

**Summary of the second Joint Meeting of the bureaux of the UN Environment
Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme**

22 May 2017

On 22 May 2017, Bureaux members of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme held a meeting via video-conference (List of Attendance attached).

The Joint Bureaux meeting allowed participants to address the following topics:

- (1) Update on preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly Second Joint Preparatory Retreat;
- (2) Structure and organization of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly;
- (3) Draft agenda for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly;
- (4) Update on the Ministerial Outcome Document

This summary highlights the main joint decisions, discussions and action points, during the second meeting of the joint bureaux of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and of the UN Environment Assembly.

Main Joint Decisions:

- 1) The Bureaux endorsed the draft provisional agenda for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly as amended following the re-ordering of agenda items switching agenda item 11, "Date and provisional agenda for the Fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly" and agenda item 12, "Election of Officers."
- 2) The Bureaux endorsed the structure and organization of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly as revised to reflect the change in the ordering of items in the draft Provisional agenda for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly reflected above.
- 3) The Bureaux agreed to operationalize ex-officio participation of the Chair of the Committee in UN Environment Assembly Bureau meetings and of a representative of the President or the Assembly Bureau in the meetings of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. This would help enhance communication and transparency in the lead-up to the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. The UN Environment Assembly Bureau reserved the right to hold informal member only meetings if needed.

Agenda 2: Update on preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly Second Joint Bureaux Preparatory Retreat

1. The Secretary informed the meeting that the revised proposed structure of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly Second Joint Bureaux Preparatory Retreat and background documents under the Agenda Item 2 took into account inputs received from both bureaux. One representative was grateful that the dates had been adjusted to accommodate his earlier concern on participation in the Informal Regional Ministerial Consultation in Ostrava, Czech Republic.
2. The representative of Gabon informed the meeting that the Minister was unlikely to personally participate in the retreat as Gabon was hosting the 16th Session of the Africa Ministers Conference on Environment (AMCEN) from 12 to 16 June 2017. The delegation of Iraq clarified that it has confirmed its participation in the retreat.
3. At the request of the Chair, the President informed on the agenda/schedule of the Global Dialogue

on Oceans that would be organized on 8 June 2017, to celebrate World Oceans Day. The Secretariat would distribute the latest version of the provisional agenda of the Global Dialogue on Oceans together with the invitation.

4. A member requested the Secretariat to share in advance details of the preparations and activities for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly that covered the week before the actual Assembly and included the third meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, the science policy forum and the Major Groups and Stakeholders Dialogue. This would help ensure seamless preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. To facilitate this, he proposed a shift in agenda item 6, "Preparations for the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Committee of the Whole" to just after agenda item 2, "Stocktaking on preparations for Assembly".
5. In response to the requests, the meeting was informed that the Secretariat was preparing a comprehensive presentation on the Assembly. In addition, the Chair of the Committee would brief the Bureaux on all processes of resolutions and structure of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and organisation of the Committee of the Whole under agenda item 6. The Chair noted that the request to shift agenda item 6 would be considered and added that if item 6 were to be moved from Saturday afternoon 10 June to Friday afternoon 9 June, the discussion of item 6 could be continued on Saturday morning 10 June if needed.

Agenda 3: Preparations for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

6. The Chair reported the following:
 - a) The Sub-committee and Bureau of the Committee had approved the structure of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly and shared inputs on the draft agenda of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. The Committee of Permanent Representatives also agreed that the current Joint Bureau meeting will endorse the structure and organisation of the High-level Segment.
 - b) Further elements of the Assembly such as the Leadership Dialogues, side events and commitments would be prepared. The Secretariat had prepared the draft concept note on the Leadership Dialogues with options for discussions in the sub-committee meeting to be held on 24 May 2017.
 - c) In terms of resolutions, further progress would be expected at the beginning of July.

She expressed appreciation to member states for their cooperation, flexibility and inclusive, transparent manner of work, which led to consensus.

7. The Secretariat added that the structure of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly took into account all inputs received from the two Bureaux and Member states. Details on the Leadership Dialogues would be discussed further by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at the sub-committee meeting on 24 May 2017 as well as in the retreat. On side events, communication would continue with member states on modalities for organization.
8. One member requested clarification on types and process of commitments expected at the meeting. In response, the Deputy Executive Director requested for additional time until after June when the draft report of the Executive Director was completed. The Bureaux would then provide guidance on the modalities and elements would be reflected in the scenario note for the 2017 UN Environment Assembly.
9. Further to discussion, the President requested: i) reordering of agenda item 11, "Date and

provisional agenda for the Fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly” and agenda item 12, “Election of Officers”; and ii) update on the financial situation with respect to the 2017 UN Environment Assembly.

10. One member suggested an additional Joint meeting in November to enhance understanding and ensure a seamless transition from the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives to the Assembly.
11. A member agreed with the President’s proposal on the change in sequence of agenda items notwithstanding rearrangement of agenda would not have great impacts on his chairmanship.
12. The meeting was informed that the Secretariat would share the revised agenda and structure accordingly.

