the high-level dialogues at a later date.
  - The Bureaux requested the Secretariat to proceed with the preparation of the MEA day.

#### **Draft structure and participation modalities for UNEA-6**

15. Following a presentation by the Secretariat, the Bureaux members provided the following comments:
- Welcomed the structure of UNEA-6 as presented, including the three leadership dialogues.
  - Agreed that UNEA-6 should be held fully in-person and informal consultations to be held in a hybrid format which will be aligned with the recommendations of the CPR-based review and will provide smaller delegations with an opportunity to have participation from capitals and ensure an inclusive and transparent consultation process.
  - Welcomed the proposal for the Heads of State and Government who would not be able to participate in-person to provide pre-recorded video messages.
  - Proposed that smaller rooms be made available for consultations on the draft resolutions/decisions.
16. The President summarized the discussion as follows:
- The Bureaux endorsed the structure and format of UNEA-6 as presented, including the proposal to have three leadership dialogues, and requested additional details on the organization of the three leadership dialogues and the multi-stakeholder dialogue to be shared at a later stage.
  - The Bureaux requested the Secretariat to make available on the UNEA-6 website the approved structure of the UNEA-6. The Bureaux agreed that the formal sessions of UNEA-6 will be held fully in-person, with the understanding that informal consultations on draft resolutions and decisions will be held both in-person and online.
  - The Bureaux also agreed that the Heads of State and Government who would not be able to participate in-person can provide pre-recorded video messages that will be played in the meeting following an introduction by the presiding officer and that pre-recorded video messages at other levels if provided, will be uploaded on the website and not played in the meeting nor reflected in the meeting report; and requested the Secretariat to convey this information in due course when the request for inscription on the list of speakers for the high-level segment will be launched.

## Handbook for delegates for UNEA

17. The Bureaux took note of the presentation of the handbook for delegates for UNEA.

### Agenda item 2 (c): Process for submission of draft resolutions and decisions for UNEA-6.

18. The UNEA and CPR Bureaux members were invited to consider the [draft guidelines on the submission of draft resolutions and decisions by Member States for UNEA-6](#), including with regard to key deadlines for submitting draft resolutions and decisions, the concept note and the technical note, the role of the annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR, and the appointment of co-facilitators to lead the negotiations, bearing in mind the [Outcome of the Process for review by the CPR](#) as endorsed by resolution 5/4, and lessons learned from previous sessions of UNEA sessions.
19. The Executive Director, while emphasizing that Member States have the sovereign right to submit any resolution that they wished, expressed hope that UNEA will focus on resolutions that need deep global action and have an impact. Regarding the guidelines, she briefed that the Secretariat has developed a set of draft guidelines based on the UNEA rules of procedure (in particular rule 44), guidance provided in UNEA decision 5/4 with reference to some deadline dates, the outcome of the CPR-based review as endorsed at UNEA-5.2, previous guidance issued by the UNEA Bureau, and best practices; the guidelines provide some key timelines for the consideration of the Bureaux; outlines specific recommendations for the submission of the drafts, including the request for the main sponsor to provide a concept note; request for the Secretariat to provide a technical note; and recommendations on the organization of the intersessional consultations. The Secretariat then presented the draft guidelines.
20. The Bureaux members provided the following comments:
- Thanked the Secretariat for providing a coherent proposed template for the submission of the draft resolutions and decisions, which provides time for co-facilitators to hold consultations, including having Q&A sessions and time for translation of the documents.
  - Expressed concern with the proposed requirement for the main sponsor to provide sources of funding for a draft resolution/decision.
  - While some Bureaux members noted the importance of having timely information on the financial implications of a proposal as it goes through various iterations, others stated that financial implications should be reviewed only after a draft proposal has been adopted.
  - Underlined the importance of timely presentation of draft resolutions at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual subcommittee meeting and stressed that as mandated in the CPR-based review, no more than half a day should be devoted to the presentation of draft resolutions during the annual subcommittee meeting.
  - Welcomed the request to put forward the concept note complementing the announcement of draft resolutions to provide additional information in relation to the UNEA-6 theme and UNEP's Programme of Work.
  - Proposed that the Secretariat provides a compilation of the recommendations emanating from the Executive Director's reports to guide the discussions at the 10<sup>th</sup> annual subcommittee meeting.
  - Proposed that the final edited version of the draft resolutions should be shared with the co-facilitators and sponsors to ensure that the agreed language is accurately reflected in the drafts.
  - Proposed limiting clustering of drafts into two clusters to facilitate the participation of smaller delegations.
21. The Executive Director, taking note of the comments made, informed that the reference to possible sources of funding will be removed from paragraph 4 (v) (h).

