



Distr.: General
28 May 2018

English only



**United Nations Environment
Assembly of the United Nations
Environment Programme**

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
143rd meeting**
Nairobi, 18 September 2018

**Draft minutes of the 142nd meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 10 May 2018**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 10 May 2018, by Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. The meeting was attended by 92 participants representing 61 members and 4 observer missions.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Sianga Abilio, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Angola; Mr. Hannes Passler, Chargé d'affaires ad interim and Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Yacin Elmi Bouh, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Djibouti; Mr. Burhan Namik Salim Al-Jaf, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Mohamed Salim Hafsi, Chargé d'affaires ad interim and Permanent Representative of Tunisia; and Mr. Abdusalam Alawi Alawadhi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Yemen.
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Virgilio Marques Faria, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Angola; Mr. Harald Gunther, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Liu Xianfa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China; Ms. Mariam Ahmed Goumaneh, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Djibouti; and Mr. Saleh Abady Hasan Al-Marday, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Yemen.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/142/1 and UNEP/CPR/142/1/Add.1).

Agenda item 3

**Adoption of the draft minutes of 141st meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives**

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 141st meeting, held on 20 February 2018, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/142/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

7. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, drew attention to a document entitled “Quarterly report to the 142nd Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/142/4). Stressing that the format of the report was intended to address member States’ requests for greater transparency, he invited the Committee to provide feedback on the format to enable the secretariat to improve its future quarterly reports.

8. The Executive Director highlighted a number of recent events of relevance to the United Nations Environment Programme and activities undertaken by the secretariat since the previous Committee meeting. Recent events included the adoption by the government of the State of California in the United States of America of a mandatory requirement to install solar panels in new buildings, which, he said, he hoped would inspire others to adopt similar measures, and the holding of a historic summit by the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 27 April 2018. Expressing the hope that the summit would lead to positive results, he said that the United Nations Environment Programme was ready to support the two countries on environmental issues.

9. Turning to recent activities undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme, he said that on 5 April 2018 the Programme had released the annual report of the Finance Initiative on global investments in renewable energy (<http://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/press-release/banking-sunshine-world-added-far-more-solar-fossil-fuel-power>). The report showed that in 2017 more electricity had been generated from solar energy across the globe than from coal, oil, gas and nuclear energy combined, in part thanks to the efforts of China and India to actively promote solar energy in order to make it more competitive. Aside from the health and other benefits of solar energy, in most parts of world it was now cheaper to produce energy from solar power than from coal.

10. The United Nations Environment Programme had focused significant efforts on the issue of plastics, which, thanks in great part to the United Nations Environment Assembly, had gained momentum and was now at the centre of political agendas and the focus of business and government activities across the world, including in India, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. Consideration was being given to ways in which the Programme could reorganize its work to more effectively support Governments and businesses to combat the menace of plastic pollution, including through the CleanSeas campaign. In April 2018, United Nations Environment Programme staff had visited Zhejiang Province in China, which had previously been one of the most polluted areas in the country. The province had been able to achieve dramatic results in combating river pollution over the previous five years, most notably by means of its “River Chief” system, which targeted transboundary water pollution from industry. Although the United Nations Environment Programme had not previously been directly involved in that initiative, the Programme was exploring cooperation modalities in the framework of a memorandum of understanding to be signed with the provincial government with a view to scaling up and replicating those successful interventions. The success of the interventions resulted from a combination of efforts, including the highest level of political will, public awareness and participation, and the application of technology and innovation.

11. With regard to conflicts, following the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2408 (2018) on Somalia, in which the central role played by climate change in conflict resolution was recognized, the United Nations Environment Programme had offered to help the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia to more effectively address climate change, energy and other environmental issues. The Programme was also working with respective member States under a memorandum of understanding to conduct an assessment of the environmental situation in the State of Palestine with the collaboration of Palestine and other Arab States, as well as Israel, and thereby deliver on the agreement to conduct the field-based and post-crisis environmental assessment in line with resolution 3/1 adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly at its third session. [He commended the efforts of the Group of Arab States, which had shown flexibility and good faith in general, and noted that while the process had been slow, progress had been made and would continue to be made with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme.

12. The Executive Director noted that the United Nations Environment Programme had set up a system to assist and protect individuals who defended the environment, known as “environmental defenders”, and commended the efforts of Latin American and Caribbean States to adopt a regional legal instrument based on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, which sought to ensure that every individual had access to information and justice in environmental

matters and could participate in decision-making processes. He expressed the hope that such efforts would inspire other regions to adopt similar instruments.

13. With the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, on 22 March 2018 the Governments of Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo had signed a political declaration entitled the “Brazzaville Declaration”, which was intended to protect peatlands in the Congo basin. The instrument represented an excellent example of South-South cooperation since, through it, Indonesia would share with the two neighbour countries its ample experience in peatland restoration. Given that peatlands were the largest natural terrestrial carbon store, it was vital that they be protected and preserved.

