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

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United  
Nations Environment Programme**  
**144th meeting**  
Nairobi, 8 January 2019

**Draft minutes of the 143rd meeting of the Committee of  
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment  
Programme, held on 28 September 2018**

**Agenda item 1**

**Opening of the meeting**

1. The meeting was opened at 10.15 a.m. on Friday, 28 September 2018, by Ms. Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations Environment Programme and Vice-Chair Committee of Permanent Representatives, on behalf of Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations Environment Programme and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme.
2. At the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee observed a minute of silence in memory of Ms. Edna Molewa, Vice-President of the United Nations Environment Assembly and Minister of Environmental Affairs of South Africa.
3. The meeting was attended by 114 participants representing 67 member States and 2 observer missions.
4. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Christian Fellner, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Michael Kassal, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria; Mr. Ivan Feys, Deputy Head of Mission of Belgium; Ms. Ilse Lauwen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. Marcus Davies, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada; Ms. Sun Baohong, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of China; Mr. Erik Lundberg, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland; Ms. Aline Kuster-Ménager, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Ms. Annett Günther, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany; Ms. Unnur Orradóttir Ramette, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Iceland; Mr. Mohammad Ichsan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia; Mr. Ziyad Tariq Kafi Ali-Midlij, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. David Eyal, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Abdullah Obaidat, Deputy Permanent Representative of Jordan; Mr. Changgyu Lee, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Mr. Lino Leopold Santacruz Moctezuma, Alternate Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Slaoui Mohamed, Deputy Head of Mission of Morocco; Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. Saif Omran Marrash Al Amri, Deputy Head of Mission/Minister Plenipotentiary of Oman; Mr. Dmitry Maksimychev, Ambassador and Representative of the Russian Federation; Ms. Frida Jangsten, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden; Ms. Sawsan Alani, Ambassador and Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic; and Mr. Daniel J. Carl, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America.

5. She then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Vincent Willekens, Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium; Mr. John Moreti, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Botswana; Mr. Jamie Pennell, Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada; Ms. Tarja Fernandez, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland; Mr. Antoine Sivan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of France; Ms. Jutta Gisela Frasc, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Germany; Mr. Yoshi Iskandar, Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia; Mr. M. Husham Al-Fityan, Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq; Mr. Michael Baruch Baro, Deputy Head of Mission and Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel; Mr. Park Ryun Min, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea; Mr. Eduardo Alcibiades Sanchez, Alternate Deputy Permanent Representative of Mexico; Mr. Abderrahim Cherrah, Deputy Head of Mission of Morocco; Mr. Victor Conrad Ronneberg, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Norway; Mr. Saleh Mohamed Alsuqri, Deputy Head of Mission/Minister Plenipotentiary of Oman; Mr. Alexander Makarenko, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation; Mr. Elsadig Abdalla Elias Diab, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sudan; Ms. Ulrica Reuterwall, Deputy Permanent Representative of Sweden; Mr. Abdulmonem Annan, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic; and Mr. Joel B. Hansen, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States.

## **Agenda item 2**

### **Adoption of the agenda**

6. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda and the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/143/1 and UNEP/CPR/143/1/Add.1).

## **Agenda item 3**

### **Adoption of the draft minutes of 142nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

7. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 142nd meeting, held on 10 May 2018, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/143/2).

## **Agenda item 4**

### **Report of the Executive Director**

8. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Quarterly report to the 143rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives”, which summarized activities carried out by the secretariat since the previous meeting of the Committee.

9. In his oral briefing, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, Mr. Erik Solheim, began by drawing attention to a letter that he had sent to Committee members addressing unwelcome media articles on the preliminary findings of an ongoing audit of the official travel of the United Nations Environment Programme by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. The secretariat expected the audit to be finalized within the following four to six weeks, at which time the matter would be discussed further with member States. He said that, as noted in his letter, the management team was taking proactive steps to correct and prevent the reoccurrence of any mistakes that had been made and to ensure that proper systems were in place to secure complete accountability in the management of resources.

10. He stressed that travelling to member States was an essential part of his work and that all the trips he had undertaken had been at the invitation of member States. In the spirit of full transparency, all his trips in 2018 would be listed on the website of the United Nations Environment Programme, together with the outcomes of each trip, as would his future travel. Travel undertaken by the Executive Director prior to 2018 would also be made available if so requested by member States. The travel control framework of the Programme would be revised to tighten compliance and accountability, and would move from a system based on self-audit to one overseen by the office of the Secretary-General. In addition, the secretariat would examine ways of reducing travel costs, including by increasing the use of alternative means of discussion and communication, such as video messages and Skype, and reducing the size of its delegations to meetings, and of strengthening financial controls and accountability under the leadership of the Deputy Executive Director. The Executive Director had decided to reduce travel for the remainder of 2018 in order to spend more time with staff and representatives of member States in Nairobi.

11. The Secretariat was also examining ways of strengthening its human resources policies, including those related to flexible working arrangements, to ensure that they were fully in line with the rules of the United Nations Secretariat. Staff would still be encouraged to use flexible working arrangements and to focus on delivering results. Offering flexible working arrangements was a significant factor in attracting the interest of and recruiting the most competent women.

