

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Nairobi, 18 April 2024  
09:00 – 12:00 and 13:00 – 16:00 (GMT+3)  
Hybrid meeting  
Conference Room 2 (in person)  
and Microsoft Teams (online)

### **Draft Chair's Summary**

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

1. H. E. Mr. Gunnar Andreas Holm, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), opened the meeting. H. E. Mr. Firas Khouri, Chair of the CPR, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Republic of Kenya and Permanent Representative to UNEP, chaired the afternoon session of the meeting.
2. The Chair informed of the cost-savings measures implemented by the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), effective from 2 April 2024 to address the UN secretariat's financial liquidity crisis related to arrears by some Member States to the UN regular budget contributions. As a result, the meeting time of the CPR subcommittee has been adjusted to be held between 9 am and 4 pm until further notice.
3. Delegations<sup>1</sup> that took the floor provided the following comments in summary:
  - a. Suggested both UNON and UNEP to consider exploring alternative options regarding the limitation of meeting time of the subcommittees.
  - b. Sought clarification on the inclusion of item 3 in the agenda of the subcommittee meeting, namely item "Update on UNEP Foresight Strategy", requesting additional information on the mandate for UNEP to develop the strategic foresight.
  - c. Suggested that the Chair include in the agenda for a subsequent subcommittee meeting an item on UNEP's flagship report, which is the Global Environment Outlook.
4. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
  - a. Clarified UN secretariat's current financial liquidity crisis and its impact on regular budget funded agencies and organizations, reassured Member States that every effort was made by the Secretariat to minimize any negative effects on services provided to Member States and governing bodies, and committed to explore if UNON could brief the Committee on planned cost-savings measures.
  - b. Suggested to address during the consideration of agenda item 3 questions and concerns pertaining to the item.
5. The [agenda](#) was adopted.

#### **Agenda item 2: UNEA-6 assessment and lessons learned.**

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Federation, India, Iran, Egypt, Netherlands, European Union, Argentina.

6. The Secretariat presented a draft paper outlining observations, lessons learned and recommendations from the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-6), held from 26 February to 1 March 2024 and the sixth meeting of the open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-6), held from 19 to 23 February 2024.
7. The presentation was followed by an interactive discussion. Member States were encouraged to submit any comments in writing by close of business 19 April 2024.
8. Subsequently, incorporating the feedback received, the Secretariat revised the document, which is now accessible via the following [link](#).

**Agenda item 3: Update on UNEP's Foresight Trajectory.**

9. The Secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the UNEP's Foresight Trajectory.
10. Delegations<sup>2</sup> that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
  - a. Sought clarification on:
    - i. The budget allocated by UNEP to the strategic foresight process;
    - ii. The mandate for UNEP to develop the strategic foresight;
    - iii. The exact purpose and outcomes of the foresight process and to what extent its envisaged to be used; and
    - iv. How the insights of UNEP's Foresight Trajectory will feed into the Summit of the Future to be held in September 2024.
  - b. With respect to the Delphi Survey:
    - i. Enquired about the methodology of analysis and clustering of the Delphi Survey inputs into the 20 Delphi 'Signals of Change'; and
    - ii. Raised concerns about the geographical distribution of answers to the survey, noting that 33% of responses came from the European Union region and only 19% from the Africa Region, suggesting potential imbalance in geographical representation of the answers.
  - c. Requested that the Secretariat shares with the Committee:
    - i. A draft outline of the report tentatively titled the "Global Environmental Foresight Report" (the Report) at the earliest juncture.
  - d. Inquired if the Foresight Trajectory integrates the expertise from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on climate-related scenarios and modelling.
  - e. Acknowledged UNEP's potential lack of expertise in certain areas like artificial intelligence and suggested exploring collaborations with other relevant UN agencies to avoid duplication of efforts and to leverage existing expertise.
  - f. Noted that UNEP has a mandate to work on emerging issues and welcomed the foresight work and suggested that insights could be helpful to inform UNEA-7.
11. In response, the secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
  - a. Clarified that the resource allocations for the foresight work is modest (USD 200,000) and is derived from the core budget (Environment Fund) and not from

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<sup>2</sup> Russian Federation, Argentina, Egypt, India, Malawi, European Union.