14. With regard to wildlife, the United Nations Environment Programme had partnered with the African Union to examine ways of stepping up efforts to protect Africa’s wildlife that obtained the support of local populations. The idea of the partnership had first been mooted at a meeting held between the President of Rwanda, Mr. Paul Kagame, in his capacity as the current Chair of the African Union, and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, on the margins of the International Solar Alliance Summit held in India in March 2018. A conference organized jointly by the United Nations Environment Programme and the African Union to discuss the details of the partnership would be held in Kigali to coincide with the African Union summit to be held in Addis Ababa in January 2019.

15. African Head of States, representatives of local communities and of the private sector, including commercial airlines, would be invited to the conference, the main objective of which was to share the experiences of countries that had succeeded in developing their tourism industry and protecting their wildlife while improving the livelihoods of local communities, as exemplified by Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda and South Africa. The conference would also provide an opportunity for business and the private sector to scope out relevant future investments in Africa.

16. In terms of oceans, the United Nations Environment Programme had launched the International Year of the Reef and was discussing a potential partnership with the Government of Australia, which had contributed five million Australian dollars for the protection of the Great Barrier Reef, and to enable other countries to learn from Australia’s experience in the management and recovery of reefs.

17. On 5 June 2018, the celebration of World Environment Day would be led by India under the leadership of Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, and with the participation of ministers and industry leaders across Indian states, focusing on the menace of plastic pollution. The Executive Director asked Committee members to invite their respective Governments to develop communication materials for the celebration of World Environment Day in their countries to enable the United Nations Environment Programme to share ideas and initiatives that were underway to tackle the menace of plastic pollution.

18. The United Nations Environment Programme had stepped up efforts to engage with the private sector and, in the last few weeks, had signed agreements with companies across the globe, including the Coca-Cola Company, a major Chinese car-sharing company “Build Your Dreams”, commonly known by the acronym “BYD”, that managed about one million electric cars, and Ethiopian Airlines, as a result of which the company would plant a tree for every passenger flown and agreement had been reached to green the airline’s business practice.

19. On the same day as the present meeting, 10 May 2018, the Government of France was to present a draft resolution on negotiating a global pact for the environment at the ongoing seventy-second session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York. Given that the great majority of Member States supported such an initiative, the resolution was expected to be adopted and, if that was the case, the United Nations Environment Programme would ramp up efforts to support the process both in New York and in Nairobi.

20. With regard to the reform of the United Nations, the Executive Director said that he had participated in a meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination that had focused on ways in which the United Nations could improve through innovation. Stressing that innovation was central to the reform agenda of the Secretary-General, he said that the United Nations Environment Programme would set up a process to innovate that would include seeking changes to those rules that needed to be changed at the General Assembly and interpreting in flexible ways those rules that could simply be reinterpreted.

21. On 31 May 2018, the General Assembly was expected to adopt a resolution on the reform of the United Nations development system, under which United Nations resident coordinators would report directly to the Deputy Secretary-General and would no longer be rooted in the United Nations

Development Programme. This would mean that, instead of having to set up new country offices, the United Nations Environment Programme would be able to recruit staff to be integrated into the resident coordinators' offices in different countries, thereby saving resources.

22. In closing, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme had sent the details of the candidates for the positions of Deputy Executive Director and Chief of the New York Office to the Secretary-General. The positions of Director of the Division of Corporate Services, Director of the Ecosystems Division and Director of the Europe Office, as well as that of Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, would soon be filled, and member States were invited to submit nominations for candidates for positions that remained open.

23. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the Executive Director for his oral briefing and the secretariat for the quarterly report (UNEP/CPR/142/4), as well as a complementary report entitled "Report by the Secretariat on UN Environment Programme's Private Sector Engagement". Several representatives said that the quarterly report represented a significant improvement on previous reports and addressed member State requests for increased transparency, accountability, clarity and simplicity. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to submit future quarterly reports well ahead of Committee meetings in order to enable member States to review them in detail prior to such meetings.

24. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the quarterly report rightly focused on the implementation of the programme of work and budget and the expected accomplishments contained therein, while providing references to key global developments. He expressed appreciation for the information provided in the report on resource and management issues. Stressing that he would provide additional feedback in writing, he said that future quarterly reports should address the implementation of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions in a more consistent manner, for instance by including an annex with brief implementation updates, including financial allocations, for each of the resolutions that included active mandates for the United Nations Environment Programme; discuss opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of all the sub-programmes; provide information on all financial allocations to all sub-programmes, including earmarked contributions and contributions from the Environment Fund and the regular budget of the United Nations; provide information on the funding of all campaigns, cross-cutting areas and special initiatives; provide a link to comprehensive information on the current status of financial contributions to the United Nations Environment Programme from all sources; and provide updates on the managerial recruitment process at the level of D-1 and above. He further requested information on the resource mobilization strategy of the Programme with a view to informing the drafting of the new programme of work and budget.

25. Another representative suggested that future quarterly reports should include only those events and activities that had a minimum level of significance to the United Nations Environment Programme; establish clearer links between programmatic updates and the programme of work and medium-term strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme and the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly; and include additional financial information, since figures alone did not provide the full picture of the Programme's financial situation.