12. A new Deputy Executive Director, Ms. Joyce Msuya, had recently joined the senior management team and would focus on exploring ways of delivering results throughout the organization and improving the generation of income from middle-income countries, foundations and the private sector, as well as traditional donors. The heads of the New York office and the Corporate Services Division had also been recruited, and it was to be hoped that the posts of the directors of the ecosystems and science divisions and the Europe office would be filled within the following few weeks. A leadership team retreat would be held in November 2018, and a system would be put in place to enable staff to convey their comments and wishes to the leadership team for consideration at the retreat.

13. The United Nations Environment Programme had achieved gender parity in the top four positions and lower level positions, but not at the levels of D-1 and P-5 management posts, where only 38 per cent of staff members were women. Further efforts would be needed to achieve gender parity within the following few years. Achieving geographical balance would require even more work, since 55 per cent of staff came from Europe and North America, compared to, for instance, only 16 per cent from Asia. Given that the United Nations websites used to announce vacancies tended to be used by those already working in the system, ways were being explored of obtaining a wider range of applicants from developing countries.

14. Significant progress had been achieved with regard to plastics and oceans. In India, Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, had committed to phasing out single-use plastics by 2022, and other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific and Africa were trying to find ways of drastically curbing the use of plastics. The European Union had prohibited a number of plastic products and, in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme, it planned to establish a global plastics platform that would enable all countries to share their experiences and best practices and to connect with companies and other stakeholders interested in turning plastic problems into business opportunities. Canada had hosted a Group of Seven meeting of ministers responsible for the environment, energy and oceans, which had focused on ocean and plastic pollution issues, and both France, as the President of the Group of Seven, and Japan, as the President of the Group of Twenty, would address the issue of plastics within each Group. On the related issue of waste management, the United Nations Environment Programme planned to partner with the United States Environmental Protection Agency to set up a new global platform for the sharing of experiences in waste management. With the support of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Governments of Kenya and Canada would be co-hosting an oceans conference entitled the “Sustainable Blue Economy Conference” in Nairobi from 26 to 28 November 2018.

15. Progress had also been made in the area of innovation. During the Global Climate Action Summit, held in San Francisco, United States, from 12 to 14 September 2018, the United Nations Environment Programme had discussed the possibility of partnering with Google to use satellite imagery as part of an innovative environmental monitoring tool that would help Governments to enforce environmental legislation, including on deforestation, fisheries and protected areas. At the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, held in Nairobi from 17 to 21 September 2018, member States had adopted a declaration on innovation and voiced a strong desire to develop an African platform for the environment under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme. Following his visit to five West African countries in June 2018, the Programme was exploring ways of supporting the countries in priority areas, namely, waste management, coastal erosion, protection of forests and wildlife, renewable energy and clean city transportation.

16. In 2020, a new greenhouse gas emissions compensation system for airlines would be launched. The resources collected through the system would be used to finance forest conservation and other environmental programmes, and the United Nations Environment Programme planned to set up a global clearing-house mechanism with a view to ensuring that those resources were well spent.

17. The first discussions on the global pact for the environment process would be held in Nairobi from 14 to 18 January 2019 and would be co-chaired by the permanent representatives of Lebanon and Portugal to the United Nations in New York. The United Nations Environment Programme would release a Secretary-General’s report in November providing an overview of existing international environmental mechanisms and programmes in order to contribute to those discussions.

18. In April 2019, the United Nations Environment Programme would launch the “Last game at the North Pole”, an international hockey game that would draw attention to the rapid deterioration of the

Arctic environment. Major sports leaders, including legendary Russian hockey player, Mr. Viacheslav Fetisov, who had been appointed as Patron for the Polar regions by the United Nations Environment Programme, would participate in the game, which both the Pope and the patriarch of the Orthodox Church were supporting.

19. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the Executive Director for his oral briefing and the Secretariat for the quarterly report. They also extended a warm welcome to the new Deputy Executive Director and expressed satisfaction regarding her planned role in facilitating reforms to improve the financial accountability and transparency of the United Nations Environment Programme.

20. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, called for more systematic references to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly in the quarterly reports. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, reiterated his earlier request that the Secretariat provide implementation updates and implementation plans for all the resolutions of the Environment Assembly, thereby contributing to their implementation and follow-up. Another representative said that the importance of setting up a robust mechanism to review and monitor the implementation of all the United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions could not be overemphasized.

21. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the Executive Director to provide details regarding the greening the belt and road initiative, the proposed China-Africa environmental cooperation centre, and the proposed world environment forum, including the role envisaged for the United Nations Environment Programme therein.

22. Another representative asked the Executive Director to comment on the opportunities that the reform of the United Nations development system presented to the United Nations Environment Programme and requested that future quarterly reports provide updates on the internal reform efforts to make the Programme more effective and efficient.

23. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, called for greater transparency around partnerships with private sector entities, including the due diligence process to assess potential partners and a list of all the agreements recently concluded with private sector entities and those projected for the near future. They suggested that while partnerships were important to the success of the Programme, they should be entered into in a careful manner and in consultation with member States in order to safeguard the reputation and work of the Programme and build trust between management and member States. One representative requested that the scope of the quarterly reports be widened to include partnerships, not only with the private sector but also with non-profit entities, stressing that all partners were important and could help the United Nations Environment Programme to deliver on its mandate.

