



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

**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
149th meeting**
Nairobi, 18 February 2020

**Draft minutes of the 148th meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment
Programme, held on 10 December 2019**

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 9.25 a.m. on Thursday, 20 June 2019, by Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.
2. The meeting was attended by 64 participants representing 50 member States and 2 participants representing 1 [--] observer mission.
3. At the invitation of the Chair, the Committee observed a minute of silence in honour of Mr. Winston Lackin, the recently deceased Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Suriname to UNEP.
4. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Mr. Martin Klepetko (Czechia); Mr. Osama Ebeid (Egypt); Mr. Dimitrios Zavoritis (Greece); Ms. Sara Mashhadi Ali Akbar (Islamic Republic of Iran); Mr. Val Kalomoh (Namibia); Mr. Willard Kapambwe Nduna (Zambia); Ms. Winpeg Moyo (Zimbabwe).
5. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Sherif Mostafa Wawl Saad Elsheikh (Egypt); Mr. Kostantinos Moatsos (Greece); Mr. Ahmad Ghalandari (Islamic Republic of Iran); Ms. Evilene Hansen (Namibia); Mr. Kelebert Nkomani (Zimbabwe).
6. The Chair announced the choice of theme of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly: "Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals".
7. The representative of Norway, speaking on behalf of the President of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, Mr. Ola Elvestuen, thanked the Committee for its constructive contributions to choosing the theme of the session, which would enable a focus on nature's role in building resilience and in adaptation and mitigation as well as on its role in ensuring that all the dimensions of sustainable development were achieved.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

8. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/148/1).

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of 147th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

9. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 147th meeting, held on 11 October 2019, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/148/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

10. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document entitled “Advance quarterly report to the 148th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. October–November 2019”, which provided an update on key developments relevant to UNEP during the last quarter of 2019.

11. In her oral briefing, the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Joyce Msuya, speaking on behalf of the Executive Director, Ms. Inger Anderson, said that the period had been marked by the release of the *Emissions Gap Report 2019*, a key pillar of the science behind the need for collective, positive and immediate climate action to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius in the hope of avoiding mass extinctions of species, unbearable heat and uninhabitable regions.

12. The twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Madrid from 2 to 13 December 2019, had, in the words of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, clearly marked the “point of no return” for humankind. The climate science supported by UNEP had received unprecedented attention from policymakers and the public and had been mentioned in more than 3,000 media outlets in 96 countries and in 27 languages.

13. Between October and December 2019, UNEP had supported several important gatherings of governing bodies of multilateral environmental agreements, including the Thirty-First Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, at which a decision had been adopted on further action on unexpected emissions of CFC-11; the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, where the parties had reviewed the financial mechanism of the Convention, adopted the first-ever guidance on the management of contaminated sites and a decision on mercury waste thresholds; the twenty-first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean and its Protocols, at which 14 decisions had been adopted on topics that included marine litter and pollution, biodiversity and marine protected areas, the blue economy and integrated coastal management; and the third meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and micro-plastics convened under the United Nations Environment Assembly, which had brought together representatives from 85 Member States as well as from United Nations entities, multilateral environmental agreement secretariats and major groups and stakeholders.

14. Turning to internal matters, she said that UNEP was engaged in a process of transformation focused on the strategic, behavioural and operational pillars of its organizational structure, which was unfolding in parallel with the development of the UNEP medium-term strategy and sought to raise the Programme’s ambitions. The “five lines of defence” initiative, as described in document UNEP/CPR/146/8, would strengthen efficiency and accountability. The initiative had been enhanced through the organization of “corporate academy” workshops for relevant staff in Nairobi, which is designed to improve the knowledge about key administrative rules and processes. She was overseeing a comprehensive review of the UNEP project review process that encompassed an examination of project selection, monitoring and delivery of results. The mainstreaming of United Nations system-wide reform continued in UNEP through the implementation of the related road map (UNEP/CPR/146/2).

15. With regard to financial resources, for 2019, contributions amounting to \$69.5 million had been received, representing just over 50 per cent of the Programme’s approved budget, and 77 Member States had made contributions or pledges. Noting that there was still time to meet the 2019 target, she urged Member States to make their contributions and demonstrate the strength of universal membership.

16. Lastly, she provided an update on senior recruitments, including of executives to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Chemicals and Health Branch and the Corporate Services Division. Several senior vacancies were in the process of being filled and updates would be forthcoming in that regard.

17. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the Executive Director for her report. Two representatives welcomed the initiative to return to a focus on the normative work of UNEP for results-oriented achievements. One representative welcomed UNEP cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and various assessment panels, and asked whether, at the next Committee meeting, a report could be given on those panels.

18. Many representatives welcomed the publication of the *Emissions Gap Report 2019*, with one highlighting the importance of such assessment reports from UNEP in informing the discussions of the international community on environment-related issues.

19. Many representatives noted that the message conveyed by the report was truly alarming and called for immediate action to be taken to find solutions to the existing grave environmental challenges. One representative stressed the importance of ensuring that such action was comprehensive and included mitigation, lowering emissions, adaptation and implementation. In that regard, another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the imminent adoption of a green new deal in his region to spur the transition towards a non-polluting circular economy and sustainable agriculture represented an important step forward and would broaden the scope of opportunities for enhancing partnerships and collaboration with UNEP. Other representatives described new initiatives by their countries to promote biodiversity conservation and active non-motorized transportation, set ambitious goals for carbon neutrality and adopt legally binding climate legislation, in one case with plans to review climate policy every year and set five-year targets, and create binding guidelines for nitrogen emissions.