26. Two representatives said that they would welcome the opportunity to discuss the quarterly report in a less formal setting and to hold subcommittee discussions on specific areas of interest that could help to inform the drafting of the new programme of work and budget. One of the representatives asked the secretariat to explain how budget allocations reflected the programme of work and priority areas of work of the organization, including, if possible, by means of historical figures, and to provide additional information on staffing, including the nationalities and general responsibilities of incumbents, especially with regard to vacant and filled senior positions at the D-1 and D-2 levels.

27. With regard to engagement with the private sector, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the United Nations Environment Programme's efforts to harness the capacity and expertise of the private sector for environmental protection, but sought clarification of how activities pertaining to engagements with the private sector, as well as those related to campaigns and special initiatives, translated into tangible impacts linked to the organization's programme of work. Another representative said that the United Nations Environment Programme could lead the way within the United Nations system in engaging with the private sector through experimentation, provided that the risks were identified and properly managed. It was also important, he said, that the Programme redouble its efforts to engage with civil society, which remained an indispensable partner of the Programme.

28. One representative encouraged the United Nations Environment Programme to be cautious about the private entities with which it chose to partner, stressing that dubious actors could seek to enter into partnerships with the Programme with no intention of delivering on their commitments and that this could pose risks to the Programme's reputation. Another representative said that partnerships must be mutually beneficial and involve the private sector, governments, civil society and affected communities in order to be productive. He encouraged the Executive Director to increase engagement with the private sector in Africa and to link up with local financial institutions operating on the continent through multilateral partnerships.

29. Stressing that private sector entities could be powerful actors for change, one representative encouraged the United Nations Environment Programme to develop broad and common platforms for the science, business and policy interface, similar to those developed for the financial sector. Expressing support for the efforts undertaken to make the Programme more proactive and to achieve results in the field through partnerships, he said that it was essential that member States be more involved in, and that there be increased transparency around, such efforts. He then requested information on the implications of, and the criteria for, joining the international coalition on Greening the Belt and Road Initiative, as well as the financial implications of that engagement and other efforts of the United Nations Environment Programme.

30. One representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries, urged the secretariat to maintain a balance between the activities carried out with and for member States and those carried out to strengthen the involvement of the private sector in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme. Stressing that the involvement of the private sector was key to complementing member States' efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, he noted the need to always bear in mind that the United Nations Environment Assembly was an intergovernmental body.

31. With regard to the "Report by the Secretariat on UN Environment Programme's Private Sector Engagement", one representative sought clarification regarding the legal basis for the multiple partnership agreements concluded in the first quarter of 2018, highlighting that two different sections of the report made reference to two different sets of guidelines on private sector engagement and suggesting that the United Nations Environment Assembly discuss the issue at its fourth session. He further requested the secretariat to clarify the nature, scope and magnitude of the different kinds of private sector partnerships concluded and to include in future reports information on the scope and potential environmental benefits of each partnership, including its relevance to the programme of work, the financial and in-kind contributions made under it, its anticipated duration and its expected outcomes and results. Another representative said that the report should clarify the link between the commitments made by private sector entities and the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme.

32. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recalled that at the previous Committee meeting he had requested the secretariat to produce implementation updates and plans for all the resolutions of the United Nations Environment Assembly and asked the secretariat to update the Committee on the implementation of that request.

33. Several representatives suggested that the three United Nations entities headquartered in Nairobi, namely, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi, could be doing more in support of United Nations reform with one offering to work with the three entities and interested member States to advance the reform. Another of the representatives noted that although the efforts of the Executive Director to raise global awareness, adopt a more positive outlook, draw on the creativity of the private sector and identify the socioeconomic benefits of environmental improvements were all valuable, it was important that the three Nairobi-based entities work together in developing a holistic approach that linked them more clearly to the New York reform agenda, for instance with regard to the discussions on strengthening the role of the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Kenya. The representative further queried how the enhanced role of the United Nations Environment Programme and the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the United Nations system might affect the Programme's core funding.

34. One representative suggested that there was a need to create a single mechanism within the United Nations Environment Programme to coordinate, and to seek the Committee's inputs on, the reform of the United Nations. Regarding the suggestion by the Executive Director that certain rules of the United Nations could be reinterpreted by the Programme, he cautioned against a liberal interpretation of the rules and stressed the need to strike a balance between efficiency on the one hand and oversight and financial propriety on the other.

35. Another representative suggested that the United Nations Environment Programme refine its theory of environmental change, which should enable the Programme to work within the framework of existing multilateral environmental agreements and other commitments and invoke its mandate of identifying emerging issues and organizing joint responses to them. In response, the Executive Director said that the meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, to be held in Nairobi from 29 to 31 May 2018, reflected that mandate, and he encouraged all member States to send their experts to the meeting, noting that funding was still available for those in need of support.

36. With regard to the draft resolution on a global pact for the environment currently under consideration by the General Assembly, the representative of Kenya, supported by two other representatives, said that member States had not agreed at any time that representatives of member States both in New York and in Nairobi should be involved in the discussions on the proposed pact. In that regard, the Kenyan Government would be requesting a vote on the resolution to ensure that all substantive meetings on the proposed pact would be held in Nairobi, where the United Nations Environment Programme, which managed most of the multilateral environmental agreements and to which the pact must be anchored, was based. Another representative said that a key role of the United Nations Environment Programme in the proposed global pact would be to identify gaps in international environmental laws.

