

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Nairobi, 2 May 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. Wael Nasreldin Attiya, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to UNEP, opened the meeting. H. E. Ms. Nicol Adamcová, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to UNEP, chaired the afternoon session of the meeting.
2. The [agenda](#) was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Briefing on human rights and the environment.

3. The Secretariat provided a joint [briefing](#) with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on human rights and the environment.
4. Delegations¹ that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
 - a. With respect to the collaboration between UNEP and OHCHR, delegates requested more details on the following aspects:
 - i. Current joint activities and collaboration efforts undertaken by OHCHR and UNEP and key developments expected to emerge from this collaboration in the future.
 - ii. Capacity-building of national institutions to mainstream human rights and the environment in national and regional policies, regulations and programmes.
 - iii. On-going activities concerning the possible adoption of an additional protocol on the environment to the European Convention on Human Rights as well as on critical minerals.
 - iv. Support to mainstreaming human rights in national environmental policies, capacity building, management of metals and minerals, and pollution as well implementation of [General Assembly resolution 76/300](#) and [United Nations Human Rights Council resolution 48/13](#).
 - b. With respect to the human rights and environment nexus, delegates:
 - i. Emphasized the need to protect environmental defenders in promoting better implementation of environmental laws.
 - ii. Stressed the importance of applying a human rights-based approach to

¹ Colombia, European Union, Morocco, China, Portugal, Brazil, Canada, Finland, Kenya, Russian Federation, United States, Egypt, Children and Youth Major Group.

- environmental actions, in the context of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#).
- iii. Suggested that UNEP continues to explore and deepen the links between environmental justice and racial discrimination, which have significant intersections, referencing relevant reports on ecological crises, climate justice, and racial justice.
 - iv. Suggested that UNEP's work should highlight the relationship between the protection of the environment and the protection of those who defend it, contributing to spreading awareness about the job and role of environmental defenders and emphasizing the need to protect them.
 - v. Expressed concern about overemphasizing human rights as the primary target within UNEP's initiatives, suggesting that human rights should support and enhance the work of UNEP but not overshadow its core environmental objectives. Caution was also expressed about discussing human rights issues in Nairobi, not that the United Nations Human Rights Council is based in Geneva.
 - vi. Suggested that UNEP and OHCHR give concrete examples on their contributions to advancing and implementing Resolutions 48/13 from the Human Rights Council and 76/300 from UNGA that pertain fostering a clean healthy environment at the national level.
5. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Clarified that all United Nations entities are mandated to work on the right to a healthy environment following the United Nations Secretary-General's Call to Action.
 - b. Outlined that UNEP and OHCHR hold quarterly meetings which includes colleagues from the field, to monitor and discuss the implementation and advancement of the right to a healthy environment at the national and regional levels.
 - c. Provided an example of country-level implementation of human rights and environmental initiatives, such as the United Nations Guidance Note on Environmental Human Rights Defenders, which is designed to enhance United Nations support for environmental defenders at the national level.
 - d. Noted that UNEP i) is working with OHCHR and other UN entities to contribute to develop a UN framework and guidance note on critical energy transition minerals, which integrates human rights components; and ii) also supports the Secretary-General's multistakeholder panel on critical minerals.
 - e. Noted UNEP and OHCHR will continue advancing the right to a healthy environment so it can be implemented and integrated at national, regional, and international levels.
 - f. Acknowledged that capacity building is an important component of the joint activities developed by OHCHR and UNEP.
 - g. Highlighted that recommendations regarding research areas to further explore will be considered in the next UNEP report on environmental rule of law.
 - h. Further highlighted that OHCHR has participated in the meetings drafting Committee on Human Rights and Environment of the Council of Europe, to prepare a report on the need and feasibility of a legally binding instrument on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

Agenda item 3: UNEA-6 assessment and lessons learned.

6. The Secretariat presented a revised version of the [draft paper](#) outlining observations, lessons learned, and recommendations from the meetings of 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.
8. Delegations² who took the floor were encouraged to submit any comments in writing by the close of business Monday, 6 May 2024.
9. Subsequently, incorporating the feedback received, the Secretariat has revised the document, which is now accessible via the following [link](#).