20. Noting that his country was tripling its budget for cycling infrastructure, one representative thanked UNEP and Kenya for organizing a high-level bicycle ride and Kenya for pledging to take into account non-motorized, active transportation in building its future infrastructure. Another representative said that enhanced support was required for developing countries in tackling the climate and emissions crises, as they would bear the worst burden of the changing climate. She also expressed her country's strong support for any solution that incorporated blue economy initiatives. Another representative said that more could be done to highlight, in UNEP reports, the significant climate change action already being taken in developing countries, including his country's leading role in renewable energy investment. One representative drew attention to General Assembly resolution 74/212, on an international day of clean air for blue skies, urging all Member States to take concrete steps towards reducing air pollution. Another representative, highlighting that her country had been named a "Champion of the Earth" in September 2019, said that it had set a goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.

21. One representative noted that her country's ambitious biodiversity plan included rewilding of unproductive agricultural land. Another, praising that initiative, said that the comprehensive action required to address the climate crisis must go hand in hand with initiatives to address biodiversity loss and land degradation. Two representatives reported that their countries were struggling to accommodate refugee populations crossing into their territories, affecting almost every aspect of their functioning, including the health and integrity of their environment, and they requested support to provide employment and other programmes to deal with the influx.

22. Turning to the preparations for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, several representatives expressed satisfaction at the choice of theme for the session. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the theme reflected a broad consensus among Member States and was the result of a timely, fair and respectful process, and successfully highlighted the role that nature-based solutions could play in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. He noted that the substantive recommendations made in 2019 by the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 with regard to the draft declaration for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its fifth session provided a very good basis for identifying and consolidating the key points of the draft declaration. The declaration should be the result of an inclusive, transparent drafting process involving the Committee as well as non-resident Member States and key stakeholders. The first meeting of the Committee in 2020 should take place in Nairobi during the first half of the year and would serve to identify and discuss those points with a view to reaching agreement well before the fifth session. A clear and well-scheduled process for the intersessional work would enable the creation of a consensus-based product for consideration by the Environment Assembly and would help to ensure that the event was not overshadowed by lengthy negotiations on the declaration. He recommended that the secretariat be tasked with preparing an input paper listing options to address the substantive recommendations agreed upon by the ad hoc open-ended working group in order to assist the discussions of the Committee.

23. He said that the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP would provide an opportunity to celebrate the progress made, while also reflecting on what could have been done better to protect the environment. The momentum of the celebration could contribute to agreement being reached on the critical actions required to achieve the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals. A single high-level United Nations meeting in 2022 would have the greatest impact, and he welcomed the offer of Sweden to host such a meeting in Stockholm. Several other representatives expressed their willingness to participate in the commemorative activities.

24. Responding to the comments, Ms. Msuya congratulated representatives on their countries' progress towards emissions reduction, carbon neutrality and biodiversity conservation. She noted that adaptation was a key aspect of comprehensive climate action and that, in the future, a greater focus would be placed on that aspect by UNEP. She noted that UNEP would evaluate what support could be provided to assist with the refugee crisis in the countries affected, including through the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

Agenda item 5

Status and future of funding of the United Nations Environment Programme

25. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the note by the secretariat on the topic (UNEP/CPR/148/7). He said that, in October 2019, at the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee, the secretariat had organized a side event entitled "Why paying your fair share matters – the future of UNEP's funding".

26. In her introduction to the matter, Ms. Msuya said that a discussion on funding was timely in the light of the reminder of the urgent need for climate action contained in the *Emissions Gap Report 2019*. There were three main challenges related to the funding of UNEP. First, having only received half the amount budgeted annually for the current Programme of Work, UNEP did not have sufficient core funding to allow for the delivery of the programme of work or for its science and policy work. Second, fewer than half of Member States had contributed to the Environment Fund in 2019, and only a small minority were contributing their fair share. Third, most of the funding contributed was earmarked for specific purposes related to the funding priorities of partners. Stressing that universal membership meant universal responsibility, she urged Member States to make meaningful and timely contributions and invited representatives to make suggestions on what could be done to address the three challenges she had outlined.

27. In her remarks, accompanied by a visual slide presentation, the representative of the secretariat said that the development of the UNEP programme of work had been guided by paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20), entitled "The future we want", in which Member States had agreed on the need to provide secure, stable, adequate and increased resources to UNEP. The core funding of UNEP, which was critical for upholding the agreed programme priorities and for their efficient and effective implementation, was inadequate. Core funding had represented 21 per cent of the total in 2018, compared to earmarked funding at 79 per cent, and the growth of the latter continued to outpace the growth of core funding for the collectively agreed priorities in the programme of work, despite the establishment of the voluntary indicative scale of contributions in 2002 to increase the predictability and amount of contributions.

28. Highlighting the narrow funding base of the organization, she noted that a total of 52 Member States had provided their fair share or more in contributions, while 46 Member States had contributed below their fair share and 96 had not contributed at all. Just 15 Member States, representing less than 10 per cent of the 193 Member States, had provided 90 per cent of the contributions to the Environment Fund in 2019.