22. The Chair of the CPR summarized the discussion as follows:

- The guidelines on the submission of draft resolutions and decisions are endorsed, as revised by the Executive Director, and in particular, the recommended deadline for the submission of draft resolutions and decisions by 18 December 2023; the need for the main sponsor to provide the concept note; and the request for the Secretariat to provide technical notes for the drafts submitted.
- Requested the Secretariat to share the guidelines with Member States.
- Noted the need to appoint co-facilitators following the submission of the draft resolutions and decisions and to determine the possible clustering of proposals which delegations will be informed through a joint letter from the President of UNEA and the Chair of the CPR.
- Noted that informal consultations will be held under the auspices of the CPR, through the regular and subcommittee meetings and possibly through dedicated question and answer sessions, and that these details can be further discussed once the draft resolutions and decisions have been submitted.
- Acknowledged that final negotiations on the draft resolutions and decisions will be held during the open-ended meeting of the CPR to be held from 19 to 23 February 2024 as well as during UNEA-6.
- Acknowledged the work of the Secretariat to make available an unedited English version of the progress reports of the Executive Director in advance of the 10<sup>th</sup> annual subcommittee meeting to facilitate the work of Member States as they consider the possible draft resolutions and decisions to be submitted.

**Agenda item 2 (d): Draft communication strategy for UNEA-6.**

23. The UNEA and CPR Bureaux members were invited to consider a [draft communication strategy for UNEA-6](#) prepared by the Secretariat.

24. The Executive Director, in introducing the item, stated that the draft communication strategy is intended to raise awareness about UNEA and is informed by UNEP's extensive experience on how to lead global communication and advocacy drawing from the lessons learnt from UNEP@50, Stockholm+50 and the World Environment Day. The Secretariat then presented the draft communication strategy.

25. The Bureaux members provided the following comments:

- Underlined the importance of raising awareness for UNEA, in particular at the national level, and among youth.
- Appreciated UNEA-6 having an App which will help participants.
- Requested information on exhibition space to allow Member States to plan exhibitions in line with the theme of UNEA-6.

26. The Secretariat informed that once space has been identified for exhibitions, additional information on exhibitions as well as side events will be made available at a later date, adding that there will be an application process which will be launched before the end of the year.

27. The President summarized the discussion as follows:

- Invited the Secretariat to implement the communication strategy to raise awareness on the environmental challenges being deliberated at UNEA-6 and rally public support for robust, impactful, and inclusive actions to make progress as we approach the halfway mark towards the implementation of the SDGs by 2030.

**Agenda item 3: Other matters.**

28. The representative of the host country of UNEP welcomed the opportunity to be at the joint Bureaux retreat; acknowledged the importance of starting preparations for UNEA-6 early; pointed out that Kenya will be hosting many meetings in 2023 which will help draw lessons; and assured Kenya's commitment to partner with the UNEA and CPR Bureaux to deliver a successful UNEA-6.

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

29. The Executive Director thanked the President of UNEA and her team for their generous hospitality and noted the rich discussion of important topics related to the preparation of UNEA-6 that took place during the course of the joint retreat in Tangier, Morocco.
30. The President highlighted a need to foster innovation, global collaboration and partnerships in order to ensure a successful UNEA-6 and thanked distinguished delegates for joining the joint retreat of the UNEA and CPR Bureaux in Tangier, Morocco.
31. The meeting closed on 7 July 2023 at 11:30 (GMT+1).

