

Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the United Nations
Environment Assembly and the Committee of
Permanent Representatives
Wednesday, 26 June 2024,
16:00 – 18:00 (GMT+3)
Online meeting

Agenda item 2: Consideration of proposals for defining the theme for UNEA-7.

This background document has been prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the bureau of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its meeting held on 16 May 2024. It aims to guide the discussion under agenda item 2: Consideration of proposals for defining the theme for UNEA-7.

The three proposals for the theme of UNEA-7, as proposed by the secretariat, are as follows:

- 1. Forging Tomorrow: Pathways to a Liveable and Resilient Planet.**
- 2. Accelerating just transitions for people and planet.**
- 3. New frontiers and solutions for a greener tomorrow.**

The note outlines a brief rationale for each of these three proposals.

In accordance with paragraph 9 of [UNEA decision 6/7](#), the UNEA-7 Bureau is requested to, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, define a theme for the seventh session of the Environment Assembly no later than 12 months in advance of the seventh session.

For more background information about the process of defining the theme, please see the [Secretariat background note](#) and [meeting summary](#) of the [meeting of the UNEA-7 Bureau held on 16 May 2024](#).

The discussion under this agenda item will be led by the President of UNEA-7. The UNEA and the CPR Bureaux are invited to provide their views on the three proposals.

Defining the theme for UNEA-7

I. Introduction

1. The seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) will take place in Nairobi from 8 to 12 December 2025.

2. In the lead-up to UNEA-7, several important international conferences and meetings will take place, discussing agendas and solutions that are critical to deliver on the sustainable development agenda and the SDGs, including, amongst others:
 - The [Summit of the Future](#), to be held in September 2024, aiming to build upon the Sustainable Development Goals Summit and deliver an action-oriented Pact for the Future to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - The [16th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity](#), scheduled from 21 October to 1 November 2024, in Cali, Colombia, which will review the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and accelerate the process of access and benefit-sharing regarding biodiversity.
 - The [16th session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification](#) to be held in in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 2 to 13 December 2024.
 - The 2025 High-level Political Forum, titled “Advancing sustainable, inclusive, science- and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals for leaving no one behind”.
 - The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development ([FfD4](#)) from 30 June to 3 July 2025, in Spain, that will aim to bridge the growing SDG investment gap and accelerate the implementation of the SDGs.
 - The [Second World Summit For Social Development](#) (date TBC) in 2025.
 - Furthermore, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution ([INC-5](#)) is expected to finalize the international legally binding instrument to combat plastic pollution in Busan, South Korea, whilst the [UN Ocean Conference](#) in June 2025 in France will support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

3. In light of this important landscape, it is important that the UNEA-7 theme connects with these critical agendas and delivers transformative solutions for people and planet. Some preliminary reflections that Member States may wish to consider in terms of what success would look like for a theme that resonates with this need and drives catalytic multilateral environmental action could be articulated as follows:
 - a) A theme that spurs the advancement of the [six SDG transitions](#) and the outcomes of the Summit of the Future, including the Pact for the Future, as agreed by Member States.
 - b) A theme that will provide UNEP with renewed mandates to focus on enabling conditions and emerging environmental issues that can accelerate, scale up and support the implementation of existing multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and the SDGs, including persisting gaps.
 - c) A theme that may open up a dedicated space for Member States to debate how environmental action can deliver on issues related to sustainable development,

including inequality, social and economic development, focusing on game-changing shifts that can translate into a handful of strategic resolutions.

II. Proposed themes

4. The proposed themes have been prepared by the Secretariat, taking into account the multitude of international conferences and meetings taking place in 2024 and 2025, and considering emerging issues in the multilateral environmental space that can accelerate the delivery of the multilateral environmental agreements and the SDGs. Some preliminary ideas of what each concept could encompass are listed below each proposal in bullet form. This is not an exhaustive but merely an indicative list.

1) Forging Tomorrow: Pathways to a Liveable and Resilient Planet

This theme focuses on enabling pathways towards more effective natural resource governance for a safer, more resilient planet. UNEA-7 could help Member States in advancing solutions, rooted in the findings and key recommendations of the [2024 Global Resource Outlook](#), which can reduce the resource intensity of high-impact sectors (e.g. food, mobility, housing, energy) and reorient demands, including consumption and production, to achieve the SDGs.

Possible focus areas of this theme could include:

- Promoting decoupling policies and practices that can reduce the environmental impacts of resource use while increasing social well-being;
- Institutionalizing resource governance in the implementation of the MEAs and embedding sustainable resource use at all governance levels;
- Accelerating, finance flows, capacity building and technology transfer to help countries set sustainable economic incentives;
- Investing in sustainable consumption and sustainable lifestyles;
- Accelerating net-zero, nature-positive and pollution-free policies and decisions, with consideration for the most vulnerable;
- Creating circular, resource-efficient and low-impact solutions and business models supported by adequate legal and policy frameworks;
- Unlocking citizen and local community engagement to foster resilience and adaptive capacity.

2) Accelerating just transitions for people and planet

This theme focuses on driving transitions to low-carbon, resilient and environmentally sustainable economies and societies that go hand in hand with addressing issues of equity and inclusivity. Linked to possible outcomes of the World Social Summit, UNEA-7 could help Member States further unpack the concept of what a ‘just transition’ is and expand it from the current labour rights focus and climate agenda. It can shift to include the biodiversity and pollution agendas, anchoring it in environmental rule of law and environmental rights principles, with a focus on relevant solution pathways to achieve the SDGs.

Possible focus areas of this theme could include:

- Enhancing participatory mechanisms for environmental decision-making to deliver the MEAs, with emphasis on women, youth, indigenous peoples, local communities and persons in vulnerable situations.
- Enacting regulatory reforms that promote green and decent jobs and more responsible, rights-based business engagement that respects the rule of law;
- Shaping finance and investment policies to align with circularity, sustainable development and human rights approaches that decrease climate, nature and pollution footprints of high impact sectors;
- Promoting gender-based actions, including combating gender-based violence arising from environmental harm;
- Reducing environmental injustices to effectively protect those who defend nature;
- Deploying financial resources and capacities towards those most affected by climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, leaving no one behind.

3) New frontiers and solutions for a greener tomorrow

This theme focuses on promoting science-based solutions to anticipate and respond more effectively to environmental risks and issues, including emerging ones. UNEA-7 could help Member States debate what are the necessary solutions, including innovations, new technologies and practices, and how to scale these up sustainably to drive economic transformations, foster resilience and address vulnerabilities.

Possible focus areas under this theme could include:

- Improving access to relevant data, science, and information to stimulate technological innovations and enable evidence-based and inclusive policymaking, including through artificial intelligence;
- Enhancing strategic foresight, predictive analytics and horizon scanning capacities for environmental decision-making;
- Promoting policies and practices that can empower decision-makers to withstand and recover from environmental shocks and stressors, including through renewable energy sources, sustainable land management, agricultural practices, green infrastructure and early warning systems;
- Developing enforceable standards to enable the private sector to drive market transformations that can help manage risks sustainably while ensuring financial protection and recovery from environmental damage;
- Institutionalize multi-stakeholder engagement in decision-making, leveraging citizen science, traditional science and knowledge, including from indigenous peoples, to deliver the MEAs.