29. Only a few Member States had championed the move towards flexible funding and had provided corporate funds that were softly earmarked, which accounted for only 5 per cent of all earmarked funding to UNEP in 2019. Around 49 Member States were providing earmarked funding, in amounts that sometimes exceeded their pledges to the Environment Fund, which indicated that the availability of resources was not a problem. She noted that the secretariat could provide a breakdown of earmarked funding to enhance further discussion of the issue, together with a proposal for different criteria for earmarked funding. The ultimate goal was for all Member States to contribute their fair share.

30. She noted that the panellists and participants at the side event had identified the main factors that motivated Member States to contribute to the Environment Fund, namely the global, collective nature of the Fund; their own agreement to provide core funding; the cost-effectiveness of core

funding and its streamlined administration costs; the fact that it often leveraged other resources; and the fact that providing flexible funding allowed Member States to take credit for all the positive results achieved by UNEP.

31. In order to increase core and flexible softly earmarked funding, the secretariat would strengthen the focus and delivery of results through greater effectiveness and efficiency; continue formulating the new medium-term strategy and programme of work; undertake a transformation process with a focus on culture, strategy and results in implementing its management reform; and position the UNEP reform within the broader reform of the United Nations system to maximize its relevance and impact at all levels. Increased and improved communications were also required, including clearer explanation of the consequences of the lack of core funding on programme delivery and greater recognition and visibility of Member States that did support the Environment Fund.

32. Representatives of Member States had also identified responses that could be undertaken by Member States at the national level to increase action on core funding, including increasing UNEP visibility in their countries; engaging their national media in UNEP high-level visits to countries; encouraging their environment ministers to write joint articles with the Executive Director of UNEP; strengthening the engagement of their ministries for the environment with other ministries, such as those of finance, foreign affairs and planning; holding themselves accountable for their compliance with agreed fair share contributions and making the transition towards soft earmarking for the funds they provided. She invited participants to highlight any other important elements pertaining to funding that should be included in the detailed discussions in 2020 and noted that the next step was for subcommittee and regional groups to propose further action for consideration by the Committee.

33. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the secretariat for the presentation, with a number, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commenting that, in the light of the discrepancy between words and action, a deeper analysis of the barriers preventing Member States from contributing to core funding was needed, followed by a suggestion of practical steps that could be taken to encourage increased contributions. If all else failed, cost recovery measures might be considered.

34. Several representatives called for Member States to increase their core funding contributions to UNEP. One representative said that not all projects were equally important to the programme of work and that some earmarked funding could be turned down if it did not contribute meaningfully to the programme of work as a whole. Several representatives encouraged the secretariat to continue and step up its active outreach to and communication with Member States, in particular by amplifying the message regarding the importance of core funding and highlighting the visibility of programmatic achievements made as a result of non-earmarked funding. Monthly donor reports and recent questionnaires were cited as good examples of improved communication. One representative said that more should be done to attribute and give visibility to the achievements of UNEP. Conversely, Member States should be made aware of programmatic achievements that were forestalled by a lack of core funding.

35. One representative said that his country had signed a multi-year funding compact and encouraged that approach as a means of providing greater funding stability. Highlighting the comparatively modest amounts involved compared to the size of national budgets, he noted that his country, a top donor, spent the equivalent of a mere two per cent of its national cycling infrastructure budget on its annual contribution to UNEP. Another representative said that the majority of the funding provided by his Government was core funding because it believed in the programme of work, in UNEP and in the Committee, and recognized the need for a strong UNEP in the light of the unprecedented environmental challenges faced by humankind. Another representative noted that increasing efficiency, effectiveness and transparency within UNEP should encourage Member States to provide more funding as trust in UNEP increased. A number of representatives said that further funding should be sought from non-State actors, and one suggested the development of a strategy on how to approach other potential donors, with a separate meeting dedicated to the topic.

36. Responding to comments, the representative of the secretariat thanked members for their strong support. She said that the secretariat would work on advocacy messages for conversations with ministries of finance, economics and planning. Alignment with the programme of work was one of the criteria for earmarked contributions, although that had not always been applied. In that regard, the enhanced cradle-to-grave oversight of projects being implemented was key. In terms of private sector funding, engagement was moderate; the current strategy was to enhance and expand partnerships focusing on behavioural change to meet pre-existing commitments. Greater alignment with foundations and philanthropic entities might be possible, but that required further development.

37. The Deputy Executive Director added that the feedback on the need for transparency had been duly noted and that collective accountability within UNEP and greater transparency was a priority for the secretariat in the coming year. Customized advocacy within country and regional contexts would also be a focus of exploration.

Agenda item 6

Analysis of lessons learned for the mid-term strategy

38. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the note by the secretariat entitled “Analysis of lessons learned for the mid-term strategy” (UNEP/CPR/148/3).

39. Mr. Michael Spilsbury, Director of the Evaluation Office, providing an overview of the topic by means of a slide presentation, said that the findings of an evaluation of the resource efficiency subprogramme had uncovered a need to embed transformative change within subprogramme strategies as they were designed. The exigencies of the challenges faced by humankind required transformative change of the business-as-usual approach through the use of disruptive strategies.