24. The same representative said that his Government had repeatedly voiced its concerns regarding private sector partnerships and had requested the Secretariat to provide a list of all the memorandums of understanding concluded over the previous 18 months. The Secretariat had provided an unsatisfactory explanation for its failure to produce such a list, namely that no central register existed for all such memorandums. He said that he had expressed concern about the due diligence process used to assess potential partners, since available documents showed that a number of important changes had been made to the process, including the relocation of the private sector unit from the Corporate Services Division to the Governance Affairs Office, major changes to the workflows of partnerships with private sector entities, the use of different policies for different kinds of partners, and the replacement of the Partnership Committee with a fast-track process for the swift approval of memorandums of understanding with private sector entities. He requested the secretariat to provide a list of all the memorandums of understanding concluded over the previous 18 months; to add the issue of partnerships, including the due diligence processes to evaluate potential partners, to the agenda of the fifth annual subcommittee meeting; and to produce a single, comprehensive document describing the due diligence processes, guidelines and workflows applicable to partnerships with both non-profit and for-profit entities for consideration and possible approval by the Committee. By providing that information, he said, the secretariat could demonstrate its commitment to transparency and allow member States to review the current system and determine whether further guidance or follow-up actions were needed.

25. Another representative said that it was important to respond to member State requests without delay and to assess the benefits of memorandums of understanding signed in the past as well as addressing any concerns arising from specific memorandums. He also expressed the view that the due diligence process to assess potential partners should be expeditious.

26. On the subject of the ongoing audit of the official travel of the United Nations Environment Programme, many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, lamented the fact that a preliminary draft of the audit report had been leaked, which, said one, had the potential to cause undue damage to the Programme. One representative suggested that it would be beneficial to look at past audits of the Programme and how the organization had responded to them, noting that leaks tended to emerge when there was an impression of past inaction.
27. Many representatives said that they would wait for the release of the final audit report to discuss its findings and recommendations. Several representatives expressed concern about the preliminary findings and the fact that some member States were withholding funding as a result of those findings. One representative said that his Government's contributions to the United Nations Environment Programme had come with the highest expectation of professionalism, accountability and the exercise of prudence on the part of the secretariat in discharging its functions and in managing resources. Another representative said that her Government had decided to withhold its contribution to the Environment Fund when questions had first arisen about the use of funds in the United Nations Environment Programme, stressing that when an organization was being audited it was standard practice to await the results of the audit and to consider the measures that the audited organization had taken in response thereto.
28. Many representatives welcomed the proactive steps taken by the Programme's management towards ensuring greater transparency and management accountability and conveyed their expectation that appropriate corrective action, including all the steps set out by the Executive Director in his letter to the Committee, would be taken, and that member States would be consulted and kept fully apprised of the situation. One representative said that it was crucial that the Programme demonstrate that it provided donors with good value for money by improving its financial management and by placing a strong focus on delivering the results foreseen in its programme of work.
29. One representative said that there was a need to build trust between management and member States and stressed that many of the corrective steps proposed by the Executive Director in his letter had been requested by member States at past Committee meetings. He recommended that the secretariat consistently summarize, circulate and include in management action plans, and in the quarterly reports to the Committee, the inputs and recommendations of member States, particularly those relating to management, in order to show how they were being addressed and demonstrate to member States that management was responsive to their requests.
30. Another representative commended the secretariat for its improved communication with the public, but said that it must improve its communication with member States, which was crucial to being more transparent and inclusive and to engaging with, and getting feedback from, the membership of the Environment Assembly. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, reiterated his proposal for creating an interactive platform to enable member States to pose questions and make suggestions to the secretariat in advance of Committee meetings and enable the secretariat to prepare answers and identify relevant speakers for such meetings.
31. With regard to travel, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked the secretariat to explain how the trips of the Executive Director described in the quarterly report had contributed to achieving the expected accomplishments set out in the approved programme of work and budget. Another representative queried whether the Executive Director had been given adequate advice by his team about travel-related costs or excessive travelling, suggesting that internal changes would be needed if that had not been the case. Cautioning against excessively restricting the freedom of the Executive Director to travel, he stressed nonetheless that the travel rules of the United Nations were fixed and, while creative solutions could be found to lower travel costs, it was important to examine how other United Nations entities handled such matters.
32. Concerning financial resources, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the secretariat for providing information on income and allocation of funds. Together with another representative, he expressed serious concern that, despite the universal membership of the Environment Assembly, only one-third of member States were contributing to the Environment Fund. He urged the Executive Director to engage more with member States and take all the necessary steps to persuade current and potential contributors that supporting the Programme was a good use of taxpayer money, which would require ensuring that contributions were invested in highly relevant activities linked to its programme of work and were managed carefully and responsibly.
33. Another representative said that ensuring accountability and transparency of secretariat activities was critical for attracting private and public sector partners.