- regular budget allocations.
- b. Explained that the objective of the draft Report and UNEP's work on strategic foresight, is to:
    - i. Address emerging issues proactively, using the evidence-based Delphi survey;
    - ii. Generate and avail a database in 2025;
    - iii. Inform UNEP internally on future work programmes;
    - iv. Guide sister agencies within the UN system about environmental issues with significant impacts to minimize surprises; and
    - v. Adopt a proactive posture and modernize tools for efficiency and cost savings.
  - c. Clarified that the Report is not expected to substantively influence the Summit of the Future as such, but rather provide inputs into the preparatory discussions and events, i.e. the High-level Political Forum, in the lead-up to the Summit of the Future as they relate to environmental dimensions.
  - d. Clarified that not all signals and issues identified through the foresight process are expected to be taken up or dealt with by UNEP directly, but rather could inform how to approach existing work streams as well as the work of other agencies and processes.
  - e. Encouraged Member States to review the Delphi survey descriptions.
  - f. Highlighted that regional workshops were held to ensure good representation across different regions and to assess the relevance of the signals identified.
  - g. Confirmed that the secretariat synthesized the work of the IPCC and integrated its outcomes into strategic foresight work.
  - h. Noted that the outcomes of the foresight work will be integrated into UNEP's strategic planning, potentially influencing the next UNEP's MTS, and presenting an opportunity to consider expanding programmes in areas like artificial intelligence, new technology, and robotics in agriculture, prompting discussions on the level of engagement in these issues.

- 12. Draft recommendation from the subcommittee for further consideration and possible adoption at the next CPR quarterly meeting:** The representatives of Argentina and the Russian Federation requested the Secretariat to further update the Committee on the foresight work and to provide a draft outline of the report at the earliest juncture.

#### **Agenda item 4: Briefing on the Global Environmental Data Strategy.**

13. The Secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the Global Environmental Data Strategy (GEDS).
14. Delegations<sup>3</sup> that took the floor provided the following comments:
  - a. Commended the work of UNEP on the GEDS and for addressing both digital sustainability and sustainable digitalization, and its support of evidence-based decision and policy making.
  - b. Acknowledged the challenges associated to the absence of data standards for Artificial Intelligence (AI).
  - c. Suggested that AI capacity building be a standalone pillar of the GEDS.
  - d. Sought clarification on:
    - i. How data feeds into the World Environment Situation Room (WESR);
    - ii. The Country Environment Dashboards;

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<sup>3</sup> European Union, Argentina, Netherlands (Kingdom of), Egypt.

- iii. UNEP's terminology for "environmental data";
  - iv. Whether the proposed 5 pillars of GEDS are still open to discussion; and
  - v. UNEP's work conducted in statistics and SDGs.
- e. Recommended the inclusion of the following components into the GEDS:
- i. Analysis on how to bridge the gap between global and national data;
  - ii. Capacity building;
  - iii. Technology transfer needs identification;
  - iv. Financing for national datasets; and
  - v. Access to best practices and methodologies;
- f. Emphasized data sovereignty and recalled sensitivities related to data sharing, encouraging transparency in the GEDS development.

15. The secretariat in response thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:

- a. Highlighted UNEP's assessment of risks and rewards associated to Digital Transformation (DT) for the environment.
- b. Agreed that the environmental effects of DT should be addressed.
- c. Reiterated the focus of the GEDS on AI capacity building.
- d. Clarified that UNEP is mandated to work with publicly available data and ensure interoperability, with future discussions planned for a capacity building track to enable Member States to establish their national situation rooms.
- e. Confirmed ongoing efforts on revamping the interface and underlying data of Country Dashboards to insure its fit for purpose for Member States and UN Country teams.
- f. Highlighted the absence of a universal definition of "environmental data", confirming UNEP plans to address this issue through consultations and advocating for the opening up of environmental data and its connection with other fields.
- g. Welcomed Member States' acknowledgement of the 5 pillars of the GEDS, indicating that details would be addressed through forthcoming consultations.
- h. Reaffirmed UNEP's plan for capacity building and partnerships on SDGs statistics.
- i. Acknowledged the need for more discussions on data sovereignty to ensure the safe grouping of both shareable and sensitive data under WESR.

16. **Draft recommendation from the subcommittee for further consideration and possible adoption at the next CPR quarterly meeting:** The delegation of the Netherlands (Kingdom of) requested the Secretariat to provide regular updates to the Committee on the development of the GEDS and on the WESR.

#### **Agenda item 5: Review of UNEP thematic programmes.**

17. The Secretariat provided a review of the following two UNEP thematic programmes: ["Towards Zero Waste"](#) and ["Pollution and Health"](#).

18. Delegations<sup>4</sup> that took the floor welcomed the presentations and provided the following comments in summary:

#### ***"Towards Zero Waste"***

- a. Recommended that future reports related to this thematic programme include indicators linked to performance, emphasizing the need to improve waste

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<sup>4</sup> Norway, European Union, Canada, Children and Youth Major Group.