40. Theories of change had therefore been incorporated in the mid-term strategy, programme of work and all programmatic documents. Such documents should aim to inventory the linkages to higher-level results from previous mid-term strategies that had translated into longer-term positive outcomes. They should also reveal the alignment and linkages of programme documents with the Sustainable Development Goals and explicitly show how subprogramme strategies contributed, through the science-policy interface, to larger goals. It was crucial that results statements be strengthened and that the composition of subprogrammes be reviewed in an effort to maintain responsiveness to changing global concerns. In that regard, it might be useful to develop a mechanism for ending, modifying or introducing new subprogrammes. The evaluation had revealed a need to strengthen clarity and shared understanding of what a regional strategic presence entailed, providing details on how each subprogramme worked with regional, subregional and country offices. Communications at the programme and project levels should mesh more seamlessly and there was similar work to be done in the field of knowledge management. It would be important to consider how innovation and attitudes to risk were captured in the programme of work. Better management systems would lead to more effective programmes.

41. Mr. Ebrahim Gora, Policy and Programme Division, provided a brief analysis on the why, how and what of lessons learned, accompanied by a slide presentation. Beginning with the why, he said that the organization was working on strengthening the clarity of purpose and shared understanding of the approach to defining the mid-term strategy in the context of the transformation happening within the organization. In doing so, the secretariat were revisiting the core mandates that had been defined when UNEP was established. The original mandates along with messages from senior management and the Committee were being combined with data and findings emerging from studies, regional offices and UNEP events.

42. Regarding strategic regional presence, the reform of the United Nations system had set the context for a review of the business model and that work was being developed in line with the mid-term strategy and the programme of work. To strengthen project design and governance, a wholesale review of project cycle management was being undertaken with a cradle-to-grave perspective, drawing from the best practices of other entities and organizations. To strengthen the portfolio of subprogramme projects, regular management review of those portfolios would be undertaken and the culture of information flow would be enhanced. Challenges could not be addressed from a silo perspective. Any projects that addressed single topic issues were being reviewed for greater coherence across the project portfolio. Lastly, a clear line-of-sight philosophy was being employed to show the progression from overall strategic objectives to individual work plans, linking strategic documents such as the mid-term strategy, programme of work and Environment Assembly resolutions with internal management tools and project plans at all levels. A corporate internal management dashboard was also being developed to allow managers at all levels to take decisions based on data. The “Umoja Extension 2” initiative was eagerly awaited and its new features included project portfolio management, strategic management and programmatic data and reporting elements.

43. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, while expressing their appreciation for the overview of lessons learned, sought clarification regarding the real impact of those lessons and how they would contribute to scaling up action on the ground. A number of representatives suggested that concrete, practical examples should be provided. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed serious concern about the gap between the findings of the performance review, with its positive image of the fulfilment of indicators, and the real and deteriorating state of the

environment. He said that the disconnect should be addressed during the process to design the mid-term strategy, which should incorporate concerns relating to human rights, gender and social issues.

44. One representative expressed concern over the need for balance between an increased focus on implementation and the need for a greater focus on the normative role of UNEP, suggesting that the issue deserved attention during the formulation of the mid-term strategy. A number of representatives, one of whom spoke on behalf of a group of countries, highlighted the need for clarification of what was meant by “transformational change” in order to elucidate what its expected result was. Some representatives said that there was an opportunity to align the UNEP transformation with the broader reform of the United Nations system and that the linkages between the two should be made explicit. Synergies should be identified to avoid duplication and to mainstream the environmental dimension into programmes across the system, including by enhancing partnerships during the reform. One representative asked whether there were gaps in the United Nations system that could be filled by UNEP, taking into consideration its comparative advantages. He welcomed the agreement signed between UNEP and UNDP, which would bring the comparative advantages of each programme into full play. Another representative asked why the closure of some subprogrammes was being considered, noting that Member States should be involved in such decisions.

45. Responding to the comments, Mr. Gora said that the transformation at UNEP was based on the strategic, behavioural and operational pillars of the organization, and would examine what value UNEP could provide to Member States and how to deliver results on the Programme’s overall mandate while linking normative work and country-level implementation. The discrepancy noted by Member States at the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee between the successful performance indicators of UNEP and the deteriorating environment constituted a lesson that would be taken forward to develop sharper results statements and a clearer line of sight vertically through the organization, from its strategic objectives down to the actions of individuals. That information would provide a clearer vision of what UNEP was accomplishing as an organization in relation to its global position, and what it was contributing to the reduction of environmental degradation and to the development of increased environmental resilience. One way to balance the normative and the implementation aspects was to provide better feedback, and efforts were under way to assist countries in monitoring their implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, both by enhancing monitoring capacity and by improving information systems, with support from the Global Environment Facility.

46. The partnership between UNEP and UNDP was currently the subject of a letter of intent. That partnership and others with various United Nations entities would be expanded and discussions on synergies in strategic planning and objectives were under way. As the development of the mid-term strategy progressed, the organization’s business model would be examined to assess on-the-ground implementation and leveraging of the “One United Nations” approach. The first step, namely the development of a one-UNEP approach, was being undertaken by more closely aligning the programme of work and mid-term strategy with the requirements of Member States as expressed in the Environment Assembly’s resolutions for greater coherence across the UNEP portfolio of work.

47. Capacity-building for Member States, provided by UNEP and by means of enhanced South-South cooperation, would continue, and was expected to result in a more nimble and focused UNEP that addressed the needs of Member States in a more strategic way. With regard to funding, the task at hand was to determine how to leverage the funding necessary to support the highest-priority elements of the UNEP strategic objectives for more equitably distributed resource allocation across the entire programme. He assured representatives that communication with Member States would be frequent as the secretariat worked to develop the mid-term strategy and programme of work.

