Agenda item 3 (e)
Contribution of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities to the UNEP Medium-term Strategy and Programme of Work

Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP
Eleventh meeting, Nairobi, 8 – 12 July 2024

Nairobi, 10 July 2024
The Sixth Session of United Nations Environment Assembly adopted Resolution 6/3 on enhancing the role and viability of regional forums of environment ministers and United Nations Environment Programme regional offices in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges.

The Secretariat will present an overview of the role of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities, and UNEP regional offices.

The Committee will be invited to take note of the update from the Secretariat and provide guidance on further action needed by the Secretariat and Member States.
Regional Forums supported by UNEP

- UNEP convenes three regional forums as their Secretariat:
  a. the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN),
  b. the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific (Asia-Pacific Forum), and
  c. the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Forum).

- Each Forum has its different organizational set up and types of outcomes.

- UNEP also supports sessions of the Arab Forum for the Environment. A similar structure exists for Europe, Environment for Europe, under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
General role of the Regional Forums

- Member States under their region-specific structure consider environmental priorities and challenges.
- **Adopt decisions on environmental management** specific to their regions and/or contributing to the global environmental agenda, including UNEA.
- They are also **platforms for Member States to engage partners**, including UN agencies, private sector representatives, scientists, academia, and civil society to share their perspectives on regional and global environmental interests.
- They play a crucial role in **facilitating collaboration among neighboring countries**: sharing information and good practices, coordinating policies, and jointly addressing challenges like pollution, resource management, and climate change at a regional level.
Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

• Guided by the UNEA Resolution 2/2 and First Forum held 19 -20 May 2015.
• 41 Member States.
• Bureau comprised of one Chair and 2 Vice Chairs.
• Five meetings organized to date.
• Platform for Ministers to discuss issues of strategic importance for the region including:
  • priorities and challenges on environmental dimensions of the Sustainable Development,
  • review implementation of UNEA resolutions in the region,
  • providing inputs to draft UNEA outcomes as well as discussing possible resolutions to be submitted at UNEA.
• **Key events organized** under the Forum included:
  • Asia Pacific Regional Youth Forum,
  • Asia Pacific Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum,
  • Asia Pacific Science, Policy and Business Forum,
  • Senior Government Officials Meeting and the Ministerial Segment

• **Key outcomes** are
  a. Chair’s Summary of the Senior Officials Meeting,
  b. Chair’s Summary of the Ministerial Segment.
Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Established in 1982** through UNEP Governing Council resolution 5, section 3.
- **Twenty-three meetings** held to date.
- **33 Member States.**
- Bureau comprised of eight (8) Member States, two per subregion.
- Organized every two years with *intersessional meetings of its Bureau and High-Level Officers*, and an *Inter-Agency Technical Committee* of seven (7) partners.
- **Twelve (12) working groups** meet regularly to advance implementation of its decisions.
- Also serves as the regional gathering for *preparation for the sessions of UNEA*.
- **Involves Major Groups and Stakeholders** in the preparations for the meetings of the Forum.
Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean

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Outcomes include:

- **Ministerial Declarations**, which set the political vision and priorities for environmental action in the region.
- **Decisions**, which guide the work implemented by the twelve working groups and the Inter-Agency Technical Committee (UNEP, UNDP, Economic Commission for LAC, Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank, WHO/PAHO and FAO).

Provides its outcomes to the Forum of the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development, helping to narrow the gap between the regional and global environmental agendas.
African Ministerial Conference on the Environment

• Established in **December 1985**, following a conference of African Ministers of Environment held in Cairo, Egypt. There have been 19 Ordinary sessions and 9 special sessions of AMCEN

• Provides advocacy for:
  
  • **Environmental protection** in Africa,
  • Ensuring that **basic human needs are met** adequately and in a sustainable manner;
  • Ensuring that **social and economic development is realized at all levels**; and
  • Ensuring that **agricultural activities and practices meet the food security needs** of the region.

• Bureau composed of representatives of five subregions.

• Sets up **subsidiary bodies** as appropriate.

• Involves **Major Groups and Stakeholders** and global **partners**.
African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
(Continued)

• Since its first session, several programmes, initiatives and activities have been developed to facilitate the effective implementation of its mandate towards environmental protection in Africa.
• The existence of AMCEN has had an impact on the manner in which environmental issues are managed in the region.
• It has also contributed to strengthening Africa’s participation and active involvement both in global negotiations and in international agreements on the environment.
African Ministerial Conference on the Environment
(Continued)

- Outcomes include:
  - **Ministerial Declaration and Decisions**, which set the political vision and priorities for environmental action in the region.
  - **The establishment of the Africa Groups of Negotiators on** Climate Change, biodiversity, Plastic Pollution and waste management. The AGNs represent the collective interests of Africa in international negotiations including COPs, INC etc.
  - Outcomes of AMCEN **importantly feed** into:
    - Africa Union **Specialized Technical Committee** on Environment – AMCEN Decisions adopted
    - **CAHOSCC** – AMCEN Decisions adopted
    - Africa Union **Heads of States Summit** – AMCEN decisions endorsed
The Africa Office (AO), the Latin America and the Caribbean Office (LACO), and the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), provide secretarial functions:

- **Organizing meetings** of the forums and their bodies (Bureau, High-Level Officials, working groups, Major Groups and Stakeholders etc.).
- Developing **in-session documents, Ministerial Declarations, and Decisions.**
- **Monitoring** of implementation of Decisions.
- **Assisting the President/Chair** of the Conference and its Bureau in his/her role.
- **Submitting the Forums’ outcomes** to the CPR and UNEA.
- **Mobilizing financial resources and technical assistance** to organize the meetings and to respond to Decisions.
CPR members are invited to:

hold a **discussion on how to enhance substantive contribution from regional forums** of ministers of the environment and environment authorities, **and regional offices**, in achieving multilateral cooperation in tackling environmental challenges.
Thank you

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