37. The representative of France said that the French Government attached great importance to the role of United Nations Environment Programme and the Nairobi location in the negotiations on the proposed global pact and expressed regret that the Government of Kenya was to call for a vote on the resolution under consideration, stressing that there had been a lot of compromise in the draft resolution with regard to the venue of the negotiations and that the French Government had done the utmost possible on the issue by making a clear reference to Nairobi as the preferred venue. She cautioned against preempting the mandate of the negotiating group, which should be free to decide on the venue of the negotiations.

38. Two representatives welcomed the partnership for the implementation of the East African Community development strategy to combat poaching and illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products, which, said one, would help countries in establishing mechanisms to combat poaching and the illegal trade in wildlife. The United Nations Environment Programme was part of the partnership under the broader auspices of the African Union, which would convene a conference on the matter on the margins of the African Union Summit in January 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Issues raised by individual representatives included examples of assistance and support provided to their countries by the United Nations Environment; the signing of memorandums of understanding between their governments and the Programme; and various environmental initiatives at the national level, including efforts towards energy diversification. One representative highlighted the enormous challenge of managing peatlands in the Congo basin and its implications for climate change, while another drew attention to work to protect rainforests, including peatlands. Yet another representative stressed the importance of training people in countries affected by war and conflict to address environmental challenges. He said that there was a need for increased representation of experts from developing countries, who had a clear understanding of the challenges facing their countries, in managerial positions at the United Nations Environment Programme.

39. The representative of the Republic of Korea expressed his appreciation to Mr. Solheim for his support for the inter-Korean summit of 27 April 2018, which, he said, could lead to cooperation between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on environmental issues, including in the biodiversity-rich demilitarized zone along the border of the two countries. He stressed that the two countries looked forward to receiving support from the United Nations Environment Programme in their common efforts to tackle environmental issues.

40. A number of representatives lamented that the fact-finding mission of the United Nations Environment Programme tasked with assessing the environmental situation in the State of Palestine had not yet commenced its work and called for efforts to be intensified in that regard. One of the representatives urged member States to exert pressure on the Israeli authorities to allow the work to be undertaken and expressed the hope that the assessment findings would be submitted for consideration by the Committee at its next meeting.

41. Several representatives expressed their condolences to the Government and people of Kenya for the loss of life and property caused by recent floods as a result of a dam collapsing in Nakuru county, with one calling on the United Nations Environment Programme to assist Kenya in its efforts to deal with emergencies caused by such floods.

42. Responding to comments from the floor, the Executive Director expressed appreciation to the Committee for the positive feedback on, and suggestions for the improvement of, the quarterly report and other reports prepared by the secretariat under the item. With regard to requests to discuss the quarterly report in a more informal setting, he said that the secretariat would gladly attend, and respond to any Committee member requests to convene, informal events to discuss the quarterly reports.
43. With regard to the specific information requested, he said that the secretariat would provide to the Committee information on the implementation of all the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly; the nationality and gender of incumbents of managerial positions at the D-1 level and above, which would reveal gender and geographic imbalances that member States might have ideas on how to address; additional information on South-South cooperation, which was growing significantly, with countries such as China and India sharing their resources, technology and experience with other developing countries; and the greening of the Belt and Road Initiative partnership, which was open to all member States, environmental groups and businesses, was being co-chaired by the United Nations Environment Programme and the Government of China, and was operating with complete transparency and would continue to do so.
44. The Executive Director said that the secretariat would brief the Committee on the resource mobilization strategy of the United Nations Environment Programme, which encompassed maintaining and increasing contributions from current supporters; increasing support from middle-income countries, where substantial success had been achieved; and reaching out to private sector entities and foundations to develop partnerships and encourage financial and in-kind contributions from them.
45. In addition, the secretariat would endeavour to provide additional information on the results of private sector engagement in future reports to the Committee. As for the risks associated with partnering with private sector entities that did not deliver on their commitments, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme could terminate such partnerships and denounce non-compliant partners, suggesting that reputational risks were higher for them than for the Programme. He noted that the organization was focused on developing win-win partnerships and would continue to expand its engagement with companies in Africa and in the Arab and Latin American and Caribbean regions, and explore how international and regional financial institutions might be involved in such partnerships.
46. The Executive Director highlighted that the Programme was working with leaders of all faiths to address environmental challenges, including the menace of plastic pollution and forest protection. Such partnerships had great potential for a positive impact given the enormous power and outreach of faith leaders.
47. He expressed appreciation to the Government of Kenya and others for their efforts to place Nairobi at the centre of the process to develop a global pact for the environment and said that the Government of France and the French President, Mr. Emmanuel Macron, also deserved praise for their leadership and the proactive and positive part they had played in ensuring a role for Nairobi in the pact. He expressed the hope that member States would reach a compromise on the draft resolution and the location of the negotiations on the pact and said that the United Nations Environment Programme stood ready to support member States in their discussions.¹ The Programme would also contribute to the process by providing an analysis of gaps in international environmental law.
48. Turning to the assessment of the environmental situation of the State of Palestine, he said that the United Nations Environment Programme shared the frustration of member States that the assessment work had not yet commenced and said that his staff would visit Israel in the coming weeks to see how the process to produce the assessment could be fast-tracked.

