

**10th Annual Subcommittee meeting of the
Committee of Permanent Representatives
20-24 November 2023**

Asia Pacific Group statement

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies, Distinguished Permanent Representatives,
H.E. Madame Executive Director,
Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group.

First and foremost, the APG would like to congratulate the Chair, H.E. Ambassador Firas F. Khouri, and the members of the Bureau for their leadership in steering the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The APG also thanks the Executive Director and the UNEP Secretariat for the thorough preparations for this meeting.

We commend the Secretariat for the early uploading of the meeting documents. However, APG members were a bit overwhelmed by the volume of the materials, as Missions were busy with consecutive environment meetings in Nairobi, culminating with the INC-3 negotiations last week.

The flurry of meetings brings increased visibility to the UNEP headquarters and should be welcomed as part of its strengthening. However, the APG kindly requests that future environment meetings be distributed throughout the year, to give Nairobi missions space to fully engage in the discussions.

In the spirit of strengthening UNEP in Nairobi, the APG takes this opportunity to congratulate one of its own, DPR Danny Rahdiansyah of Indonesia, for ably co-facilitating one of the contact groups at the INC-3 discussions last week.

Mr. Chair,

The APG thanks UNEP and its offices in the Asia Pacific and West Asia, for their work in our region across 13 thematic programs.

With the complexity of challenges faced by our region and to better support governments in achieving the SDGs, the APG cannot overemphasize the need to strengthen UNEP's regional offices and allocate them more financial and human resources.

The same call is made on the need to support the work of UN Resident Coordinators and country teams to capacitate them to be more responsive to the increasing and

urgent requests from APG countries for environmental support, whether this be in terms of policy and expert advice, capacity and technical assistance or mainstreaming the environment in governance initiatives.

This would also allow for greater coherence between UNEP's Program of Work and Budget and the projects being implemented on the ground, including those identified in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks with host countries.

The APG also wishes to take this opportunity to recognize the role of UNEP's Regional Seas Program, which will mark its 50th anniversary next year. Since its establishment in 1974, this regional mechanism has been doing important work in the conservation of the marine and coastal environment at the regional level, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. Chair,

The APG thanks all the member states that have contributed to the budget of the UNEP. We call on countries which are able, to contribute to their capacity. To widen the funding base of UNEP, the APG views the creation of the thematic funds with soft earmarking as a good initiative but it needs more publicity. Aside from its outreach programs, we suggest that the UNEP also find a way to appreciate and encourage more those who do contribute to the Environment Fund, even if it is not up to the full share under the VISC.

On UNEP's staffing, the APG welcomes the gender balance. It also welcomes the progress made in improving the geographic diversity at the professional and above levels in 2023 and hopes that this momentum continues in the future to promote equitable geographic distribution. The APG also welcomes UNEP's new program on recruiting young talents from less-represented regions (the Young Talent Pipeline). We look forward to hearing about the assessment of the program next year.

Mr. Chair,

On UNEA 6, we thank the Presidency, the Kingdom of Morocco, for its leadership in steering the discussions and preparations. We especially appreciate the transparent and inclusive manner by which the Presidency is conducting consultations on the draft Ministerial Declaration. We look forward to participating in the fourth informal consultations on the draft.¹

We welcome the much-needed conversation under the supplementary agenda item on "cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements" to promote synergies between MEAs and UNEA resolutions towards more efficient environmental governance.

We note the regional ministerial meetings convened ahead of UNEA 6 and would like to request the Secretariat's views on their efficacy, feeding into UNEA 6.

¹ 7 December 2023.

The APG thanks the Executive Director for the advance version of her report. It is a compelling report. The APG notes the suggestions on where UNEA 6 should put its focus on, including on aligning the financial system for sustainability.

On UNEA 6 resolutions, the APG echoes the call for resolutions to be implementable, related to the theme of UNEA 6, and for similar resolutions to be clustered. We hope that resolutions will be submitted in accordance with the recommended timelines, to give member states adequate time for consultations.

As of today, among APG members, Japan is likely to present a draft resolution on “promoting synergistic approaches to address the triple crisis on climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution and support sustainable development” for UNEA 6.

With regard to the timing of the UNEA sessions, we thank the Secretariat for the revised options paper, now with three options, each with its own pros and cons. We look forward to the exchange of views on the various options.

Mr. Chair,

UNEA 6 is just around the corner and we have a lot of work to do. The APG and its members look forward to the exchange of views in the days ahead and stands ready to contribute constructively to the meeting.

Thank you, Chair. ###