

**Subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UNEP
(Nairobi, 5 March 2020)**

Agenda item 4. Implementation of paragraph 14 of UNEA Decision 4/2

EU+MS LTT

Key objectives:

- To share reflections of the EU+MS on the implementation of Paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Outcome Document ‘The Future We Want’, in particular paragraphs a), c), g) and h) taking into account the overview, provided by the Secretariat, on the implementation of paragraph 14 of UNEA decision 4/2.
- To avoid duplication of discussions, by referring to ongoing processes where relevant, including the CPR review, which largely responds to paragraphs a) and g), as well as the UN Reform that provides excellent opportunities for the follow up on paragraph c).
- To respond to the suggestion by BRA and other MS that consolidating Headquarters functions in Nairobi implies, amongst others, strengthening the role of the CPR, as well as pointing out that para 88 took measures aimed at strengthening the programme (UNEP). EU/MS therefore believe that the CPR should enhance its oversight function (and discussions) in particular on the Programme of Work, the budget and their execution. For overall strengthening of the governing bodies, the CPR review is better placed to do that.

Key messages:

- EU+MS are largely in agreement with UNEP’s analysis on the state of play of implementation of the subparagraphs of paragraph 88. We note that the implementation of most subparagraphs is ongoing and is linked to other on-going processes, including the CPR review process and the preparation of the Medium Term Strategy 2022-25, as indicated in the document as well.
- We also believe that in preparing the MTS, the contribution to the implementation of paragraph 88 should be taken into account.
- In addition, subparagraph c) and to a lesser degree paragraph g) are closely connected with the UN development system reform and the work of the EMG.
- On paragraph a), EU/MS believe that further implementation and its follow up will mainly depend on the outcomes of the CPR review process
- We believe more can be done with regard to paragraph c):
 - Enhance the application of the Framework for System Wide Strategies and their visibility: in this respect we would like to ask the Secretariat to provide an analysis of the extent to which the Framework is applied, what the successes are and what are areas for further improvement.
 - On the EMG, we support the ED to continue to proactively lead the international environmental agenda and to use this forum to further coordinate and cooperate with relevant UN agencies. More may be done to highlight the successes of the EMG.
- On paragraph g), EU/MS believe that the existing regional presence is up to date, but that much can be done to enhance UNEP’s impact, including at the regional level, through better cooperation with relevant UN agencies that are present. We also suggest that the consultations with the ED of UNON result in concrete actions that contribute to reasonable and predictable (conference) services, possibly as part of the Action Plan. Furthermore, we

believe that the role of the CPR can be further strengthened– with the help of the Secretariat’s increased transparency and accountability – by enhancing its oversight role, that will provide a basis for decision making at UNEA on how to improve the implementation of the PoW/B and the resolutions.

- On paragraph h), EU/MS suggests to ask the Secretariat to reach out with other relevant international programmes/processes in order to analyse possible options to enhance stakeholder engagement and based on the analysis provide concrete recommendations for the CPR to consider.

Detailed comments

- **Paragraph a)**

EU+MS note that with the establishment of UNEA, a big step has been taken towards its implementation and that - as UNEP points out – the on-going CPR-based review process provides an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of the UNEP governing bodies, which is expected to contribute to UNEP’s responsiveness and accountability to MS and hence the implementation of this paragraph.

On the issues of responsiveness and accountability, EU/MS believe that the Secretariat could enhance them through providing more concise documents, that identify the issues that need to be discussed by their governing bodies, as well as provide concrete recommendations to the CPR as a basis for their decision-making. If documents are considered to be only for background information, this should also be considered and these documents should be used for Secretariat briefings, rather than for Subcommittee discussions.

We note however, that not all MS to date are accredited to UNEP, and hence not members of the open ended CPR. To support MS discussions on options to further implement this paragraph, it would be interesting if the Secretariat could provide further information on what the reasons for MS are and the options to address this. During the CPR Review, EU and MS have also suggested that further action may be taken to encourage MS to be accredited to UNEP (that will automatically include them as a member of the CPR). We therefore believe that it is up to the CPR in its review, to further enhance the implementation of para a).

- With regard to **paragraph c) on UNEP’s coordination role:**

EU+MS find this paragraph very important, not so much for UNEP itself, but for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda as a whole, as well as the UN Development System Reform. We believe it is necessary for UNEP to have a strong coordination role on environment related issues. We concur with UNEP’s analysis that efforts have been made in recent years to enhance UNEP’s role, with some success (e.g. at the HLPF) but much more could and should still be done. For instance, the visibility of the System-wide Framework of Strategies for the environment in the past UNEA’s has been minimal, which is unfortunately also telling about the level of application, as confirmed by the latest scientific reports on the state of play and the prospects for the environment to date. We are also heartened by the MTS providing an opportunity to engage in the MTS process as well as the possible closer involvement of MEAs in UNEA sessions in the future, and we would like to call upon the ED to continue to strengthen coordination with MEAs, as well as other multilateral fora, that take relevant decisions for the state of the environment. The

latter will also be discussed as part of the CPR-based review process, as indicated in the document as well.

We also appreciate UNEP's recent active engagement in the UN Development System Reform, which is instrumental for ensuring mainstreaming of the environment at the regional and national level. We welcome continued updates from UNEP on how involvement in UNDSR has increased UNEP's delivery on the environmental dimension of the SDGs and how UNEP has taken a role in the national and regional context. We also stress the importance of taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the UNDSR in the context of the MTS. This also relates to funding opportunities, as well as partnerships for delivery. For example, in para 112 of the background document it is stated that despite progress in "Delivering as One", UNEP still faces challenges, among other things, in engaging in relevant country-level processes; this is said to be due to limited operational and staffing budget. As regards para 51 of the background document, it would be interesting to hear what the menu of services for engagement with UN partners entails.