48. Responding to the query about the mechanism for the closure of certain subprogrammes, Mr. Stilsbury said that the idea had come from a number of major strategic evaluations conducted since 2010. It was important for UNEP to regularly evaluate its priorities and, if that had not been happening to date, the time had come to start. The lessons learned document necessarily gave a telegraphic account of those lessons, but each one led back to details produced in past reports. The secretariat would be working to effectively communicate specific lessons to Member States and would report back to the Committee on a regular basis.

49. A representative of the secretariat clarified that although the nomenclature could be confusing, subprogrammes were in fact the priority areas of UNEP and any changes thereto were made in full consultation with Member States since they were discussed and approved by the Environment Assembly. Member States would be informed of feedback as it came in, and motivation would be clarified for any element of the mid-term strategy that was developed.

Agenda item 7

Findings of the *Emissions Gap Report 2019*

50. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the note by the secretariat on the *Emissions Gap Report 2019* (UNEP/CPR/148/10), noting that the report had been launched in November 2019 to significant attention worldwide from the press and policymakers.

51. The representative of the secretariat, providing an overview of the findings of the report, said that, if current trends continued, the world was on track for global heating of between 3.4 and 3.9 degrees Celsius by the end of the century, with catastrophic consequences for all life on Earth. Rapid, ambitious transformation to low-emissions economies based on action by governments, regions, cities, businesses and civil society, was the only way to change the trajectory. While good progress in emissions reduction was being made by some Group of 20 countries, and it was possible for countries to accelerate emissions reduction even as they grew their economies, the scale and pace of progress on emissions reduction remained insufficient. It was crucial that ambition be increased, especially in the fields of comprehensive carbon pricing, phasing out fossil fuel subsidies by specific target years and ensuring that financial flows were consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. The fundamental structural changes required for global decarbonization should be designed to bring about multiple co-benefits for humanity and for planetary support systems. Climate protection and adaptation investments would become a precondition for peace and stability, including in the fields of air quality, urbanization, governance, education, employment, industry, digitalization, energy efficiency, land use and food security.

52. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation for the report, noting that its publication in advance of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had been particularly timely. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that, while the updating of nationally determined contributions was heartening, countries needed to increase their ambitions. Europe and all the G20 countries, which accounted for some 70 per cent of emissions, needed to act swiftly to make the transition to a sustainable track.

53. One representative highlighted the gap between ambitions and the transformative action required to avoid the worst consequences of climate change, which disproportionately affected the poorest, but would ultimately have a universal negative impact. Sharing experiences regarding the effectiveness of the various national green initiatives and approaches at the fifth session of the Environment Assembly would create a real opportunity for countries at all stages of development to learn from them. The many opportunities for exploiting synergies between efforts to protect nature, fight climate change and combat hunger and poverty should be an important focus of the fifth session.

54. Another representative, calling for urgent transformative action on climate from State and non-State actors alike, expressed strong support for efforts to implement and develop oceans- and nature-based solutions with a continued focus on gender equality and the inclusion of indigenous peoples. She noted that a successful outcome to the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change would facilitate a shift in the international community's focus towards the implementation of climate goals and the identification of areas where further relevant action was required.

55. One representative said that although the report was a scientific one, it should nevertheless take policy into account, in particular with regard to the parameters within which developing countries needed to operate. He suggested that some of the policy recommendations could involve economic analysis rather than comprising mere general recommendations about sustainable power or a circular economy. The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, for example, had the potential to contribute to a reduction of up to 0.5 degrees of global warming, and that information should be reflected in the report to encourage countries to ratify and implement the provisions of the Amendment.

56. Another representative, noting that his country was on track to achieve its nationally determined contribution targets and that 80 per cent of the energy it produced was clean, sought clarification regarding the basis for the figure quoted in the report according to which his country was required to implement a further 15 per cent emissions reduction. He also stressed the importance of avoiding duplication of content between reports and suggested that the report should provide figures on emissions from the production of green energy, including those related to the use of batteries.

57. One representative said that, in the short term, developed countries would need to reduce their emissions faster than developing countries for reasons of equity, although developing countries could make the transition to sustainable technologies more quickly. The required emissions reductions could only be achieved by transforming the energy sector. On a positive note, wind and solar energies were

becoming the cheapest forms of electrical power generation; the main challenge lay in designing and implementing integrated, centralized power systems.

58. The representative of the secretariat expressed his appreciation for the constructive comments made and commended the efforts being made by many countries to reduce emissions, develop clean energy supplies, make the transition towards a green economy and implement green development and environmental education initiatives. The findings of recent global assessments were unanimous in expressing the view that a full transformation to a global green economy was required.

59. Responding to comments on the methodology used in preparing the report, an expert panellist, participating via video link, said that it had been to examine individual studies and estimate, on the basis of the existing policies, the status of each G20 country in terms of emissions in 2030 and how that compared to the current unconditional targets of the nationally determined contributions. Responding to a specific query by one representative, he noted that the 15 per cent figure in the report showed that the country concerned was on track to overachieve its targets by more than 15 per cent, which suggested that it could increase its ambition even without putting additional policies in place.