Agenda 4: Update on the Ministerial Outcome Document

13. Following the President’s introductory remarks on this agenda item, one member said his group would continue consultations and the outcomes of the 16th Session of the Africa Ministers Conference on Environment (AMCEN) would provide inputs for the outcome document.
14. A member welcomed a roadmap for the document highlighting the importance of consultations with Regional Groups. In this sense, he raised a question on the status of invitation and the venue of the Asia-Pacific Forum.
15. Another member informed the meeting that his group was not involved in a particular regional process, given the particularities of their groups but he would provide inputs from his constituents. He added that the outcome document, if it received support, should be actionable and not utopian and should stick to the spirit of the carefully crafted theme: “Towards a pollution-free planet.”
16. The Deputy Executive Director informed the meeting that the Asia-Pacific Region planned to hold a consultation in September 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. For the Latin America and Caribbean Region, dialogues were expected in September 2017 instead of full ministerial meetings. He noted that Regional Groups also had the opportunity to hold consultations in Nairobi during the Assembly.
17. The Chair informed the meeting that the Informal Regional Ministerial Consultation for the 2017 Environment Assembly – “Europe’s call for a Pollution Free Planet” would be held on 13 June 2017 in Ostrava, Czech Republic and the ministerial outcome document would be considered during the meeting. Key messages from the consultation on the outcome document would be shared.
18. The meeting was reminded that the ministerial outcome document and resolutions need to be actionable and related to citizens. Members were also encouraged to engage their regions in the process of the ministerial outcome document.

Agenda 5: Other matters

Ex-officio participation

19. The Chair raised the issue of ex-officio participation in the Bureaux meetings, which would help the Bureaux to work together in a transparent manner during the inter-sessional period. She recalled the agreement on the participation of the representative of the President of the UN Environment Assembly in the bureau meetings of the Committee. She requested reciprocity through the participation of the Chair of the Committee in bureau meetings of the UN Environment Assembly.

20. There was general support for an arrangement for ex-officio participation to ensure smooth cooperation between the Bureaux and enhance information sharing.
21. In response to a request from one member, the Secretariat confirmed that the arrangement did not violate the Rules of Procedure. Furthermore, the Rules of Procedure contemplated the participation of the Chairs of sessional bodies in the bureau meetings during the UN Environment Assembly. One member was of the view that the Assembly Bureau should have the opportunity to meet on its own if needed because unlike the Committee Bureau, it did not have the opportunity for regular face-to-face informal consultation.
22. The meeting agreed to the arrangement on ex-officio participation of a representative of each Bureau in the other's meeting in the understanding that the Assembly Bureau could hold informal meetings without ex-officio participation if needed.

Financial situation of the 2017 UN Environment Assembly

23. The Deputy Executive Director reported that the Secretariat had received pledges from the Nordic Council, France, Finland, Romania, Australia, South Africa, Sweden and Philippines. There were also savings from the previous session. Nevertheless, there was still shortfall of 500,000 USD, especially for providing funding for participation of least developed states and Small Island Developing States. The Secretariat would continue resource mobilization efforts to support participation of developing countries and help ensure a truly universal Assembly.
24. The President reminded members to continuously work on bridging the financial gaps for the UN Environment Assembly and cited his efforts in this regard.

Private Sector Engagement in the form of Side Events

25. A member raised the need for active participation of the private sector and reiterated an earlier suggestion that the best technologies available, which are contributing to addressing pollution should be showcased for the benefit of developing countries, through side events during the UN Environment Assembly. The President agreed with the idea and requested the Secretariat to provide further ideas in this regard. He hoped that the Secretariat would approach to business and industries.
26. Another member hoped that the Secretariat could update the meeting on follow-up action on proposals from the Representative of the Business and Industry Major Groups. He was of the view that the private sector should have opportunities to provide inputs to the 2017 UN Environment Assembly through physical participation or alternative means. He added that the Representatives of the Business and Industry Major Groups could be utilized to engage the private sector in a broader spectrum.
27. The Deputy Executive Director responded that the Secretariat would provide information on the private sector engagement during discussion on the relevant agenda item at the retreat. He hoped member states could provide guidance and direction on this issue.
28. The meeting was reminded of the agreement that only two parallel sessions would be held at the Assembly.
29. One member stressed the need for discussion on private sector engagement to keep in mind the inter-governmental nature of the Assembly and was concerned about possible extra costs related to the participation of the private sector to the Environment Assembly.

30. In response, some members stressed the importance of early engagement of the private sector to ensure their meaningful participation in the 2017 UN Environment Assembly. It was proposed that global companies, interested in how to handle natural resources and address pollution-related issues, could participate in the Joint Bureau preparatory Retreat. Members agreed that private sector participation and inputs were indispensable for tackling pollution.
31. The President concluded that there would be further discussion with the Secretariat on how to engage the private sector and find spaces for its participation in the upcoming retreat.