¹ On 10 May 2018, the General Assembly adopted resolution 72/277 entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment.” By that resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its seventy-third session, in 2018, a technical and evidence-based report that identified and assessed possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation. The General Assembly also decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to consider the report and discuss possible options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, with a view to making recommendations, which may include the convening of an intergovernmental conference to adopt an international instrument and to report to the Assembly during the first half of 2019. In accordance with the resolution, the organizational session of the ad hoc open-ended working group will convene in New York and all the substantive sessions will subsequently be convened in Nairobi.

49. He stressed that the United Nations Environment Programme would look at better ways of working and influencing the discussions on United Nations reform in New York. Many elements of the reform were cultural in nature and involved, for instance, working in a less hierarchical manner and welcoming the inputs of all staff, regardless of their level or age, and speaking in plain language that laypersons could understand.

50. With regard to ways in which the United Nations Environment Programme could improve its collaborative relationship with the United Nations Office at Nairobi and UN-Habitat, the Executive Director noted that the Programme's relationship with the Office had improved significantly, as had the services that the Office provided to the Programme. He intended to meet with the Executive Director of UN-Habitat in the coming weeks to discuss closer collaboration between the two programmes in areas of common interest, inviting support and ideas from member States on the matter.

51. In closing, the Executive Director said the United Nations Environment Programme stood ready to assist the Government of Kenya, upon request, in its efforts to deal with the recent floods in the country.

Agenda item 5

Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

52. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Contributions of the UN Environment Assembly to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development: Responses to the questions raised by the President of the Economic and Social Council", which, he said, had been sent to the President of the Economic and Social Council as the submission of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development to be held in New York from 9 to 18 July 2018. He invited the Committee to endorse the document as the submission of the Assembly to the Forum.

53. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation to the secretariat for preparing and submitting the document, which, said one, was succinct and substantive, providing an overview of the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals under review in 2018.

54. One representative sought clarification regarding the results of the interaction with the high-level political forum in order to improve the review of contributions from the United Nations Environment Assembly to the Forum. He also invited the President of the Assembly to continue to endeavour to ensure that he was given the opportunity to address the Forum in plenary during the July 2018 meeting in order to deliver a message on the environmental dimension of sustainable development from the third session of the Assembly.

55. The Committee endorsed the submission of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum at its 2018 meeting.

Agenda item 6

Organization of the intersessional period for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

56. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Note by the Secretariat on the organization of the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Subcommittee and the Fourth Open-ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/CPR/142/6), presenting options for the organization of the period leading up to the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The note included proposed dates for the fifth annual meeting of the subcommittee and the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, and had been discussed by the subcommittee. The Chair also drew attention to a document entitled "Draft road map on developing a new programme of work and budget 2020–2021", which had been considered by the subcommittee at a meeting held on 24 April 2018.

57. The Committee agreed to hold the fifth annual meeting of the subcommittee from 22 to 26 October 2018. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that while he had no objection to the proposed date, he would need to confirm that the dates were practical.

58. With regard to the date of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, the Chair recalled that at the last meeting of the subcommittee most of the regional groups had expressed support for

holding the meeting back-to-back with the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. Others, however, preferred the usual practice of holding the meeting earlier.

59. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted a preference for holding the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee back-to-back with the fourth session of the Environment Assembly. He suggested that, in order to enable member States to prepare adequately for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, the Executive Director should submit all his reports for consideration at the session by 11 January 2019 and member States should submit all their draft resolutions by 17 January 2019. Member States were reminded to bear in mind the option of addressing specific issues in the new programme of work and budget of the United Nations Environment Programme, rather than by means of the adoption of resolutions, which would facilitate a reduction in the volume of draft resolutions presented to the Environment Assembly for its consideration.

60. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a different group of countries, said that in view of the limited time available they were open to holding the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee and the fourth session of the Environment Assembly back-to-back, but stressed that this should not set a precedent for the future. One of the representatives said that the decision to hold the two meetings back-to-back should only be made on an exceptional basis and provided that sufficient time was allocated in the lead-up to the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee for consideration of all the draft resolutions and the draft outcome to be considered by the Environment Assembly. She underlined the need for the Assembly to adopt a final decision at its fourth session on the timing of future open-ended Committee meetings.

61. The other representative asked the secretariat to provide periodic reports on the financial situation with regard to the fourth session of the Environment Assembly and expressed the hope that the secretariat would make financial provision for future sessions in the next programme of work and budget.

62. Two representatives suggested that the Committee should decide at the current meeting that, starting with the fifth session of the governing body, there should be a gap between the meetings of the open-ended Committee and the Assembly sessions, with one expressing the view that while holding the two meetings back-to-back could save money, it would compromise the quality of the work produced and put undue pressure on small delegations.

63. Another representative suggested that there was a need to reflect on the role of the open-ended Committee, specifically whether its purpose was to serve as a preparatory meeting for Environment Assembly sessions or whether it should also afford member States an opportunity to discuss substantive issues in the period between Assembly sessions.

