

Meeting of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly  
Wednesday, 3 July 2019,  
9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.  
Trondheim, Norway

### **CHAIR'S SUMMARY**

*All background documents and presentations are available on the [meeting portal](#).*

#### **1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda**

- 1) The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ola Elvestuen, President of the UN Environment Assembly Bureau and Minister for Climate and Environment of Norway. Mr Elvestuen welcomed all Members of the Bureau and Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Rapporteur of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, who attended the meeting in an ex-officio capacity on behalf of the Chair of the Committee, H.E. Fernando Coimbra, as well as Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, to the meeting.
- 2) The meeting was attended by the following members of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly:
  - Vice President Mr. Bassiere Batio Nestor, Minister of Green Economy and Climate Change, Burkina Faso, representing (the African Group);
  - Vice President Mr. Carlos Manuel Rodriguez Echandi, Minister of the Environment and Energy, Costa Rica, representing the Latin America and Caribbean Group;
  - Vice President Mr. Goran Trivan, Minister of the Environment, Serbia representing the Eastern European Group;
  - Vice President Mr. Winston Lackin, Ambassador in charge of the Environment and Presidential Advisor, Suriname, representing the Latin America and Caribbean Group;
  - Vice President Ms. Laksmi Dhewanthi, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia representing the Asia-Pacific Group;
  - Vice President Mr. Ado Lohmus, Permanent Representative to the UN Environment Programme, Estonia, representing the Eastern European Group;
  - Vice President Ms. Brune Poirson, Secretary of State for the Ecological and Inclusive Transition, France, representing the Western Europe and Others Group (attending via video link);
  - Vice President Dr. Mohamed Mubarak Bin Dainah, Chief Executive of Supreme Council for Environment, Bahrain, representing the Asia-Pacific Group (attending via video link)
  - Rapporteur Ms. Barbara Creecy, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries, South Africa, represented by Ms. Shahkira Parker, Senior Policy Advisor, representing the Africa Group.
- 3) Other representatives present:
  - Ms. Marta Juarez-Ruiz, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to Kenya;
  - Mr. Dragan Županjevac, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Serbia to Kenya;
  - Ms. Suzana Bošković Prodanović, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Serbia to Norway;
  - Mr. Yann Wehring, Ambassador of France for Environment;
  - Ms. Elin Bergithe Rognlie, Ambassador to Kenya and Permanent Representative of Norway;
  - Ms. Ivette Patterzon, Senior Policy & Legal Advisor, Cabinet of the President of Suriname;

- Mr. Joel Bama, Forest Inspector at the Permanent Secretary of the National Council for Sustainable Developments of Burkina Faso
- 4) The Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was represented ex officio by:
    - H.E. Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Rappporteur of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Ghana;
    - Mr. Patrick Luna, Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, representing Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of Committee of Permanent Representatives
  - 5) The Secretariat of the UN Environment Programme was represented by:
    - Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director
    - Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies
    - Mr. Ulf Bjornholm, Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies

The meeting adopted the provisional agenda.

## **2. A joint vision for the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly**

- 6) The President outlined his vision for the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly as a forum which strengthens knowledge- and science-based environment policy-making and action. He further explained that he sees the Assembly as a platform that provides an opportunity the global community to meet and take stock of its collective efforts, consider the status of implementation of previously adopted decisions, identify gaps and emerging issues, and share good ideas and solutions, to effectively tackle important environmental challenges. He further noted other important meetings and processes addressing various environmental issues and considered that UNEA should be seen as part of that “bigger journey”. He underscored the important task that lays before the Bureau in preparing for an ambitious and successful UNEA-5 in 2021 that will deliver tangible progress for the global environment.
- 7) In the discussion that followed, Ms. Andersen and several Members of the Bureau expressed full support to the President’s overall vision, and underlined that the next UN Environment Assembly needs to promote action-oriented and cross-sectoral policy action, engage all stakeholders in a meaningful way, consider options to improve international governance, and support global, regional and country-led health and environment initiatives and actions while taking into account different levels of development.