- treatment, promote resource efficiency in sectors like textiles, plastics, and e-waste, and enhance wastewater management.
- b. Recommended focusing on the upstream phase of products to reduce global waste streams, citing ongoing negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution.
  - c. Highlighted the benefits of adopting circular economy practices to reduce waste, pointing out the upcoming fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-4) in Canada as a platform for substantive progress.
  - d. Welcomed UNEP's partnerships for the observance International Day of Zero Waste and for increasing awareness on the importance of waste reduction, acknowledging the online International Youth Forum on Zero Waste Future, highlighting its role in equipping youth with tools and knowledge to shape a sustainable future.

### ***“Pollution and Health”***

- e. Acknowledged the considerable progress with respect to chemicals and health, encouraging UNEP's further efforts to improve environmental and health conditions for children.
  - f. Enquired more information on UNEP's partnerships with various stakeholders, particularly World Health Organization (WHO) to address human health aspects of pollution and emphasized the importance of a multi-sectoral approach to chemicals and waste management.
19. In response, the secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Emphasized the focus on circularity-based waste management, aligning with the [Global Waste Management Outlook](#), and expressed eagerness to further implement the program in this direction.
  - b. Appreciated the co-organization of the International Day of Zero Waste and emphasized the importance of intergenerational waste management, user engagement, and youth employment in the waste sector.
  - c. Highlighted UNEP's ongoing collaborations with WHO, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) on various fronts, including the global framework on chemicals, air quality, and non-communicable diseases, emphasizing the [One Health](#) perspective.
  - d. Stressed the significance of thematic funds, set to call for projects by year-end, as crucial platforms for implementing the agenda and fostering collaboration with other UN organizations and various sectors.

### **Agenda item 7: Briefing on the preparations for INC-4 on plastic pollution.**

20. The INC secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the preparations for [INC-4 on plastic pollution](#) scheduled to be held from 23 to 29 April 2024 in Ottawa, Canada.
21. Delegations<sup>5</sup> that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:

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<sup>5</sup> Canada, Malawi, Argentina, European Union, Children and Youth Major Group, Kenya.

- a. Reiterated commitment to the INC process and to conclude negotiations by the end of 2024 in line with the mandate of UNEA Res 5/14.
  - b. Highlighted the need to take into account smaller delegations when scheduling various parallel meetings during INC-4.
  - c. Expressed hope that the revised draft text will be streamlined at INC-4 to allow for conclusion of negotiations in a timely manner.
  - d. Highlighted the laborious visa process for INC-4 and appealed to the host country of INC-5 to seek ways to ease entry requirements for delegates attending the upcoming fifth session of the INC.
  - e. Urged for timely communication regarding the meetings of the regional groups and expressed concern with the participation of industry groups as Observers in the INC process.
22. In response, the secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Noted that as per the Chair's scenario note, two parallel contact group meetings would take place simultaneously, but all will depend on the discussions and decisions by the Committee.
  - b. Recalled that the invitations for the regional meetings are conveyed by the regional groups.
  - c. Highlighted that as per the draft rules of procedure provisionally applied to the INC, accredited Intergovernmental Organizations, United Nations system entities and non-governmental organizations accredited to UNEP, Multilateral Environmental Agreements administered by UNEP and/or in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and accredited to the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) can participate as Observers in the INC process.

**Agenda item 8: Other matters.**

24. Due to time constraints, the Chair informed that the consideration of agenda item 6, namely, "Briefing on human rights and the environment" would be postponed to the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 2 May 2024.
25. Delegations<sup>6</sup> that took the floor provided the following comments in summary:
- a. Requested the Secretariat to share a road map for the development of and preparations for UNEP's draft Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) for the period 2026-2029 and draft work programme and budget for the period 2026-2027.
  - b. Requested further clarification on how the Secretariat handled comments received from Member States during the silence procedure related to UNEA's contribution to the 2024 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
  - c. Emphasized the need for an enhanced civil society participation in UNEP-led events.
26. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Clarified that the Secretariat will provide a briefing on the roadmap for the development of the new Programme of Work and MTS at the upcoming eleventh annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR scheduled from 8 to 12 July 2024.

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<sup>6</sup> European Union, Malawi, Iran, Children and Youth Major Group.

- b. Assured that explanation will be provided bilaterally regarding the handling of comments during the silent procedure of UNEA's contributions to the 2024 HLPF.
- c. Announced that the first meeting of the Group of Friends for Enhanced Civil Society Participation will be held on 3 May 2024, to enhance cooperation and information sharing between Member States, Major Groups and Stakeholders.

**Agenda item 8: Closing of the meeting.**

27. The meeting closed at 16:30 (GMT+3).