

Committee of Permanent Representatives  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Thursday 4 October 2018  
9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.  
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri  
Conference Room 4

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

#### **Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting**

1. H.E. Mrs. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representative and High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana, opened the meeting.
2. The meeting agenda was adopted, following a proposal to reorder the agenda by way of considering Agenda Item 5 at the beginning of the meeting, before Agenda Item 2.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Briefing from the Secretariat on the Implementation of UNEA Resolution 2/19 on the fourth Programme for the Development and Period Review of Environmental Law**

3. The Secretariat presented the latest developments on the implementation of the fourth Programme for the Development and Period Review of Environmental Law, also known as the “Montevideo Programme”, and clarified that a revised draft programme for the next period will be proposed for consideration by member States at the fourth UN Environment Assembly following a broad consultative review involving Member States Focal Points and a “Friends of the Chair” group, which will be finalised in January 2019.
4. Member States welcomed the presentation, and highlighted the need for a future fifth programme to become more streamlined and focussed; the importance of developing indicators to monitoring progress; and the need to clarify the relation between the Montevideo Programme and the Global Pact on Environment. Member States also requested information on the composition of the “Friends of the Chair”.
5. The Secretariat took note of the comments made, informed the meeting of the composition of the Friends of the Chair, and clarified that the Montevideo Programme and the process related to the Global Pact for the Environment differs in many respects, including with regard to different legal basis and initiating UN body.

#### **Agenda item 3: Briefing from the Secretariat on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/277, entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”**

6. The secretariat provided a presentation on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 72/277, entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”. Under this resolution, the secretariat was entrusted with three main functions, (i) the preparation of a Secretary-General’s report that identified gaps in environmental law and environment related instruments (“gap report”); (ii) the convening of

sessions of the ad hoc open-ended working group created under the resolution and (iii) the establishment of trust funds for the receipt of voluntary contributions to fund the process and to fund the travel costs of delegates from developing countries attending the sessions. All secretariat activities under the resolution are to be funded by way of voluntary contributions.

7. The Secretariat indicated that the gap report had reached an advanced stage and was expected to be available to Member States by 30 November 2018. The organizational session had gone well and that this session had decided on the dates for the substantive sessions in Nairobi. The first substantive session would be held between the 14th to the 18th of January 2019. Furthermore, unless otherwise decided by the working group, the second session would be of three to five days' duration beginning on 18 March 2019 and the third session would be of three to five days' duration beginning on 20 May 2019.
8. The Secretariat also informed that, to date, the United Nations Environment Programme had received Euros 921,000 from the Government of France and Euros 500,000 from the European Union. We expected to receive a further Euros 500,000 from the European Union next year. As far as the costs were concerned, the three consultants who had prepared the Gap report had cost US\$82,840; conference services US\$75,528; and participants from developing countries to attend the organizational session, US\$100,000.
9. The meeting expressed broad support for the process under General Assembly resolution 72/277. Many Member States expressed a strong interest in the upcoming Secretary-General's Gap Report, and raised questions on the potential overlap between the Montevideo Programme and the Global Pact for the Environment. Other comments from Member States included the following:
  - The need for the provision of adequate financial resources to allow for the participation of delegates from developing countries, including with regard to possible preparatory meetings;
  - The process should lead to improved coherence and strengthened implementation of international environmental governance, while avoiding overlap and duplication;
  - The financial and human resources necessary to implement the General Assembly resolution should be clarified;
  - Information was requested on which Multilateral Environment Agreements and Regional Conventions had been consulted for the Gap Report;
  - Germany announced a contribution of Euros 100,000 to the process; and
  - Relevant documents had to be translated into all six official UN languages.
10. The Secretariat took note of the comments made, and emphasized that no staff had been recruited for this process and that currently all staff supporting this process were doing so in addition to their existing functions. The Secretariat emphasized that under General Assembly resolution 72/277, it was a requirement that developing countries receive financial assistance for the purpose of attending all sessions. The secretariat clarified that translation was subject to available resources but that there was sufficient funding for the translation of the Gap Report into all official languages. The Secretariat also underlined that further clarity on possible links to the Montevideo Programme review may emerge in January 2019, once the review of that Programme has been finalized.