64. The legal adviser of the secretariat said that the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly did not provide precise guidance on whether the meetings of the open-ended Committee and the sessions of the Assembly should be held back-to-back, while Environment Assembly resolution 2/22, which provided that the cycle of Assembly sessions should also apply to open-ended Committee meetings, only required that the meetings of both bodies be held in the same year. In resolution 3/2, the Environment Assembly had requested the Committee to decide on the date of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee only. The Environment Assembly should decide on the timing of future meetings of the open-ended Committee, should it wish to do so.

65. The Committee agreed that the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee would be held from 4 to 8 March 2019, back-to-back with the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. The Committee further agreed to request the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to examine further, for subsequent consideration by the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the issue of whether, at its fourth session, the Environment Assembly should adopt a decision on the timing of open-ended Committee meetings.

66. In response to a request on the matter, the representative of the secretariat undertook to share with the Committee a budget for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, confirming that in view of the decision taken by the Committee regarding the timing of the fourth meeting of the open-ended Committee, the secretariat was now in a position to finalize that budget and would start working on resource mobilization efforts for the session.

67. With regard to the draft road map on developing a new programme of work and budget 2020–2021, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat was preparing a note to respond to questions raised by members on the draft road map during the subcommittee meeting of

24 April 2018. He suggested that the Committee defer consideration of the draft road map to a subcommittee meeting to be held once the secretariat had finalized the said note.

68. The Committee agreed to defer consideration of the draft road map to a subsequent subcommittee meeting.

Agenda item 7

Preparations for the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

69. Introducing the item, the Chair said that it included four sub-items, which the Committee addressed in the following order: outcome of the joint bureau retreat, held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March; structure of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; information updates from the secretariat on a concept note and a communication strategy for the theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly; information updates from the secretariat on the implementation plan for the outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

(a) Outcome of the joint bureaux retreat, held in Nairobi on 22 and 23 March 2018

70. Introducing the sub-item, the chair drew attention to a report entitled "Report of the Bureaux Retreat held in Nairobi on 22-23 March 2018" together with a summary of the first joint preparatory retreat of the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, stressing that during their joint retreat the bureaux had agreed that the theme of the fourth session of the Assembly would be "Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production".

71. The Committee took note of the report.

(b) Structure of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly

72. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to a note by the secretariat entitled "Proposed structure of the 2019 Environment Assembly" (UNEP/CPR/142/9), noting that the secretariat had revised the note in the light of comments made by member States, including at the last subcommittee meeting, and would welcome additional feedback on the proposed structure at the current meeting with a view to finalizing the note for consideration and endorsement by the joint bureaux during their retreat to be held in Tallinn, Estonia, on 6 and 7 September 2018.

73. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the secretariat for the proposed structure and made a number of suggestions thereon.

74. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it was essential to start the negotiations on the draft resolutions for consideration by the Assembly as early as possible. The representative suggested that the chair of any committee of the whole to be established at the session should be elected on the first day of the session and that the drafting groups tasked with negotiating the draft resolutions of the Environment Assembly should start their work immediately on the first day. The representative further reiterated the oft-expressed position that no more than two meetings should be held in parallel during sessions of the Assembly. Speaking on behalf of her own country, the representative suggested that adequate time should be allocated to the negotiation of the programme of work and budget 2020–2021.

75. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that adjustments should be made to the proposed structure to ensure that adequate time was allocated to the consideration of the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook report and to last-minute negotiations to resolve outstanding issues pertaining to the draft resolutions and the draft ministerial declaration of the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

76. Two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to include the outcomes of the session's multi-stakeholder dialogue as one of the items for consideration at the closing plenary meeting of the session.

77. Another representative asked the secretariat to promptly disseminate information on all the substantive side events to be held during the fourth session, stressing that such events provided member States and stakeholders with an opportunity to share best practices and ideas, and to develop partnerships. It would be beneficial, therefore, if they were able to prepare for such events.

78. One representative suggested that the secretariat reach out to civil society and business stakeholders, including through the regional offices of the United Nations Environment Programme, to get a better sense of their expectations for the session.

79. The representative of Kenya requested that time be allocated on the evening of one of the days of the high-level segment for a host country ministerial reception.

80. Closing the sub-item, the chair said that the secretariat would revise the structure (UNEP/CPR/142/9) in the light of members' comments and forward the document for consideration by the joint bureaux in September 2018.

(c) **Information updates from the secretariat on a concept note and a communication strategy for the theme of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

81. Introducing the sub-item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Draft concept note for the theme of the 4th United Nations Environment Assembly", which, he said, had been prepared by the secretariat at the request of the joint bureaux. The joint bureaux had requested the secretariat to seek input from member States on the concept note in order to develop it further. The Chair requested that member States provide feedback on the note at the current meeting or in writing by 16 May 2018.

82. Introducing the concept note, the representative of the secretariat said that the secretariat had adopted a pragmatic approach, working to combine and narrow down the two components of the theme of the fourth session, namely sustainable production and consumption and innovative solutions, into a single theme that would ensure a valuable and relevant session.