## **3. Defining the theme of the fifth Environment Assembly**

- 8) The President reminded the Bureau of decision UNEP/EA.4/2, entitled “Provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly”, in which the UNEA Bureau, in consultation with the Committee of Permanent Representatives, is requested to define a theme for the Environment Assembly no later than 31 December 2019.
- 9) The Secretariat presented a background paper which proposed a set of selection criteria for the identification of the theme and outlined three possible thematic areas as an initial starting point for further consideration and consultation; (i) Investing in Nature-based Solutions; (ii) Blue Planet: Transformative actions to protect the planet and enhance well-being; and (iii) Addressing the water-energy-food nexus for sustainability.
- 10) The President thanked the Secretariat for the proposal, and underlined the need to set in motion a wide consultation process to define a theme for the next Assembly, with the aim to ensure broad support for a politically appealing, relevant and focused theme that can pave the way for concrete and action-oriented outcomes.

- 11) All members of the bureau expressed general support for all three proposed thematic areas as a good basis for further consultations, and expressed willingness to further consult with member States within their respective regional groups on this basis. The meeting emphasized the need for the theme to facilitate and promote concrete action, that it should resonate with and be easily communicable to the general public, and that it should help increase the Assembly's visibility. There was also general support for the notion that the theme must be solution-oriented in support of the implementation of existing decisions and agreements, that it should be focused yet sufficiently broad to allow for cross-sectoral action, and that it needs a strong development component. It was also suggested that the theme should address land degradation challenges, and allow for targeted action on key existing work streams such as marine plastic pollution.
- 12) Several members expressed a preliminary preference for a theme relating to Nature-based Solutions, as a relevant theme that would support concrete implementation of many UNEA resolutions and multilateral environmental agreements as well as several Sustainable Development Goals. In this context it was suggested that this theme, if selected, must go beyond a narrow monetary perspective, and that it could be combined with the third (the water-food-energy nexus) so as to provide a more specific focus.
- 13) One participant expressed a preliminary preference for a thematic area relating to the thematic area entitled Blue Planet, and underlined that the theme should encompass sustainable consumption and production as well as the urban environment. Some Members pointed to the need for a clearer definition of this theme, also to avoid confusing it with the "blue economy" concept.
- 14) With regard to the third thematic area relating to the water-food-energy nexus, several Members noted that it may need to be framed in a less technical manner, if selected.
- 15) The meeting mandated the President, with the support of the Secretariat, to carry out consultations with all Member States and stakeholders in the form of a "thought-starter", with a view to seek consensus on a theme for UNEA-5 based on the three proposals outlined in the Secretariat background document and taking into account the views and suggestions from the Members of the Bureau, and report back to the Bureau at its next meeting.

#### **4. From vision to reality**

- 16) The President invited the Secretariat to provide a presentation on the roles and expectations of the Bureau of the Assembly and a draft roadmap of meetings, based on the meeting background documents.
- 17) Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Rapporteur of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, called for a continued and strengthened partnership and cooperation between the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and outlined several work streams of particular relevance, including:
  - The consultation on the theme of UNEA-5;
  - Consultations on the agenda for the Open-Ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and for UNEA-5;
  - The consensual process of review undertaken by the Committee pursuant to Decision 4/2, including on the respective roles and responsibilities of the Bureaux of UNEA and of CPR;
  - Joint guidance to member States on criteria and time frames for tabling draft resolutions;
  - Consultations with the Committee on the development of a draft Ministerial Declaration.
- 18) The meeting agreed on the draft roadmap of meetings for the UNEA Bureau, while noting that meeting dates may be subject to further changes. Bureau Members were encouraged to keep in close

contact with their respective UNEP Regional Offices to support the organization and planning of regional coordination meetings relating to UNEA-5, as well as other regional initiatives.

#### **5. Date for the next UN Environment Assembly Bureau meeting**

- 19) The meeting agreed that the next UN Environment Assembly Bureau meeting should be on Tuesday 1 October 2019, from 4:00p.m. to 6:00p.m. via video conference.

#### **6. Other Matters**

- 20) The meeting agreed that effective communication is crucial to the success of the UN Environment Assembly, including the strategic use of social media and UN Environment Programme ambassadors and celebrities. This will be particularly relevant once the theme of the Assembly has been identified.

#### **7. Closing of the Meeting**

- 21) The meeting closed at 12:30 p.m