Agenda item 4: Review of UNEP thematic programmes.

10. The Secretariat provided a review of the following two UNEP thematic programmes: "[Finance and Economic Transformations](#)" and "[Circularity in Sectors](#)".
11. Delegations³ that took the floor welcomed the presentations and provided the following comments in summary:
 - i. Requested further information on how UNEP (i) addresses the intersection of trade and environmental concerns, especially with respect to the ongoing work implemented by organizations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and (ii) supports activities at the national level, promoting sustainable production and consumption.
 - j. Requested more detail on UNEP's next Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) and how components related to finance, economic transformation, and circularity in the sector will be integrated into the development of the MTS.
 - k. Suggested that the Secretariat updates the Committee on specific lessons learned and tangible improvements observed in the recipient countries from the thematic programmes.
 - l. Suggested that UNEP continues to coordinate closely with national ministerial focal points for sustainable public procurement processes and provides further details on existing strategies and tools for integrating sustainable practices into public procurement.
 - m. Showed interest in understanding UNEP's plans to expand the implementation of the programme titled "Circularity in Sectors" to other sectors beyond electronics, mining, plastics, and textiles.
 - n. Suggested that the Secretariat updates the Committee with detailed information on the strategies and tools already in place for integrating sustainable practices into public procurement, suggesting a practical focus on how these changes are being operationalized.
 - o. Suggested that for future presentations on the thematic programmes, the Secretariat

² European Union, Russian Federation, Norway, United Kingdom, Argentina, Brazil, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Canada, State of Palestine, Switzerland and Egypt.

³ Argentina, European Union, Portugal, Canada.

- provides a set of guiding questions in advance of the meeting and addresses such guiding questions during the presentations.
- p. Emphasized the need for all Member States to provide feedback on the MTS (2022-2025).
12. The Secretariat in response thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Noted that UNEP’s work on trade has been an integral part of the Finance and Economic Transformations subprogramme of the current MTS (2022-2025) and of the Resource Efficiency subprogramme in the previous MTS (2018-2021) with associated outcome-level indicators.
 - b. Provided more information on UNEP’s partnership with WTO, known as the “[Environment and Trade Hub](#)”, and highlighted specific initiatives aiming at fostering environmental goods and services, circular economy practices, and addressing challenges like plastics pollution and unsustainable fisheries.
 - c. Provided examples of UNEP’s successful interventions related to integrating environmental and social considerations into economic decision-making, such as the support provided by UNEP to India and Brazil for the G20-related processes.
 - d. Explained that additional sectors such as building and construction, energy, mobility and food systems are covered under the Climate Action and Nature Action subprogrammes.
 - e. Updated that the integration of environmental considerations into economic and financial planning and decision-making will be an important focus in UNEP’s future MTS and Programme of Work and Budget (PoW).
 - f. Highlighted the ongoing efforts undertaken by UNEP to support countries in aligning finance with climate objectives, underlining the importance of capacity-building and collaboration for effective implementation.
 - g. Explained that UNEP is presently undertaking an evaluation of its Delivery Model and Programmatic Approach, lessons learned of which will inform the development of the next MTS (2026-2029) and PoW (2026-2027).

Agenda item 5: Briefing on the preparations for the third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science policy panel (OEWG-3).

13. The Secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the **on the preparations for the [third session of the ad hoc open-ended working group on a science policy panel \(OEWG-3\)](#) to be held from 17 to 21 June 2024 in Geneva, Switzerland**, followed by an exchange of views from Member States and stakeholders.
14. Delegations⁴ that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
 - a. Welcomed the timely [availability of the working documents](#) prepared by the Secretariat and noted the importance of maintaining the proposed timeline to establish the science-policy panel.
 - b. Looked forward to the upcoming webinars scheduled in May and June 2024 as follows:(i) Capacity Building Function on 11 April 2024; (ii) Overview of the OEWG-

⁴ Children and Youth Major Group, Norway, European Union.