Agenda item 8

Follow-up on the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

60. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to four documents providing updates on the implementation of resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly, entitled “Follow-up of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly – implementation of UNEP/EA.4/HLS.1” (UNEP/CPR/148/4); “Updated road map to prepare an action plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 in an inclusive, open and transparent manner” (UNEP/CPR/148/9); “Follow-up of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly – implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.22” (UNEP/CPR/148/5); and “Follow-up of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly – implementation of UNEP/EA.4/Res.23” (UNEP/CPR/148/6).

A. Implementation of the ministerial declaration of the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

61. With regard to the implementation of the ministerial declaration on innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production (UNEP/EA.4/HLS.1), Mr. Alexandre Caldas, Chief of Country Outreach, Technology and Innovation Branch, Science Division, provided an overview of the information set out in the note by the secretariat on the matter (UNEP/CPR/148/4), noting that table 2, presented in the annex thereto, provided a logical framework for monitoring the implementation of the declaration and the strategies that emerged from it.

62. He said that the formulation of data strategies to disseminate high quality, accessible, open and disaggregated data was fundamental for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. A global environmental data strategy, as envisaged in the ministerial declaration, was of key importance in that regard. A first draft of the global environmental data strategy would be presented to the Committee for its consideration by the end of March 2020, in keeping with the clear mandate from Member States that the strategy should be implemented by 2025. A road map would be prepared to demonstrate how the strategy would be implemented. The task could only be completed by partnering with other United Nations system entities and partners, including civil society, the private sector, academia, citizen scientists and international organizations. Those partnerships were included in the strategy and were described as “One global partnership”. Work was under way within the United Nations system, including with the United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management Academic Network and the Inter-agency and Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators, in the context of an initiative entitled “Acting as one”.

63. The data strategy would leverage global environmental monitoring systems already in place, support assessments and support the next Global Environment Outlook process. The data strategy would contribute to seven different streams of decision-making and action based on the requirements set out in the ministerial declaration and Environment Assembly resolution 4/23. It was estimated that within a four-year cycle, \$17.5 million would be required for the implementation of the global environmental data strategy, of which 71 per cent represented in-kind contributions and 29 per cent cash flows. Approximately \$5 million would therefore be required every four years. He acknowledged with appreciation the \$1.5 million pledged by the Government of Denmark. Resources would also be drawn from a fund set up by China for South-South cooperation and from the Nordic funds, and the earmarked funds from Switzerland. A shortfall of \$2 million remained for the period 2020–2021 to be able to properly implement the data strategy.

64. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that although for enhanced holistic thinking the link should be made between the global environmental data strategy and the monitoring system for the follow-up on the declaration, the global environmental data strategy should not be seen solely as a tool for the implementation of the declaration. He suggested that document UNEP/CPR/148/4 should be revised to clarify the matter.

65. Another representative said that greater clarity was required on how the monitoring framework for the implementation of the declaration would dovetail with the monitoring of the implementation of resolutions and decisions, and suggested that those issues should be considered together to avoid duplication of effort. Another representative said that the monitoring of the implementation of the declaration should be linked to that of the programme of work, multilateral environmental agreements, the Sustainable Development Goals, and resolutions and decisions of the Environment Assembly.

66. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it would be useful to provide more information on guidance, examples, best practices and tools for the implementation of the whole declaration and not just the data strategy. He asked whether other key performance indicators were going to be used in addition to the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goals. That issue should be considered at the next subcommittee meeting and should also be brought before the Bureau. The establishment of an internal task team to work on the data strategy was welcome and should lead to better data management. The strategy would contribute to the Global Environmental Outlook process, but the reverse should also be the case, with synergies influencing the development of the data strategy. More information on the “One global partnership” concept would be useful, as would information on how it would relate to the “World environment situation room” and the data strategy itself.

67. Responding to the comments, Mr. Caldas said that the next version of the document would make a clear distinction between the global environmental data strategy and the monitoring of the declaration, and would clarify the balance between key performance indicators and actions. He acknowledged the clear opportunity to align the monitoring of the implementation of the declaration with those of the Sustainable Development Goals, multilateral environmental agreements and the Environment Assembly decisions and resolutions. It was to be hoped that the updated version of the document would be ready in time for discussion at the next meeting of the Committee in February.

B. Implementation of Environment Assembly decision 4/2 on the provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

68. Introducing the item, the Chair said good progress had been made in the review of the implementation of paragraphs 9 to 13 of decision 4/2 and that a schedule of meetings had been agreed upon to continue the review. Two rounds of discussion had been held on the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP, a discussion initiated during the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee, and further Bureau meetings would be held on the topic early in 2020. The Bureau had adopted the theme of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly at its most recent meeting and had decided that two questionnaires would be circulated, one on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 73/333 and one on the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP. A revised road map for the preparations for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, had been created as the basis for further work (UNEP/CPR/148/9).

69. Ms. Tita Korvenoja, Chief of the Environmental Governance and Conventions Branch, Law Division, recalled the mandate set out in decision 4/1, in which the Environment Assembly had requested the Executive Director of UNEP to submit an action plan on the implementation of subparagraphs (a) to (h) of paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document. It had also invited the Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi to contribute to the development of the action plan with respect to the implementation of subparagraph (g) of paragraph 88 on the progressive consolidation of the headquarter functions of UNEP in Nairobi.

