

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

Context

- 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.

Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

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- **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

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- 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

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- 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

Role of the Regional Offices regarding the Regional Forums

- 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



Name of presenter.
Designation
xxxxxxx@un.org

United Nations Avenue, Gigiri
PO Box 30552 – 00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya

www.unep.org