

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday, 6 February 2018,
09:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri
Conference Room 4

MEETING SUMMARY

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

1. H.E. Mr. John Moreti, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana, welcomed members to the meeting. The meeting adopted the provisional agenda.

2. Lessons learned from the Third Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

2. The Chair invited members to share their initial views on lessons learned from the Assembly based on a draft note submitted by the Secretariat, and to send them in writing to the Secretariat for submission to all members, in view of further consideration at the 141st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to be held on 20 February 2018. He highlighted a number of key factors contributing to the success of the Assembly, including:
 - a) Early identification of an appealing theme, which contributed to strong high-level participation and to effective awareness-raising and media coverage.
 - b) Efficient informal and formal consultations between members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, conducted in an inclusive and transparent manner.
 - c) Member states were well prepared and committed to early negotiations of resolutions and decisions, and timely availability of the official documentation in all six official UN languages.
 - d) The strong personal commitment and engagement of H.E. Edgar Gutiérrez-Espeleta, former President of UN Environment Assembly, whose strong leadership and commitment throughout the process contributed to effective negotiations of the Ministerial Outcome Document.

- e) The successful conclusion of a Ministerial Outcome Document, which provided a strong foundation for good political will and clear message to the world on the topic of pollution.
3. Committee members underlined that effective measures needed to be put in place to ensure that the next Assembly will be equally successful, and identified several challenges and opportunities to be further considered. These included among others:
- a) Improved planning and organization, to avoid conflicts in room allocation for consultations;
 - b) Careful consideration on potential advantages and disadvantages of organizing the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives back-to-back with the Assembly;
 - c) The need to identify and respect an informal deadline for timely submission of draft resolutions, without prejudice to the Rules of Procedure, to allow for sufficient time for negotiations;
 - d) The need to consider appropriate length and possible merger of the texts submitted as draft resolutions to allow for effective negotiations;
 - e) The importance of timely availability of documents from the Secretariat;
 - f) The necessity to ensure adequate financial resources and infrastructure in the Gigiri compound;
 - g) Consideration of giving more emphasis to the implementation of previously adopted resolutions, including by establishing adequate mechanisms and tools for monitoring and evaluation;
 - h) Careful consideration to the organization of the delivery of national statements, to ensure they were well attended;
 - i) Further clarity on the roles and mandates of informal contact groups established during the inter-sessional period negotiations;
 - j) Effective planning and co-ordination of meetings and side events, to also enable smaller delegations to fully participate and engage in the deliberations;
 - k) A simplified and improved online registration system established at the UN Office at Nairobi to for early registrations by permanent missions in Nairobi;

- l) Enhanced conditions, including financial provision, to allow for Major Groups to actively engage in the UN Environment Assembly.

4. In addition, Member States:

- a) Asked when the proceedings of the third session of the UN Environment Assembly would be made available to Member States;
- b) Asked for more information on how the figures and statistics related to the impact of the commitments made at the Assembly had been calculated in the Secretariat's Lessons Learned document;
- c) Requested additional information on the sources and allocations of funding used for the organization of the third session of the UN Environment Assembly, as well as related savings;
- d) Requested the Secretariat to revise the note on lessons learned, taking into account views expressed by Member States, in order to prepare for an informed discussion at the 141st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

5. In its response, the Secretariat informed the meeting that the process to finalize the document documents from the Assembly was well advanced, and committed to provide further detail and information on the impacts of and the implementation plans for the outcomes of the Assembly, as well as on resourcing of the Assembly in due course. The Secretariat also took note of the request to update and revise the lessons learned document.

3. Reporting on the Programme of Work and Budget, including the Assembly resolutions

- 6. The Secretariat introduced two new senior staff members of the UN Environment Programme; Mr. Gary Lewis, Acting Director of the Programme and Policy Division, and Mr. Ulf Björnholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies.
- 7. The Secretariat presented tentative ideas on how they planned improve and regularize the reporting to the Committee of Permanent Representatives on programme implementation and budgeting, as well as options to consider and internalize the new UN planning and budgeting cycle, as recently decided by the UN General Assembly in Decision A/RES/72/266 of 24 December 2017. The Decision stipulates a transition from biennial budgets to annual budgets complemented by bi-annual Programmes of Work, and is expected to have

implications to the UN Environment Programme cycles, which currently comprises a four-year Medium-Term Strategy and two-year Programme of Work.

8. In the discussions that followed, Member States provided the following comments, regarding the proposals on the reporting the programme implementation and budgeting:
 - a) Requested additional information and briefings on the broader ongoing UN Reforms and the expected impacts on the UN Environment Programme, as may be relevant;
 - b) Reiterated the need for improved and regular oversight of the implementation of the Programme of Work, including information on how policy initiatives (campaigns, partnerships and missions) are associated with the programme of work and implementation of Assembly resolutions;
 - c) Acknowledged that more time was required to reflect and to provide specific guidance on the type of mechanism required to oversee the implementation of the Programme of Work, possibly an informal open-ended working group meeting amongst Member States, with the support of the Secretariat, was proposed for further consideration.
9. In regard to the new UN planning and budgeting cycles, members requested timely distribution of the presentations made and any additional relevant documents and proposals relating to the transition to the new cycle to allow for in-depth consideration by Member States. Further to the request, one member also requested additional specific information to be presented at the 141st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on (i) the current status of senior level staff recruitments and vacancies; (ii) the current status of resource allocation of funds between subprograms; and (iii) a comprehensive list of projects and their progress, per sub-programme.

4. Organization of work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

10. The Chair informed members that a draft roadmap to guide the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives up to the fourth session of the UN Environment Assembly in March 2019 was made available on the Committee portal, and that it should be seen as a 'living document' that will be updated and evolved over time. He invited members to submit any observations or comments ahead of the 141st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
11. Following a brief presentation on the roadmap by the Secretariat, Member States exchanged views relating to, for example, a revised title of the roadmap, the

differentiation of meetings between the first column and third column in the roadmap, the need to make reference to the Ad-Hoc Open-ended Expert Group on follow-up on the implementation of the resolution on marine litter and plastics and to the 23rd Intergovernmental meeting of the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region, consideration of subcommittee meetings during the next semester, and the need to align the dates of the Annual Subcommittee meeting to the relevant Decisions.

12. The Secretariat took note of the views expressed and committed to share a revised and updated version of the roadmap with Member States before the 141st meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

5. Other matters

13. No other matters were raised by the members.

6. Closing of the meeting

14. The Chair closed the meeting at 12:40 p.m.