70. At the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee, in October 2019, the secretariat had presented a draft road map on the development of the action plan. Several representatives had emphasized that Member States must have an active role in its preparation, which should begin early and be as lean as possible. The draft road map was available on the Committee’s portal. Engagement with the Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi had begun in September and the Office had nominated a related focal point. A synthesis report based on previous reports of the Executive Director, including the most recent one submitted to the Environment Assembly at its fourth session, was being prepared and would be available for review by Member States in early January. The report would provide an update on progress in the implementation of paragraph 88 to

enable the identification of areas for further work under each subparagraph thereof, for discussion in a series of meetings planned for early 2020.

71. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives expressed appreciation for the update and the synthesis report. One representative suggested that the eight subparagraphs in paragraph 88 could be discussed two at a time at each of four subcommittee meetings that could be held in early 2020. He also suggested that informal consultations on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333 should be postponed until the substantive debate on the implementation of paragraph 88 had concluded, given that the political declaration mandated by that resolution depended on the conclusion of the process on paragraph 88. Another representative said that despite the links with other workstreams, such as stakeholder engagement and strengthening UNEP, it was premature to consider subjecting progress on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333 to the completion of the work on paragraph 88 before receiving the synthesis report.

72. A number of representatives noted that despite the improvements to the road map for the action plan, the process seemed to be moving slowly. One representative asked what concrete actions had been taken since the last update. Another representative expressed concern about the number of simultaneous workstreams, noting that his delegation had hoped the synthesis report would already have been drafted to ensure that the finalized action plan could be dealt with sooner than in the third quarter of 2020, when action would become urgent on other workstreams, including on preparations for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, concurred, noting that many processes were converging towards the end of 2020.

73. Two representatives, one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked whether the synthesis report would indeed be discussed at the subcommittee meeting to be held on 23 January 2020. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that the two questionnaires should both be sent at the same time to Member States to ensure a more coherent response. The questionnaires should be deployed before the consultations took place in early 2020, and the process to formulate their questions should be inclusive and should involve input from Bureau members.

74. Responding to the questions about the timeline for the upcoming consultations and questionnaires, the Chair said that the Bureau would be looking at the calendar of meetings to identify the exact dates based on the general structure presented by the representative of the secretariat, and would also consider the content of the questionnaires as soon as possible.

75. Another representative highlighted the importance of stakeholder engagement throughout the discussion. He asked how stakeholder outreach was being conducted during the stocktaking exercise and what plans were in place to proactively ensure meaningful stakeholder participation.

76. Responding to the comments, the representative of the secretariat confirmed that the synthesis report would be distributed in early January and formally presented at the subcommittee meeting on 23 January. Work already done included the establishment of internal task teams for each subparagraph of paragraph 88. Those teams had gathered the relevant information to update the status document and meetings had been held with each focal point. An initial meeting had been held with the United Nations Office at Nairobi, whose focal point had been identified. The secretariat required further guidance from the Committee on the timing of the consultations and the best method for involving stakeholders, among other things.

C. Implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 4/22 on implementation and follow-up of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions

77. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the note by the secretariat on the matter (UNEP/CPR/148/5).

78. The representative of the secretariat, providing a recap of the discussion held at the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee and referring to a slide presentation, noted that additional guidance had been received on the monitoring mechanism and the revised options. An initial preference had been expressed for option 2, rationalization, and option 3, minimalistic. Option 1, to improve the status quo, had not received endorsement.

79. During the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee, it had been highlighted that the website requested in resolution 4/22 should be developed as expeditiously as possible and that reporting on resolutions and on subprogrammes should be linked, while showing the regional dimensions of each, and, in that regard, the creation of a consolidated interface for reporting by the secretariat and voluntary reporting by Member States had been discussed. It had been emphasized that existing

monitoring instruments should be used in an effort to maintain cost-effectiveness and reduce the reporting burden, and Member States had been consulted on how a web-based tool would respond to their oversight needs and how the exercise could build on existing monitoring mechanisms. The secretariat continued to work on content development and on the information and communications technology aspects of the mechanism, including identifying and strengthening the links to the programme of work, projects, the Sustainable Development Goals and multilateral environmental agreements.

80. She noted that critical deadlines for the submission of feedback by Member States had passed without such feedback being received. The importance of project design had been acknowledged in the context of programmatic activities and the same was true for the monitoring mechanism; if the initial design was not adequate, the mechanism would not function smoothly. She suggested that, if Member States could not support the proposed design, they could nevertheless inform the secretariat if they had no objections to it.

81. Turning to the road map, she said that it had been created on the assumption that the required feedback would be received by December 2019. Since that feedback had not been forthcoming, the road map had been updated to accommodate the delay, and progress had consequently been set back by two months. She noted that the submission of Member States' ideas on changes to the proposed parameters for their voluntary reporting and on the reporting of the secretariat were fundamental to the progress of the work.

82. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, underlining the importance of linking the follow-up on the implementation of the resolutions and of the subprogrammes to enhance coherence and ease of reporting, said that during the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee, many representatives had expressed a preference for options 2 and 3. Many representatives said that work should continue on developing the website. Many representatives said that option 1 should be eliminated and several suggested that options 2 and 3 be combined, as there might not be much difference between rationalization and minimization. Several representatives expressed a preference for option 2, with one pointing out that minimization might lead to less action being taken than was actually required. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, suggested that an example be provided, on the basis of an existing resolution, of how the reporting by the secretariat and also by Member States would look. Regarding frequency of reporting, alignment should be sought with programme performance review, but also with the quarterly and annual reports of the Executive Director.