83. Another representative of the secretariat said that the draft concept note proposed defining key environmental challenges on the basis of two scientific reports that would be launched during the fourth session, namely, the sixth edition of the *Global Environment Outlook* report and the International Resource Panel's report entitled "Global assessment of natural resource use and management"; forging a link with past sessions of the Assembly, including voluntary commitments made during the third session; and building on the integrated action framework adopted at the second session to address the nexus between human health and the environment and advance the goals of decarbonization, detoxification, the decoupling of economic growth from resource use, and enhanced ecosystem resilience; focusing on innovative solutions to develop and to scale up actions; promoting innovation within the United Nations Environment Programme and strengthening its internal capacity to identify and implement innovative solutions; developing partnerships; establishing mechanisms to scale up the implementation of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns; and creating a repository of innovative solutions for use by member States.

84. In the ensuing discussion, representatives expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the draft concept note. Several representatives said that the note required further revision, with some undertaking to send feedback to the secretariat in writing.

85. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the draft concept note appeared to be unbalanced, since it implied that the theme of the fourth session was primarily related to Sustainable Development Goal 12, when in fact the concept of innovative solutions also related to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17, and gave undue prominence to Goal 12 as key to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The representative highlighted that the concept note appeared to replace the concept of "innovative solutions" with that of "innovation"; focused on pollution and sustainable consumption and production and overlooked other environmental challenges, such as energy and food security, biodiversity loss, waste management, microbial resistance, and sand and dust storms; and missed the point behind the theme which had been chosen for a more synergistic implementation of the two components of the theme in order to address social, environmental and economic challenges through innovative policies and markets and partnership solutions.

86. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to revise the note to place the issues of innovative solutions and sustainable consumption and production on an equal and balanced footing; to strengthen and move up the section on sustainable consumption and production and not to limit that issue to the 10-Year Framework of Programmes, but also to address chemicals and waste, marine litter and microplastics, production and product issues; to list sustainable consumption and production as a separate item in the section entitled "Possible outline"; and to better explain the relationship of each item listed in that section with the theme of the fourth session. Expressing support for the definition of innovation in the concept note as encompassing both science and technology and knowledge-based assets, the representative suggested consideration of innovative education and awareness-raising approaches aimed at changing mentalities and behaviour as part of innovation, while emphasizing that innovative solutions should not be presented as the only answer to environmental degradation, and that it was very important to implement and to scale-up

existing solutions to environmental challenges, including for the delivery of the voluntary commitments made during the third session of the Environment Assembly.

87. One representative suggested that the concept note should provide specific examples of best practices; clarify that innovative solutions included indigenous knowledge; examine innovative solutions to the challenges posed by unsustainable consumption and production patterns; and address emerging environmental challenges.

88. Another representative queried the mandate to produce the concept note and said that if the note was released solely at the discretion of the Executive Director it should not be referenced in the resolutions or the outcome document of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fourth session. The concept note read as if the purpose of the Assembly session was to implement the 2030 Agenda, which was not the case. He expressed the view that it also focused unduly on Sustainable Development Goal 12; should not use a framework for action premised on the environment and health nexus, since the only area where that nexus was clear was detoxification; should emphasize the potential of innovation and resource efficiency for enhancing economic growth; and should include examples of innovative solutions to tackle environmental challenges, including food waste and other issues addressed at previous Assembly sessions.

89. One representative suggested that the concept note should be revised to list the *Global Chemicals Outlook* as one of the key assessments used to identify environmental challenges and to mention and give prominence to the resolutions and political outcomes of all Assembly sessions, in addition to the voluntary commitments made during the third session.

90. Two representatives suggested that there was a need for greater clarity among member States on the theme chosen for the fourth Assembly session, with one suggesting that member States must discuss their objectives in selecting a theme, such as whether they were trying to change the current economic model and to replace dirty industries with green ones, and have clear and modest expectations about what the fourth session could achieve, what the costs of action emerging from the session would be, and who would bear such costs.

91. One representative suggested that the concept note should discuss the links between biodiversity and the two components of the theme, as well as the links between technological change and sustainable development.

92. Another representative highlighted the need to narrow down, and to identify a clear narrative for, the theme and to examine how it related to the agreement reflected in paragraph 4 of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), “The future we want”, that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable and promoting sustainable patterns of consumption and production and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development were the overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development. The representative suggested that the concept note should be revised to acknowledge the work undertaken on the theme for the session by the United Nations Environment Programme and by the international community, which he asked the secretariat to examine. The representative also proposed including food waste as one of environmental priorities that must be addressed at the fourth session; addressing lifestyles and the focus areas of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes; and focusing on innovative solutions rather than innovation, as well as existing solutions that were working.

93. The Chair thanked representatives for their comments and requested that any written submissions reach the secretariat by 16 May 2018 in order to enable the secretariat to revise the concept note for possible consideration by the subcommittee on 24 May 2018.