34. One representative expressed concern that the United Nations Environment Programme currently lacked adequate financial resources to implement the activities set out in its programme of work for the period 2018–2019 related to sand and dust storms, which was a serious international environmental problem affecting millions of people. Another representative said that the implementation of the activities set out in the programme of work should be the uppermost priority of the United Nations Environment Programme.
35. With regard to human resources, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern about the very lengthy recruitment process for management personnel, which led to prolonged post vacancies or ad interim arrangements in key managerial positions that were critical for the organization and its delivery of results. He said that, while some recruitment issues were system-wide, the United Nations Environment Programme should take steps to avoid recurrent delays in recruitment and the re-advertisement of posts. Together with several other representatives, he called on senior management to engage more and consult with staff, which, said one representative, was crucial for improving the working environment of the organization. One representative said that it was especially important that inclusive, open and transparent consultations be held with all staff members throughout the internal reform process. Another representative expressed the hope that the improvements resulting from the internal reform would be reflected in the United Nations global staff satisfaction survey in the following years.
36. Two representatives asked the secretariat to engage more with specific regions, including by supporting worthwhile projects. Several representatives highlighted activities described in the report.
37. A number of representatives welcomed the holding of the negotiations on the global pact for the environment at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme, with one expressing the view that the negotiations would only succeed if they were properly inclusive. To that end, her Government had contributed €500,000 to facilitate the participation of developing countries in the process. She also expressed her full support for bolstering the role of the United Nations Office at Nairobi within the United Nations system.
38. Two representatives drew attention to their recent financial and in-kind contributions to the United Nations Environment Programme and said that they would continue to support the Programme in the future. Another representative reported that his Government planned to expand its donor contributions to international development, including in the field of the environment.
39. The representative of China expressed an interest in holding the 2019 World Environment Day celebrations in China.
40. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of the Latin American and Caribbean States urged the secretariat to revise the quarterly report and to consistently use the term “Latin America and the Caribbean”, rather than only “Latin America”, when referring to that region.
41. The representative of Ukraine, requesting that his statement be reflected in the present report, asked the secretariat to correct a mistake on page 35 of the report, which implied that two regions of Ukraine were regions of the Russian Federation, and to avoid such mistakes in the future. He further requested the Russian Federation not to politicize the work of the United Nations Environment Programme.
42. The representative of the Russian Federation said that his Government was against any such politicization and expressed the view that the constitutional setup of the Russian Federation was not a subject to be discussed in the context of the United Nations Environment Programme.
43. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director said that the secretariat would revise the quarterly report to refer correctly to the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and to describe its partnership with Russian Fairs LLC in a neutral way that satisfied both parties.
44. Responding to the other issues raised by representatives, the Executive Director said that the United Nations Environment Programme would continue to facilitate the establishment of the China-Africa environmental cooperation centre, which would be set up in Nairobi and would be a clear example of South-South cooperation, and to examine means of further engagement in certain regions, including the Balkans. He also offered to respond in writing, or informally, to specific questions posed regarding financial matters; the coalition for the greening the belt and road initiative, which was expected to be launched in Beijing in May 2019; and the World Environment Forum, which was an initiative of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Governments of Canada and China that would involve holding a major conference in China in June 2019.

45. The Executive Director agreed that the length of the recruitment process was frustrating and he invited interested member States to share their ideas on possible measures to resolve that problem. He noted that it had been necessary to re-advertise the position of director of the Europe Office owing to a complaint raised by a staff member. As for the questions related to his past travel, he said that information on all his trips and how they had contributed to the outcomes of the organization was available on the website of the Programme.

46. He said that he would find a suitable format to provide information on engagement with the private sector, stressing that the secretariat was moving step by step towards full transparency in every area, which, he believed, was crucial for the Programme to succeed. Member States should be able to scrutinize all partnerships. He assured the Committee that the United Nations Environment Programme was working not only with the private sector, but also with major non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations to develop joint activities and partnerships.

47. With regard to member State contributions, the Executive Director thanked those Governments that had made or increased their contributions to the Programme and expressed the hope that more middle-income countries would start to contribute to the Programme. Stressing the importance of unearmarked contributions to the Environment Fund, he expressed the view that most contributions would be earmarked in the future, so, in addition to consolidating non-earmarked funding, there was a need to create partnerships in order to attract resources. He also suggested that the only way of obtaining resources was to deserve them, and he emphasized that the Deputy Executive Director, with his full support, would be in charge of ensuring accountability and full transparency in the management of resources.

48. Despite the enormous progress made in the area of communications, the Executive Director said that the Programme must further improve its internal and external communications and, noting that communications required considerable resources, including for staff and equipment, he asked member States to support such efforts.

49. Emphasizing the importance of the ongoing intergovernmental work on marine litter and microplastics, he said that that work must be supplemented with efforts to reach out to the private sector in order to obtain its support for concrete action; he invited Committee members to nominate possible ambassadors and patrons of the environment to that end. As for sand and dust storms, he said that the issue had been addressed as a priority at a recent meeting of the Environment Management Group. Consideration was being given to actions to tackle that grave environmental problem, including ways of establishing better early warning systems.

50. With regard to the internal reform of the United Nations Environment Programme, he said that the secretariat would dedicate additional time to staff issues and ensure that all staff were brought into the reform process, including through improved communication, with a view to minimizing the tensions that inevitably arose from reforms. As for the reform of the United Nations development system, one of the key opportunities that it presented to the United Nations Environment Programme was the ability to expand its presence in different regions and countries by appointing staff members to join the teams of United Nations resident coordinators, rather than by creating new offices, which would save the organization considerable resources. All the regional directors had been asked to develop plans for responding to the reform.

51. Lastly, with regard to the ongoing audit and travel-related issues, the Executive Director said that the Secretariat would continue to act on the preliminary findings of the audit and address all the issues raised in the final audit report, and that it would do so in an open and transparent manner and in consultation with member States. The travel expenses of the United Nations Environment Programme were actually lower than those of sister entities, but he would ensure that all travel was in full compliance with the regulations and rules of the United Nations. He also noted that he would strive to improve the balance between his time in Nairobi and in other locations.

52. Following the discussion, at the suggestion of the Chair, the Committee requested the Executive Director to include, in his next report to the Committee, the findings of the final audit report and any action taken in response to those findings.