## **Annex 1: List of participants of the Joint Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

### **UNEA Bureau members**

1. H. E. Ms. Leila Benali, President of UNEA and Minister of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco.
2. Mr. Rachid Firadi, Director of Partnership, Communication and Cooperation, Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco.
3. Ms. Nassira Rheyati, Head of the International Cooperation Division, Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco.
4. Ms. Soukaïna Alaoui Sossey, Chief of Staff, Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco.
5. Ms. Siham Moura, Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Kenya.
6. Ms. Khaoula Lagrini, Head of unit in charge of Multilateral Cooperation, Directorate of Partnership, Communication and Cooperation, Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of Morocco.
7. H. E. Mr. Silvio Jose Albuquerque e Silva, Vice President and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP (**online**).
8. H. E. Ms. Susana Muhamad, Vice President and Minister of Environment of Colombia was represented by Mr. Sergio Salazar, Deputy Permanent Representative of Colombia to UNEP and Mr. Andres Duque Solis, Office of the Environmental Matters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia (**online**).
9. H. E. Mr. Barmaki Jaffar, Vice President, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to UNEP (**online**).
10. H. E. Senator Sherry Rehman, Vice President of UNEA and Minister for Climate Change of Pakistan was represented by H. E. Mrs. Saqlain Syedah, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UNEP.
11. H. E. Mr. Jose Duarte Piteira Silvestre Cordeiro, Vice President and Minister for the Environment and Climate Action of Portugal, was represented by Mr. Miguel Luis Estagiario, Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to UNEP and Ms. Catarina Sousa, Head of international relations of the Ministry for Environment and Climate Change (**online**).
12. H. E. Mr. Alioune Ndoeye, Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development and Ecological Transition of Senegal (**online**).
13. Mr. Norbert Kurilla, Advisor to the President of the Slovak Republic on Environment, Energy and Climate Action.
14. Ms. Katarina Butkovska, State Secretary, Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic.
15. Mr. Oleksandr Krasnolutskyi, Rapporteur, Deputy Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine (**online**).
16. H. E. Ms. Harrison Trudy, Vice President, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister of Environment of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
17. Mr. Cherly Case, Deputy Director of International Multilateral Environment Negotiations, United Kingdom.
18. Mr. Charles Thomas, Head of the UN Environment Programme, United Kingdom.
19. Mr. Henry Penrose, Private Secretary to the Minister, United Kingdom.

### **CPR Bureau members.**

1. H. E. Mr. Firas Khouri, Chair and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to UNEP.
2. H. E. Mr. Wael Attiya, Vice Chair and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt.
3. Mrs. Sara Hassan, Expert Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Nairobi.
4. H. E. Mr. Gunnar Andreas Holm, Vice Chair and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to UNEP.
5. Mr. Øystein Rune Størkersen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway.

6. Mr. Jovan Bernard Reid, Rapporteur and Deputy Head of Mission of the Permanent Mission of Barbados.

**Representative of the Host Country of UNEP participating as an observer**

1. Ms. Sophia Amboye, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNEP.

**UNEP delegation**

1. Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director.
2. Ms. Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, Deputy Executive Director.
3. Mr. Tim Kasten, Director, Policy and Programme Division.
4. Mr. Nicholas Bertrand, Chief of Staff.
5. Ms. Radhika Ochalik, Secretary of Governing Bodies.
6. Mr. Ulf Bjornholm, Deputy of Governing Bodies.
7. Ms. Thais Narciso, Special Assistant to the Executive Director.
8. Ms. Aline Nsengimana Umutoni, Political Affairs Officer.
9. Mr. Isaiah Otieno, IT specialist.
10. Ms. Nicole Leichum, Programme Officer, Governance Affairs Office.