(d) Information updates from the secretariat on the implementation plan for the outcomes of the third session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

94. Introducing the sub-item, the representative of the secretariat introduced a document entitled “Note by the Secretariat on the development of the UNEA3 implementation plan ‘Towards a pollution-free planet’”, which, she said, was a work in progress and reflected feedback provided by member States. The draft plan was built on the outcomes of previous sessions of the Environment Assembly and sought to create links between them and the upcoming fourth session. She provided an overview of the plan and, in closing, drew attention to a meeting to be held in Paris on 13 and 14 May 2018 to discuss the draft plan, inviting senior representatives from regional groups to attend the meeting.

95. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the secretariat for the draft plan and said that he looked forward to reviewing it and providing further comments on the next version of the plan.

96. Responding to a request for further information on the Paris meeting, the representative of the secretariat said that some 30 to 35 participants were expected to attend the meeting, whose main purpose was to obtain feedback on the draft plan and to examine how stakeholders might be mobilized to support its implementation, for instance by investing in infrastructure for pollution prevention and control.

Agenda item 8

Programme performance report 2016–2017

97. Introducing the item, the representative of the secretariat drew attention to a document entitled “Programme performance report 2016–2017”, which, she said, had been prepared in response to Governing Council decision 25/7, in which the Governing Council had requested the Executive Director to continue to strengthen results-based management in the United Nations Environment Programme, and she outlined the results of the work undertaken by the United Nations Environment Programme relating to the second half of the medium-term strategy.

98. Another representative of the secretariat presented the main elements of the report, providing an overview of the achievements of the United Nations Environment Programme in the implementation of its programme of work 2016–2017, the results achieved under each of the seven subprogrammes, and organization and programmatic improvements achieved during the 2016–2017 biennium. In closing, he suggested that it would be beneficial to set up a working group under the next programme of work to focus on the development of the programme of work and budget 2020–2021, stressing the need to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

99. In the discussion that followed, representatives thanked the secretariat for the presentation and for the report.

100. Welcoming the information presented, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the report was very good in both content and form. It suggested that overall progress had been satisfactory. There was a need to continue the discussion on project performance with a view to better assessing and guiding the United Nations Environment Programme. In that regard, he encouraged the secretariat to identify and discuss with member States the specific reasons for a lag in performance in some areas, so as to inform the implementation of the current programme of work and the negotiations on the next one.

101. With regard to financial performance, he expressed concern over the gap between projected and actual contributions to the Environment Fund and said that there was a need to consider how earmarked and unearmarked funds were being allocated across the various subprogrammes of the Programme. The *Global Environment Outlook* process had suffered from insufficient funding because the secretariat had relied excessively on unearmarked funds. Lastly, the representative drew attention to the document entitled “Evaluation synthesis report 2016–2017”, containing important lessons that should be considered in the discussions on the new programme of work.

102. One representative highlighted a number of gaps in the information provided in the report, including a lack of discussion of the programmatic and financial challenges facing each subprogramme and of the regional and local impacts of the work undertaken under the environmental governance subprogramme, and the omission of the efforts by Latin American and Caribbean countries on ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change in the presentation, to which another representative also alluded. It was important that a greater number of Governments and private sector entities in the Latin American and the Caribbean region benefit from the global projects and programmes being implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme.

103. Drawing attention to difficulties experienced downloading the report and following the various graphics and pie charts contained in the presentation delivered at the current meeting, one representative urged the secretariat to break down the report into smaller file segments to make the downloading process easier and ensure that future presentations were as simple as possible.

104. Following the discussion, the representative of the secretariat provided details on the income, expenditures and funding gaps of each of the seven subprogrammes during the 2016–2017 biennium, which complemented the information provided in the programme performance report 2016–2017.

105. She also provided financial projections for 2018, stressing that four months into the year, pledges had amounted to about \$41 million, which represented 30 per cent of the approved budget of

\$135.5 million. Some 40 member States, representing approximately 21 per cent of the total membership of the Environment Assembly, had provided their contributions, thereby enabling the implementation of the programme of work in 2018. Further and substantial financial contributions would be required if member States were to fulfil their commitment to providing secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources for the Programme, as reflected in paragraph 88 of “The future we want”. In order to reach the approved projections and to achieve full universality in financial terms, the Programme expected to receive an additional \$94.3 million from 153 member States during 2018. In closing, she asked member States to provide their contributions for 2018, expressing the hope that the Environment Fund would reach \$75 million and that at least 70 additional member States would contribute to the Fund in 2018.

106. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that member States would have the opportunity to discuss the programme performance report 2016–2017, which would be printed for ease of reference, the evaluation synthesis report 2016–2017, financial projections, and the issues of resource mobilization and partnerships, at a subcommittee meeting on 14 June 2018, in the context of the discussions on the next programme of work and budget.

107. The Committee took note with appreciation of the programme performance report 2016–2017 and agreed to consider it further at a future meeting of the subcommittee.

Agenda item 9

Report of the Subcommittee

108. The Committee took note of a document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/142/9).

Agenda item 10

Other matters

109. The representative of Romania, speaking on behalf of the Eastern European States, requested that two members of each regional group be invited to future joint bureaux retreats in order to ensure an equal and balanced number of participants from all the regional groups. The Committee took note of the request.

Agenda item 11

Closure of the meeting

110. The meeting was declared closed at 5.40 p.m. on Thursday, 10 May 2018.