## **Agenda item 5**

### **Outcomes of the second joint retreat of the bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

53. The Chair drew attention to a document entitled “2nd Joint Preparatory Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, 6-7 Sept. 2018 Tallinn, Estonia: Chair’s Summary”, which summarized the outcomes of the second joint retreat of the

bureaux of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, held in Tallinn on 6 and 7 September 2018. She said that the retreat had been a milestone in the preparations for a successful fourth session of the Environment Assembly and had, in a collaborative and transparent manner, resulted in a number of concrete decisions and guidance to member States and the secretariat. Among the key outcomes of the retreat was a guidance note endorsed by the Bureaux on the submission of resolutions to be considered at the fourth session. The note recommended that member States inform the Secretariat of their intention to submit resolutions, either through the submission of a finalized draft resolution or a concept note explaining the rationale and content of the draft resolution, by 15 November 2018; and the submission of all draft resolutions to the secretariat by 21 January 2019. She encouraged representatives to ensure that those deadlines were duly respected, without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly.

54. The representative of the Secretariat thanked the participants in the retreat and expressed appreciation for the comments provided by the Bureaux on the documents presented at the retreat, including the communications strategy for the Environment Assembly. Providing an update on the preparations for the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, he said that the Secretariat had shared with member States a note on the outline of the Executive Director's report to the Environment Assembly at its fourth session, and he invited members to submit their comments thereon by 5 October 2018. A first draft of the report, which he said would be succinct, action-oriented and anchored in the major global assessments to be presented at the fourth session, would be made available on the platform for draft resolutions on 29 October 2018. Member States would be afforded an opportunity to submit comments through the platform. The Secretariat would convene a subcommittee meeting to further discuss the draft report on 8 November 2018 and, in order to meet the deadlines for the submission of documents, it would present an advance version of the report during the first week of December and seek its final endorsement by member States at the regular Committee meeting to be held on 8 January 2019.

55. With regard to the regional preparations for the fourth session, a robust process had been put in place. A very successful seventh special session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment had recently concluded in Nairobi with the adoption of a ministerial declaration on theme of the fourth session and a document on Africa's contributions to the session. Similar ministerial meetings would be held in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean from 9 to 12 October 2018; South-eastern and Southern Europe on 4 and 5 December 2018; and the Asia-Pacific region from 23 to 26 January 2019.

56. Lastly, concerning the proposed action plan towards a pollution-free planet as one of the potential outcomes of the fourth session, he said the Secretariat would hold a dedicated session on the plan on 4 October 2018.

57. The Special Envoy of Estonia, Mr. Ado Lõhmus, speaking on behalf of the President of the United Nations Environment Assembly, thanked all the participants in the joint Bureaux retreat for their constructive engagement. He highlighted some of the retreat's outcomes and post-retreat developments, including the provision of guidance to the Secretariat in the preparation of the concept note on the theme of the fourth session, guidelines for the preparation of draft resolutions and a draft outline of a ministerial declaration for consideration and possible adoption at the session. The Bureaux had also mandated the Secretariat to start developing a vision for the long-term environmental agenda of the Environment Assembly, taking into account that the year 2022 would mark 50 years since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which had led to the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme, and was therefore an important milestone in its history.

58. With regard to the draft outline of the ministerial declaration, he said that the valuable comments received during the retreat would be incorporated into the draft outline, assisting the President in the preparation of a zero draft of the declaration, which would be released on 15 October 2018. All the member States would have an opportunity to provide comments on the document in the period up until the beginning of December 2018.

59. Expressing the hope that member States would respect the voluntary guidelines for the preparation of resolutions endorsed by the Bureaux, in particular the deadline of 21 January 2019 for the submission of all draft resolutions, he said that the guidelines would enable the production of comparable documents that would facilitate substantive discussions on, and the building of strong alliances around, all the resolutions. In addition to holding consultations on the draft resolutions, it was essential that member States hold extensive consultations on the programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021 and on the draft action plan for a pollution-free planet. In closing, he said that the President had received valuable input from the major groups and stakeholders, who were seeking to be more involved in the preparatory process for sessions of the Environment Assembly.



60. Two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation to the Secretariat and to the Government of Estonia for a very successful joint retreat of the Bureaux, which had been highly inclusive and had resulted in fruitful outcomes based on consensus, as set out in the detailed Chair's summary on the matter. One representative emphasized the importance of abiding by the deadlines endorsed by the Bureaux, and called on the Secretariat and the Presidency of the Environment Assembly to consider the proceedings of regional meetings of ministers of the environment when drafting the Executive Director's report to, and the draft ministerial declaration for consideration at, the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

61. One representative requested the Secretariat to ensure that regional groups were equally represented in future joint retreats of the bureaux, stressing that not all the regional groups had been equally represented at the first and second retreats. She also suggested that the summaries of future joint retreats should be produced by both co-Chairs.

62. In response to a comment from the floor, the Special Envoy of Estonia confirmed that his Government would produce and share with member States, in October 2018, the summary of a one-day conference on environmental solutions that had been held in Tallinn immediately before the joint Bureaux retreat.

63. Responding to questions raised by another representative, the representative of the Secretariat reported that the secretariat had not yet drafted the concept note for the leadership dialogues to be held at the Environment Assembly session. A subcommittee meeting would be held to consult with member States on the dialogue themes with a view to ensuring that all member States were fully satisfied with the themes selected. Confirming that the Bureaux had agreed to the concept note produced by the secretariat on the theme of the fourth session at their joint retreat, he noted that the secretariat's approach to innovation and to the third focus area proposed in the concept note, namely "Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change", was extremely broad and encompassed a wide range of actors, including scientists, academics and non-governmental organizations, and not only the private sector. He noted that the secretariat had presented the focus areas without prejudice to issues or solutions that member States might wish to raise.