- 3 Document on 7 May; (iii) History of the Science Policy Panel on 16 May; and (iv) Pre-session briefing on the road to the third session of the Open-ended Working group on 6 June 2024; and acknowledged that the webinar on capacity building held in April 2024 provided a good basis to develop a common understanding on the capacity building function.
- c. Called for a prioritization of necessary pre-requisites for the establishment of the Science Policy Panel.
 - d. Supported the idea of convening (i) the first session of the governing body of the science-policy panel back-to-back with the intergovernmental meeting to establish the Science Policy Panel once the open-ended working group has completed its work which is to be held in February 2025 and (ii) the second session in February 2026 to establish the first work programme.
 - e. Noted that the Science Policy Panel would function complementary to the existing international environmental frameworks such as Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), This integration underscores the science-policy panel's role in broadening the scientific basis for informed decision-making across related environmental issues.
 - f. Encouraged Member States to include youth and early professionals in their delegations attending the meetings of the open-ended working groups.
 - g. Highlighted the urgency of enhancing global action on chemical and waste management to mitigate pollution and stressed the importance of establishing a dedicated science-policy interface to develop effective strategies for managing these issues.

15. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations and took note of the comments.

Agenda item 6: Briefing on World Environment Day.

16. The Secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the [World Environment Day](#) scheduled to be held the 5th of June 2024 in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
17. Delegations⁵ that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
- a. Appreciated the Host of the upcoming World Environment Day (WED), recognizing the WED as a pivotal platform for collective action and inspiration in addressing desertification.
 - b. Called for integrated policy changes that bridge the gap between research and policy making processes to effectively combat the decline of drylands.
 - c. Urged prioritization of monitoring and assessment efforts regarding the rates and extent of desertification underscoring the need for data to support evidence-based decision making and policy formulation.
 - d. Highlighted the necessity to invest in sustainable land management through the exploration of payment for environmental services and empowering local communities, through capacity building and education.
 - e. Called for meaningful youth engagement during the World Environment Day celebrations and the upcoming United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) COP 16 to be held from 2 to 13 December 2024 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

⁵ Children and Youth Major Group.

18. In response, the Secretariat thanked the delegations and took note of their comments.

Agenda item 7: Briefing on the new UNEP Youth and Education Programme.

19. The Secretariat provided a [briefing](#) on the UNEP Youth and Education Programme.

20. Delegations⁶ that took the floor welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:

- a. Highlighted their support for UNEP's Youth and Education Programme, called on other Member States to join UNEP's Sport for Nature initiative, and suggested a collaboration between UNEP and Member States through forums such as Group of Friends for Youth and Education.
- b. Recommended that youth and education components be integrated into UNEP's next MTS.
- c. Recommended that UNEP works further with Member States who have national education programmes to develop synergies.
- d. Encouraged UNEP's collaboration with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to enhance efforts to ensure equitable access to education opportunities for youth.
- e. Recommended the inclusion of (i) Advisory services and the formation of specific advisory groups within universities to support youth initiatives in environmental education; and (ii) Incorporation of legal education on environmental matters to empower youth in advocating for environmental justice.
- f. Requested more detail on (i) Engagement with Non-Conventional Areas; (ii) The role of Civil Society Organizations or community-based organizations in environmental education and (iii) Youth Data Integration and Impact in UNEP programmes.

21. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:

- a. Agreed that youth and education priorities should be incorporated into UNEP's next MTS, reiterated that the UNEP Youth and Education Programme could expand with additional funding and support.
- b. Invited further feedback on the ongoing collaborations with other United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF, noted the importance of making sure youth voices heard and incorporated into UNEP's work.
- c. Acknowledged UNEP's role is primarily being an enabler and facilitator in civil society collaborations, particularly with grassroots organizations.
- d. Noted the gap on data collection and impact measurement on youth and education and flagged that there is more work to be done to fill this gap within UNEP and further invited Member States to work with UNEP on this element.

Agenda item 8: Other matters.

22. The Secretariat recalled that the first meeting of the "*Group of Friends- for enhanced*

⁶ France, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Portugal, Children and Youth Major Group.

civil participation in UNEP led activities", scheduled for 3 May 2024 and reminded that all delegations were welcome to join, either in-person or on-line.

Agenda item 9: Closing of the meeting.

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