

167th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives UNEP

Statement by Colombia on Agenda Item 4 Report of the Executive Director to the 167th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the floor. Since this is the first time our delegation is taking the floor, we would like to extend our greetings to all the distinguished delegates and express our sincerest gratitude to the Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen, for her presentation and the report on the second quarter of this year. We also extend our thanks to the staff of the UNEP Secretariat for their efforts in preparing this meeting.

This report highlights the extensive work undertaken by UNEP across all regions and thematic areas of the PoW. Our delegation would like to highlight two points in particular, given their relevance to Colombia:

1-Under point 1: “*Significant developments, item A. Global developments*”, reference is made to UNEP's co-organisation of the High-Level Conference on Peace, Justice and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development during the High-Level Political Forum -HLPF- in 2024, as a contribution to the review of the environmental dimension of SDG16.

Colombia commends this effort by UNEP, given the urgent need to contribute to the achievement of SDG16, whose progress towards achieving its targets is lagging behind. The environmental components require specialised inputs to be effectively addressed, which UNEP is well positioned to provide. In this regard, UNEP's ability to promote environmental justice and its link to social and racial justice as part of the environmental rule of law is critical.

On peace, we highlight the goal of advancing a Global Coalition for Peace with Nature, a flagship initiative of COP16 under the Convention on Biological Diversity. This coalition is a call to action that recognises the interconnectedness of peace and nature. It aims to raise awareness and strengthen efforts in the areas of human rights, sustainability and environmental justice, and international cooperation. These pillars require collective action, for which the participation and support of the widest possible group of countries, civil society and stakeholders is essential. We extend an invitation for you to join this coalition.

2-Second, under point 1, item “*B. Regional developments*”, the report mentions UNEP's support for the 4th meeting of the working group for the development of an Association of Southeast Asian Nations -ASEAN- declaration on environmental rights, and to the 3rd Conference of the Parties (COP-3) to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), where the Parties endorsed the Action Plan on Human Rights Defenders in Environmental Matters.

In this regard, I am pleased to inform you that in Colombia, the constitutionality of the Escazú Agreement was confirmed by the Court last month, and it is now in the process of ratification.

These meetings complement the issues discussed at the meeting of national focal points for the Fifth Montevideo Programme, where the progress in its implementation was reviewed. This is outlined under item “*D. Foundational Subprogrammes, point ii. Environmental Governance*” of the report, where one of the emerging topics to be addressed was the links between environmental and racial justice, which was also identified as a priority for the region during the event on the environmental rule of law in LAC.

An integrated analysis of these processes and developments presents a significant opportunity for UNEP to continue supporting Member States in advancing Principle 10 of the Rio de Janeiro Declaration and in implementing the Bali Guidelines, fostering the exchange of experiences between regions.

Against this background, my question is whether South-South exchanges have been considered on these issues, given that the experiences, various advances and instruments from different regions could significantly enrich these issues and offer new ways for interested countries to address them.