

STATEMENT COLOMBIA
SUBCOMMITTEE CPR 18 April 2024
AGENDA ITEM 2: UNEA-6 ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS
LEARNED

1-How to better ensure that UNEA resolutions set the global environmental agenda and address emerging environmental challenges?

- At this point, my delegation would like to pose a question: It has been noted that UNEA must address emerging issues, but frequently, when an emerging or even established topic in UNEP is proposed, it is argued that this is not agreed-upon language. For instance, discussions on the relationship between human rights and the environment, rule of law, environmental justice, among others, where UNEP has extensive developments and even has resolutions approved by its governing council. In this context, how can one introduce emerging proposals to UNEA and think outside the box, rather than simply revisiting the same topics of previous resolutions year after year? Could you please clarify the procedure for considering an agreed-upon language concept or issue in UNEP?

3-How can the number of draft resolutions submitted be limited? What criteria, if any, could be used

At this point, it should be noted that sometimes resolutions are introduced to follow up or complement previous UNEA resolutions. In such cases, it should be determined whether a new resolution is necessary or if it would be sufficient to promote implementation and monitoring activities. To this end, the mandates and operational parts should allow for updating on new issues that arise in the implementation context, clearly establishing the procedure for doing so, subject to prior consideration and approval by the CPR, without needing a new resolution.

The process of merging resolutions is also important at this point. At UNEA6, there were similar resolutions and others that were broader and could include topics proposed in others, but there was a lack of willingness from the proposing countries to merge them, except in two cases. Establishing criteria or guidelines to promote the merge of resolutions by the CPR, can assist the co-facilitators in this process.

It is crucial that proponents possess a practical vision and the flexibility to acknowledge during negotiations that adjustments, even significant ones, must be made to their texts for the negotiation to progress. They should also be humble enough to recognize the need to withdraw certain texts, which clearly will not reach agreements following the recommendations of the co-facilitators in this regard.

4-How can the Executive Director's strategic report to UNEA better guide Member States when considering the submission of possible draft resolutions?

The Executive Director's report to the UNEA, in its analysis of the environmental multilateralism's response to the issues addressed by UNEA, might consider including specific boxes in each section of the report. These would explicitly group and highlight gaps, related emerging topics, and issues that could impact the required action, as well as the necessary steps for progress on these issues in terms of science-based approaches, traditional knowledge and programmatic areas.¹

This would help to focus on the most urgent issues, where the resolutions presented to the UNEA would have the most significant impact.

Furthermore, it is crucial that these reports deeply integrate the outputs from multilateral treaties and their scientific bodies, as well as from science-policy panels and platforms (SBSTTA, IPBES, IPCC, SPP, etc.). The reports should not just relay what has been presented but rather identify concrete actions and policy responses within UNEP's scope to address these findings made by these treaties, panels and platforms.

Likewise, the ED's quarterly reports to the CPR could adopt this approach in assessing the follow-up and implementation of UNEP's work programme and mid-term strategy.

¹ The UNEP/EA.4/Res.22, stated:

*"4. Requests that the monitoring mechanism: (...)
f) Summarize specific challenges that have hindered implementation efforts, including those of Member States, using available information, including existing national voluntary reports and United Nations Environment Programme reports;"*

5-Should paragraph-by-paragraph negotiation (first reading) on draft resolutions and decisions be initiated already during the intersessional period between the annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR and the OECPR?

Our delegation agrees with the legal advisor's recommendation contained in the Chair's summary of the Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau Meeting on March 19, 2024, which *“Proposed the establishment of an additional week, prior to the OECPR, specifically dedicated to negotiations, distinct from the discussion phase.”*²

6-How can the Regional Ministerial fora be used more effectively as preparatory meetings for UNEA?

It might be considered to include in the agendas of regional forums a point that anticipates a preparatory space for the ministerial declaration and the resolutions of UNEA, ensuring coherence between the topics addressed in the ministerial declarations and regional decisions with the outputs of UNEA. Thus, the issues discussed at UNEA would already have preliminary work from the regional groups on matters such as agreed language, themes to be covered in the resolutions, and co-sponsorships, among others.

This would facilitate the negotiation process at UNEA and allow for the escalation to a global level of issues that already have a prior understanding in the regions, without implying a predominance of regional groups in UNEA, reducing the role of member states. Instead, this should be seen as a further step in UNEA's preparation and not be perceived as something disconnected.

² Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau Meeting, 19 March 2024 *“10. The Legal Advisor provided the following recommendations: a) Emphasized the necessity of clearly defining the negotiation period in advance of the OECPR to address concerns raised by delegates about insufficient time. Proposed the establishment of an additional week, prior to the OECPR, specifically dedicated to negotiations, distinct from the discussion phase.”*