## **Agenda item 6**

### **Preparations for the fifth meeting of the annual subcommittee**

64. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled "Proposed structure of the 5th annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme", which outlined the proposed structure of the meeting, to be held in Nairobi from 22 to 26 October 2018, as well as the draft provisional agenda and draft annotated provisional agenda for the meeting (UNEP/CPR/SC/2018/1 and UNEP/CPR/SC/2018/Add.1).

65. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives, each speaking on behalf of a group of countries highlighted as the key objectives of the fifth annual subcommittee meeting the review of the implementation and impacts of the current programme of work and budget for the period 2018–2019 and the drafting of the new programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021. They stressed that the latter should build on lessons learned from the implementation of the former and that consideration of programme performance reports was therefore crucial. One representative sought additional information on progress achieved in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Environment Assembly, while another suggested that programme performance reporting should show more clearly the link between implemented activities and concrete results achieved.

66. With regard to the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, one representative reiterated his request that the Secretariat clarify the implications of the different options proposed for the budget, stressing that there was a need to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each option and how the proposed budget related to anticipated resources and proposed activities. He suggested that it would be useful to discuss how to find a balance between realistic estimates and more ambitious resource mobilization projections. He emphasized the need to understand the impact of the target set for the Environment Fund on the motivation of contributors and on the voluntary indicative scale of contributions mechanism; to include a prioritization plan in the new programme of work and budget in case resources did not meet expectations and pledges; and to ensure that the special initiatives proposed by the Executive Director contributed fully to the objectives of the programme of work and budget. He further suggested that, when drafting the programme of work for the period 2020–2021, consideration should be given to ways of strengthening South-South cooperation and engagement with the private sector.

67. One representative, noting that it was during subcommittee meetings that the Committee best assumed its governance and oversight role of the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular

with regard to budgetary matters, urged the secretariat and the Bureau of the Committee to consider allotting sufficient time during the fifth annual subcommittee meeting to discuss cross-cutting issues, such as the role of partnerships as a tool for implementing the programme of work; ensuring that the subcommittee was given an overall bird's eye view of the proposed budget and was able to understand the underlying assumptions of the secretariat and assess the validity of the proposed budget options; ensuring that, in meetings dedicated to reviewing each subprogramme, updates on the implementation of the current programme of work and the implementation of resolutions of the Environment Assembly were as succinct as possible so that sufficient time was allotted to the new programme of work and the links between its narrative part and its proposed budget; and ensuring that the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, including its narrative part and a detailed budget, was published at the beginning of October 2018.

68. The representative of the Secretariat said that the Secretariat would discuss with the Bureau the requests and suggestions presented by representatives and urged Committee members to provide as soon as possible any additional comments on the proposed structure of the upcoming meeting. With regard to the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, he said that member States had been invited to provide comments on the draft document by 28 September 2018, and that the secretariat would produce, by 4 October 2018, a revised version of the document on the basis of comments received in order to enable member States to consult with their capitals in advance of the fifth annual subcommittee meeting.

69. Responding to a question on the secretariat's expectations for the meeting, the representative of the secretariat said that member States were expected to provide as much guidance as possible on the draft programme of work and budget for the period 2020–2021, with a view to enabling the secretariat to finalize the document for consideration by the Committee at its 144th regular meeting, in December 2018, after which time there would be limited opportunity to make changes to the document, in view of the need to meet document translation requirements by 21 January 2019.

## **Agenda item 7**

### **Implementation of United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/8, entitled "Sustainable consumption and production"**

70. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the Secretariat entitled "Progress made pursuant to UN Environment Assembly resolution 2/8, entitled 'Sustainable consumption and production'". She said that the update on the implementation of resolution 2/8 was very timely, in the light of the discussions on Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns) by the High-level Political Forum at its meeting in July 2018, and in view of the related theme of the upcoming fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

71. Mr. Charles Arden-Clarke, Head of the Secretariat of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, Economy Division, United Nations Environment Programme, delivered a presentation on progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 2/8 under the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, noting that the Framework directly supported Sustainable Development Goal 12 and resolution 2/8. He drew attention to the adoption of a total of 303 policies on sustainable consumption and production by 71 countries and the European Union to date, and the One Planet Network, a multi-stakeholder partnership comprising over 600 partners, which had been established in 2013 for the implementation of the 10-Year Framework. The partnership had developed and in some cases piloted more than 1,800 tools and resources to achieve sustainable consumption and production patterns and included civil society; national Governments; business, scientific and technical organizations; and United Nations and other intergovernmental organizations. Its work was focused around six programmes for action, namely public procurement, buildings and construction, tourism, food systems, consumer information, and lifestyles and education.