#### **Agenda item 4: Briefing from the Secretariat on launch of the Green Coalition on the Belt and Road Initiative**

11. The Secretariat provide a progress update on the launch of a Green Coalition on the Belt and Road Initiative.

12. Member States welcomed the briefing, while reemphasizing the need for full transparency and inclusiveness for this as well as other UN Environment Programme activities and initiatives.
13. While some member States expressed their full support for the Green Coalition initiative and encouraged the UN Environment Programme to do more to green large infrastructure projects, others expressed concern about the limited opportunity for broad consultations with all interested parties to date, especially taking into account the high ambition and large scale intervention that may be necessary to deliver on this initiative. Additional comments from member States included:
  - The need to consider further how to measure overall progress for the Initiative;
  - The need to demonstrate links between the Initiative and the Programme of Work;
  - Whether a comprehensive environmental assessment of the Belt and Road Initiative as a whole is foreseen;
  - A proposal to consider the development of “hard investment criteria” as a means to deliver on the initiative.
  - A call to ensure adequate regional balance within the initiative, to promote South-South Cooperation;
  - An expression of concern about setting the Belt and Road Initiative and the Green Coalition as two separate processes instead of having environmental safeguards built into the Initiative.
14. The Secretariat welcomed the guidance received, and acknowledged the need for full transparency and inclusiveness to ensure regular guidance and ownership from the Committee on this important initiative in future, including at the upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee.
15. The Chair proposed that the Secretariat would provide a new briefing on this topic before the end of the year.

**Agenda item 6: Briefing from the Secretariat on the Interim Secretariat for China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre.**

16. The Secretariat briefed the member States on the purpose, functions and activities of the Interim Secretariat for China-Africa Environmental Cooperation Centre, which was launched on 17 August 2018.
17. Member States welcomed the briefing, and acknowledged the importance and potential positive impact of establishing a China – Africa Centre on environmental cooperation as an open and transparent platform to which all interested parties can contribute.
18. The meeting stressed the importance of government leadership in the future process to establish the centre, in particular from the main parties concerned, and underlined the need for the initiative to be pursued in accordance with the mandate and Programme of Work of the UN Environment Programme. The Secretariat was called upon to provide regular briefings on progress made, and share relevant documents with all member States.
19. Several member States expressed concerns with regard to the process so far, in particular in relation to limited transparency and inclusiveness with regard to the definition of the role of the UN Environment Programme in the initiation phase of the initiative, including in relation to the recent unveiling of the Interim Secretariat of the Centre. Some member States stressed that the legitimacy of the project will depend on a non-discriminatory participation of all willing Member States and called for an intergovernmental decision in the case that the UN Environment Programme would continue to be involved in the Centre beyond its start-up phase.

20. The Secretariat welcomed the guidance provided by the meeting, underlined the need for a continued open discussion on the establishment of the Centre, and committed to share relevant information and to brief the Committee of Permanent Representatives regularly.
21. The Chair thanked member States for their contributions, stressed the need for openness and transparency in the future work, and invited China and Africa to assume full ownership of the process to make further progress.

**Agenda item 6: Consultation on the development of the UNEA-3 Implementation Plan “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”.**

22. The Secretariat gave an update on the progress made in the development of an Implementation Plan Towards a Pollution-Free Planet, as mandated by the third session of the UN Environment Assembly.
23. The Chair announced the nomination of the Permanent Representatives from Germany and Costa Rica to act as co-facilitators for the future process, with the purpose of ensuring full ownership and engagement from Member State, in preparation for the adoption of the Plan at the next session of the Assembly.
24. Member States welcomed the presentation and the nominations, and underlined the need for extensive consultations with the Committee to ensure full transparency and ownership. Several member States also underlined the need to ensure synergies with other relevant initiatives and to promote an integrated approach which is aligned with the new Programme and Work and Budget for 2020-21. Member States also highlighted the need to consider adequate financial resources for the plan, and the importance of developing benchmarks or criteria to measure progress.
25. The co-facilitators committed to share an annotated outline of the Plan by Friday 5 October and invited member States to share their comments by Thursday 11 October, after which a discussion is foreseen to take place at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Subcommittee meeting scheduled for 22-26 October. Thereafter, a first draft of the Implementation Plan will be shared and discussed with member States in early November, with a view to finalizing it for further consideration by the fourth session of the Environment Assembly by mid-December.

**Agenda item 7: Briefing on the Outcomes of the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols.**

26. The Secretariat briefed the meeting on the outcomes of the second meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols, in view of the upcoming meeting of the Conference of Parties of the Convention.

**Agenda Item 8: Other matters**

27. No other matters were raised.

**Agenda Item 9: Closing of the meeting**

28. The meeting closed at 4:30 p.m.