83. Two representatives said that they supported option 3, with one noting that reporting should be clear, trackable, digitally accessible and comprehensive, but not too burdensome on the secretariat. One representative said that, while transparency was greatly appreciated, lengthy reports of over 50 pages each quarter were not needed. He said that he would welcome a better understanding of which activities were contributing to which targets or indicators of the programme of work, possibly by means of a review of the key performance indicators, which could be colour coded, for example, in green, yellow and red. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the information in the quarterly report was highly valued as it was the only report providing comprehensive information on UNEP activities and should not be shortened.

D. Implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 4/23, entitled “Keeping the world environment under review: enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science-policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook”

84. Mr. Jan Liu, Director, Science Division, and Mr. Pierre Boileau, Global Environment Outlook, drew attention to the note by the secretariat on the matter (UNEP/CPR/148/6). He said that the first meeting of the steering committee for enhancing the science-policy interface had been held in Prague in October 2019. At that meeting, it had approved the issues that should be considered in the options document on the future of the Global Environment Outlook process, the overall work plan for the process and the terms of reference for a consultancy to create the work plan. The committee was now calling for expressions of interest in that consultancy. The follow-up action analysis and options paper was being drafted and elements were being gathered from various evaluations and impact assessments conducted over the 20-year history of the Global Environment Outlook.

85. Consultations were planned in all regions for 2020, with the last workshop to be held in October 2020 prior to the seventh annual meeting of the subcommittee. The recommended options would be presented at that meeting, and a draft resolution would be elaborated based on the feedback from Member States.

86. Turning to the strengthening of the science-policy interface, he drew attention to relevant meetings, noting that the Science-Policy-Business Forum had held a governing body consortium meeting in Canberra in November 2019, at which it had decided that the focus for the next annual forum would be nature-based solutions. The sixth edition of Global Environment Outlook for Business would be launched in 2020.

87. A pilot project related to the common country analysis had begun in country teams in Ethiopia, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Government of Denmark had generously provided \$1.5 million to support 30 developing countries to elaborate a common country analysis in the context of United Nations system-wide reform based on data drawn from the World Environment Situation Room. More funds were needed to cover the common country analysis of the remaining 120 developing countries.

88. A report entitled *Measuring Progress: Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs* had been launched at the fourth session of the Environment Assembly, providing a snapshot of the world status in achieving the 93 indicators of the Goals. The next version of that report, focusing on nature-based solutions and the Sustainable Development Goals, would be launched at the fifth session of the Environment Assembly.

89. Regarding the global assessment dialogue to promote greater coherence and coordination in global assessments, he said that although all global assessments were welcome to join the dialogue, there were five initial members, namely the Global Environment Outlook, the Global Sustainable Development Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the International Resource Panel. A paper was being prepared for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The draft conceptual framework for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of UNEP had been prepared, with milestones leading up to 2022. The framework was being reviewed by the senior management team of UNEP and would be shared with the Committee thereafter. A report on the science-policy interface over the past 50 years was also being prepared.

90. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, urged the secretariat to maintain an open-minded and bold approach regarding the options document on the future of the Global Environment Outlook process, rather than being tied to the past and making incremental changes to the existing approach. The Global Environment Outlook should be seen as a service provider to improve regional monitoring and data management and build regional reporting capacity in a way that went far beyond what had been envisioned in past processes. Regarding the brainstorming process, he suggested that limiting it because of concern over limited resources was very risky and would bind the process to what it had been in the past. In that regard, despite the value of face-to-face meetings, he expressed concern over the convening of standalone regional meetings and encouraged consideration of back-to-back meetings with other meeting, virtual meetings and written consultations. Another representative said that the options paper must be very clear and should provide a summary of what had already been addressed and discussed. At present, the paper set a number of challenging questions, including regarding the purpose of the Global Environment Outlook. He suggested avoiding such questions owing to a potential of lack of agreement, which could impede progress. He encouraged the members of the Committee to approach that process in a spirit of compromise, as a lack of progress would be a significant failure. It was also important for Member States to view the terms of reference for the related consultancy in order to understand the scope of the consultant's work. Another representative expressed the hope that the paper being prepared for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity would be a balanced and robust synthesis report that would not hinder the negotiation process.

91. Responding to the comments, Mr. Liu said that the paper for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity would be prepared with all due care and the secretariat would do its best to exploit efficiencies with regard to the regional consultations. Mr. Boileau said that the steering committee would be presented with various options for standalone or back-to-back meetings, although the latter option was not always possible in the light of the individual preparations of each State for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly. The terms of reference for the consultancy would be shared once they had been made available to bidders, the earliest date possible according to the procurement rules of the United Nations.

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/146/6).

Agenda item 10

Other matters

93. The representative of Sweden, speaking on behalf of his country and also of Kenya, said that bilateral discussions had been held on the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the founding of UNEP. The great interest in the celebration shown by Member States was an indication that regular, informal consultations would need to be held on the subject.

Agenda item 11

Closure of the meeting

94. The meeting was declared closed at 5.25 p.m. on Thursday, 20 June 2019.