72. One of the tools being developed under the partnership was a hotspot analysis tool that would help Governments and other stakeholders to identify unsustainable consumption and production hotspots, which was critical to prioritizing action. The tool would enable users to enter their own data and, by incorporating key metrics such as resource depletion, greenhouse gases, climate change, water use and impacts, land use and biodiversity. The tool would show that achieving sustainable consumption and production patterns was key to achieving 50 out of the 169 targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, and that Goal 12 on sustainable consumption and production patterns was therefore very much a transversal Goal. Despite the existence of numerous policies, tools and resources on sustainable consumption and production, the implementation of such policies and tools remained very weak. Existing activities were small in scale and fragmented, and funding for the implementation of projects

was grossly inadequate. In fact, despite its importance to other goals, a 2017 report by the Secretary-General showed that Sustainable Development Goal 12 was the least-resourced of all the Goals. There was a need, therefore, to better coordinate and scale up the delivery of activities on sustainable consumption and production, and to secure large-scale funding for the implementation of Goal 12.

73. In an effort to promote coordination and secure greater resources for the implementation of Goal 12, five United Nations partners in the One Planet Network, namely the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, had established the One Planet multi-partner trust fund for Sustainable Development Goal 12. The primary objective of the fund was the delivery by the five entities and their partners of coordinated and comprehensive projects at scale that could be integrated into United Nations country teams for the implementation of the network's "One Plan for One Planet" strategy for the period 2018–2022 in the pursuit of Sustainable Development Goal 12. Both the strategy and the multi-partner trust fund were aligned with the medium-term strategy 2018–2021 and the programme of work 2018–2019 of the United Nations Environment Programme, and contributed directly to achieving expected accomplishments under the organization's resource efficiency subprogramme. He expressed the hope that, with the creation of the new trust fund, further progress would be achieved in the implementation of resolution 2/18, on the relationship between the United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariats, including with regard to funding, by the Environment Assembly at its fourth session.

74. In the ensuing discussion, all the representatives who spoke thanked Mr. Arden-Clarke for his presentation and expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for progress achieved in the implementation of resolution 2/8, stressing the importance of Sustainable Development Goal 12 and the achievement of sustainable consumption and production patterns.

75. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, drew attention to a circular economy action plan implemented in his region and in the countries of the region in making the transition from a linear and wasteful economy to a low-carbon, resource efficient and circular one. A similar transition was required at the global level in order to achieve sustainable development, as reflected in resolution 2/8. He expressed his commitment to global-level action on sustainable consumption and production and cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme to support a global transition to a low-carbon, resource-efficient and circular economy premised on more sustainable consumption and production patterns. Stressing the need for greater synergies between the 10-Year Framework and other initiatives led by the United Nations Environment Programme, such as the International Resource Panel and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, he called on the Executive Director to ensure that the findings of the International Resource Panel's first global assessment of natural resource use and management, to be launched during the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, were duly considered and reflected in the work of the United Nations Environment Programme.

76. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, advocated raising the profile of the One Planet Network partnership within the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and, expressing concern that Sustainable Development Goal 12 was one of the least resourced Goals, recommended that the Secretariat do its utmost to obtain financial resources to accelerate progress towards its implementation. Another representative, stressing that sustainable consumption and production was a tool for development and poverty eradication, expressed the hope that the fourth session of the Environment Assembly would increase the visibility of sustainable consumption and production and lead to increased funding for Goal 12.

77. Two representatives reiterated a request, made at a previous Committee meeting and in other forums, that the secretariat provide similar implementation plans and updates for all the resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly.

78. Responding to the comment, the representative of the secretariat noted that updates on as many resolutions as possible were provided at Committee meetings and said that the secretariat would endeavour to provide updates on three resolutions at the latest by the next meeting.

79. Responding to a question about specific actions that member States could take to advance sustainable consumption and production, Mr. Arden-Clarke said that member States could strengthen the implementation of existing sustainable consumption and production policies, including by mobilizing domestic financial and human resources for that purpose; join the One Planet Network's programmes and activities; ensure that appropriate interministerial coordination mechanisms for

sustainable consumption and production were in place; and make financial contributions to the One Planet multi-partner trust fund for Sustainable Development Goal 12.

80. The Executive Director said that, in addition to supporting the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on sustainable consumption and production, in striving to achieve such sustainability Governments should ensure the adoption of appropriate policies in areas such as public procurement and the regulation of markets. He also stressed the importance of moving away from end-of-pipe solutions and designing products that could be recycled and whose components could be reused. In closing, he noted that the issue of making the transition to a circular economy would be considered at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly.

## **Agenda item 8**

### **Discussion on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities**

81. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a note by the Secretariat entitled “Future direction of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities” (UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/3/Rev.1), which summarized recent global developments that had serious implications for the future direction of the Global Programme of Action and identified possible policy approaches for consideration by Governments during the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting of the Global Programme of Action, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, from 31 October to 1 November 2018. The outcome of the meeting in Bali would feed into the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, to be held in March 2019.

82. Ms. Lisa Svensson, Oceans Director, United Nations Environment Programme, delivered a presentation on the Global Programme of Action and its possible future direction. Recalling that the Programme, whose secretariat was provided by the United Nations Environment Programme, had been established in 1995 to protect the marine environment from land-based pollution, she said that the current focus of the Programme was on addressing three major sources of marine pollution, namely nutrients, marine litter and wastewater, through three multi-stakeholder partnerships.

83. Much had changed, she said, since 1995, including the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the adoption of a number of marine pollution-related resolutions and declarations by the United Nations Environment Assembly. She drew attention to multiple developments and activities in the international oceans agenda since 2017 and emphasized the importance of member States discussing the challenges facing the Global Programme of Action, including limited country involvement in the Programme; difficulty maintaining the momentum in the light of five-yearly meetings of its governing body, the Intergovernmental Review Meeting; weak inter-agency cooperation; limited political awareness of the Programme and its goals, including in the context of many of the multiple recent initiatives on oceans; and a complete lack of member State contributions to its trust fund since 2011.

