

**2017 UN Environment Assembly Preparatory Retreat  
Windsor Golf Hotel & Country Club in Nairobi  
27 – 28 October 2016**

**Note for Session 3: Outcome of the Ministerial Segment of the Third Session of  
the UN Environment Assembly**

*What type of process can be supported that leads to the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly?*

The second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly led to the adoption of 25 resolutions covering a range of topics of global and regional relevance. Despite this success, the Assembly failed to adopt a political outcome document that could have built on the positive working spirit that prevailed throughout the Assembly.

This note aims at setting the scene for a discussion on the process needed for the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration at the next UN Environment Assembly to be held in December 2017.

The UN Environment Assembly is the highest level decision-making forum in the United Nations on the environment. It is important that the Assembly produces an ambitious outcome document that reflects the consensus amongst policy makers yet also creates impact and resonates within the UN System and beyond in people's minds.

Building a consensus on the format and type of political outcome document from the Ministerial Segment will ensure that the Environment Assembly is a powerful global voice for giving visibility to issues on the environment and constitute an outcome that can be in turn inform the discussions in key intergovernmental such as the High-Level Political Forum, among others at the regional and global levels.

To this end, there is a need for the governing bodies of the UN Environment Programme to agree and guide Member States early on the appropriate format for the adoption of an outcome document. Agreement should be established well in advance on the nature of the outcome document, i.e. is the aim a ministerial declaration or a President's Summary? The former is clearly the more desirable outcome for UN Environment, as there is a need to be ambitious and empower the Assembly with a voice in the global conversation on sustainable development. In addition, consideration should be given to the linkage between the theme of the high-level segment and its outcomes.

The single biggest impediment to reaching an agreement on a political outcome document during the second session of the Assembly was whether 'common but differentiated responsibilities' of countries should be reflected or not. This issue should be discussed and agreed upon by regional groups well in advance if similar deadlock is to be avoided in the future. Again, regional discussions and guidance from the Bureau of the Assembly is likely to help in this respect.

In sum, it is important to establish consensus on the aim for a political outcome document and on the process that should be followed to negotiate and reach agreement on its contents. These key stakeholders that could be involved in building such consensus include:

- Members of the Environment Assembly Bureau;
- Members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
- Regional and political groups and any member who could make or bring positive aptitude that such an approach requires.

The Session will:

- Invite Bureau members to share their vision and suggestions to involve other members, especially their peer Ministers, to set up a set of approaches to foster a spirit of trust for achieving consensus for a successful outcome of the Assembly;
- Invite Bureau members, who attended the Second Session of the UN Environment Assembly, to share their (political) ideas, reflecting on their past experience;
- Invite Bureau members, who opposed a Ministerial Declaration during the second session of the Environment Assembly, to share their views.

*Drafted by the Governance Affairs Office*