84. In order to facilitate a discussion by member States on the future of the Global Programme of Action, the secretariat had prepared a paper presenting three options for their consideration. The first option, business as usual, entailed strengthening the Programme and continuing to hold Intergovernmental Review Meetings every five years to review progress in the implementation of declarations and work plans approved by member States. The main challenge under this option would be resource mobilization. Under the second option, the three partnerships of the Global Programme of Action would be integrated into the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme. Thus, the United Nations Environment Assembly would govern the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on marine pollution, guiding activities by means of its resolutions and ministerial outcomes on oceans as well as the national action plans developed to meet Sustainable Development Goal targets 14.1, on oceans, and 6.3, on land-based pollution. The capacities and actions of the regional seas programmes would be strengthened and further integrated into such work. Option 3 represented a combination of the first two options, preserving the Intergovernmental Review Meeting but holding its meetings either back-to-back with sessions of the Environment Assembly or, in any case, more frequently than every five years. Work on oceans would be guided by the resolutions of the Environment Assembly and implemented through the United Nations Environment Programme. As for option 1, the main challenge under option 3 would be obtaining financial resources.

85. In closing, she suggested that, in considering the three options, member States should take into account developments in the wider oceans and marine pollution agenda, including the ongoing work of the ad hoc open ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics, and reflect on what would constitute the most effective governing body for oceans, ways of exploiting interlinkages and synergies

between the oceans agenda and the 2030 Agenda, and ways of creating and strengthening multi-stakeholder partnerships to tackle marine pollution.

86. In the ensuing discussion, representatives thanked the secretariat for the information provided, stressing the key role played by the Global Programme of Action in mobilizing efforts to address land-based sources of marine pollution. There was general agreement that, given the proliferation of initiatives on oceans and marine pollution, the time was right to reflect on the Programme's future role and formulate a recommendation in that regard.

87. Referring to the three options set out in the note by the secretariat (UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/3/Rev.1), two representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that they could support option B, which provided for the integration of the work of the Global Programme of Action into the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the holding of Intergovernmental Review Meetings back-to-back with sessions of the Environment Assembly. Both representatives said that clarification was needed regarding the implications of option B, including on the activities proposed thereunder. One representative said that she could also support option C, under which the Global Programme of Action would be disbanded, but she asked the secretariat to explain whether the activities proposed under option B could be absorbed into the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme should option C be chosen. She also expressed support for changing and shortening the name of the Global Programme of Action, and said that her Government, which had played a leading role in making oceans a major issue within the Group of Seven, was actively looking into making contributions to the Global Programme of Action trust fund.

88. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, sought clarification on all the proposed options with regard to how duplication of effort would be avoided, the advantages, disadvantages and costs of each option, the roles of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Environment Assembly under each option, and the consequences of each option for the continuation of the activities of the Global Programme of Action. Irrespective of the preferred option, the secretariat should also describe activities and pollution areas that needed to be covered in the future, taking into account the need to ensure the most efficient use of resources. He suggested that, pending the outcome of the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting should take a decision on its future set-up and its possible relationship with the Environment Assembly, recognizing that the Environment Assembly, including the United Nations Environment Programme, might be the appropriate forum for addressing land-based pollution.

89. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed a commitment to actively participating in the regional seas conventions and to assessing ways of better aligning regional goals with national goals in order to combat environmental pollution and achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

90. One representative said that there was a need to be realistic and to reflect on what was and should be covered by other instruments, and what should be the future focus of the Global Programme of Action. Stressing that the three partnerships developed under the Global Programme of Action provided a practical mechanism for action, she said that they should be more closely linked to the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as each other, and suggested that the way forward was to give a mandate to the United Nations Environment Programme through the Environment Assembly to continue the work of the three partnerships and to require the partnerships to report to the Environment Assembly at its future sessions. She also suggested exploring whether the Global Programme of Action could be transformed into a platform for the three partnerships, bringing donors and recipients together to cooperate on capacity-building activities, guided by scientific advice and by the relevant priorities and recommendations set by the Environment Assembly.

91. Another representative asked the secretariat to clarify whether the Global Programme of Action had been funded by the Environment Fund of the United Nations Environment Programme; what the administrative and financial implications were of options A and B set out in the note by the secretariat (UNEP/GPA/IGR.4/3/Rev.1), including whether option B would require additional contributions from member States; the cost of the staffing support provided by the United Nations Environment Programme to the implementation of the Global Programme of Action, including the number of staff members and staff hours dedicated to the Programme; whether other options would be provided to member States; and possible next steps following the fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting to be held in October 2018.

## **Agenda item 9**

### **Report of the subcommittee**

92. The Committee took note of the document entitled “Chair’s report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (UNEP/CPR/143/10).

## **Agenda item 10**

### **Other matters**

93. The representative of Indonesia delivered a presentation on the fifth “Our Ocean” Conference, to be held in Bali, Indonesia, on 29 and 30 October 2018, describing the main on focus action areas, namely marine pollution, marine protected areas, maritime security, climate change, sustainable fisheries and the sustainable blue economy.

## **Agenda item 11**

### **Closure of the meeting**

94. The meeting was declared closed at 5.25 p.m. on Friday, 28 September 2018.

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