- **Paragraph g) on headquarters functions:**

EU+MS consider the need to concentrate functions in Nairobi, identified in para 88, as acted upon and met. In addition, EU+MS want to point out that the current state of play is considerably different now as compared to 10 years ago. The current popular demand for delivering results for the environment gives room for growth. A zero-sum approach risks diminishing and constraining UNEP's possibilities to ensure they are well placed and staffed – in Nairobi and elsewhere - to meet rising demands. Any type of further discussions should highlight the need to look at UNEP's functions globally – what is the most impactful way of ensuring delivery of the environmental dimension and the needed support for the member states? We consider that the existing network of regional and sub-regional offices is now strategically well placed to ensure this. Of course, with more financing, the impact would be greater. As for physical placement of UNEP staff, EU+MS consider that a lot of progress has been made and that we are in quite a good situation right now.

Furthermore, EU and MS believe that successful cooperation with relevant UN agencies present on the ground will be much more important than UNEP's presence in any region, as long as the relevant products, instruments and policy advice or other support to mainstream environmental considerations for sustainable development can be delivered in an effective manner. In that respect, the approach envisioned to support more MS and regions through cooperation with other UN agencies in the light of the UN Reform, will be very important to increase UNEP's impact.

However, there is plenty of room for improvement in the services provided by UNON at the Nairobi headquarters, as well as the predictability of costs. The decision invites the UNON director to contribute to the implementation of subparagraph g) concerning the headquarters functions in Nairobi, which started in November and are ongoing.

EU+MS welcome the new director of UNON and encourage UNEP and UNON to continue their exchange on this important topic and appreciate an update by UNEP on the issues covered, key messages and outcomes of the said consultations to date, as well as plans for the ongoing consultations with UNON in the coming months. EU and MS believe that these consultations should result in concrete actions and agreements that contribute to reasonable, affordable and predictable prices of conference services that are comparable to other UN stations, improved quality and adequacy of services and an overview of the cost savings of

the shared functions with UN Habitat, delivered by UNON (e.g. financial statements, controllers, HRM, etc.).

- **Paragraph h) on stakeholder participation:**

The document provides a comprehensive overview of all the actions taken up to date; however, what remains unclear is to what extent good practices elsewhere are taken into account.

EU/MS suggest to ask the Secretariat to reach out with other relevant international programmes/processes to analyse possible options to enhance stakeholder engagement and based on the analysis provide concrete recommendations for the CPR to consider. In addition, EU/MS believe that UNEP should make greater use of modern technology to engage stakeholders, including the use of remote contributions, organising hackatons to contribute to innovative solutions (e.g. in the context of implementation of its Programme of Work), etc. These options should be part of the analysis.

Furthermore, EU/MS would like to note that it is expected that the latest versions of the private sector engagement strategy/policy, partnership policy, etc. will be updated in the light of the MTS and UN Reform.

- **Paragraph 88 (b):**

Since having secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the UN and voluntary contributions is important to fulfil UNEP's mandate and in many ways for achieving implementation of para 88 as a whole, EU+MS would like to reiterate their call for all MS to contribute to the Environment Fund:

- We have only 11 years left until 2030 and we are not on track to meet the environmental dimension of Agenda 2030. The recent scientific reports on the state of environment and emerging challenges have very clearly demonstrated that we cannot continue with business as usual if we care about a healthy planet for future generations.
- Against this backdrop, the EU and its Member States remain concerned about the widening gap in the Environment Fund. We note that the earmarked funds, while very significant, will not ensure a balanced and efficient implementation of the Programme of Work. With only half of Member States contributing to the Environment Fund, we fall short of our joint commitment to strengthen UNEP by – amongst others – providing voluntary financial resources that would correspond to the universal membership in this organization. The EU and its Member States would like to reiterate its call on all Member States to contribute to the Environment Fund in line with their national capabilities.
- Furthermore, we note the provided information on the development of the Regular Budget since the establishment of universal membership of UNEA. We hope that the decisions on the 2020 and 2021 budgets will reflect/contribute to the implementation of this paragraph and be approved for the indicated amounts.

- EU+MS welcome continued discussions on financing in the coming months, including on the Resource Mobilization strategy, communication as well as in the context of the MTS.

- **Paragraph d) on science-policy interface:**

EU+MS believe that keeping the world's environmental situation under review is the backbone of UNEP's work. In particular, we consider the on-going work to assess the future of GEO to be very important for ensuring that this flagship activity by UNEP remains a valid and useful contribution for both scientists and policy makers in the future as well. We would welcome further information on the progress made/steps taken to assess the options for future GEO activities, as well as the development of a long-term data strategy in response to resolution 4/23 (paras 5 and 6) and we look forward to substantive recommendations for these actions to be adopted in UNEA5, based on the work of the expert group.

- **Paragraph e) on environmental information:**

EU+MS thank the Secretariat for an overview of the on-going activities by UNEP aimed at providing access to and approving the quality of environmental information. We note that the development of the environmental data strategy called for in UNEA4 declaration and in resolution 4/23 will be a useful contribution to the prioritizing of activities and implementation of paragraph e). We also commend UNEP for the improved communication in recent years, indeed, the communication efforts listed in the background documents (para 71-78) seem impressive – how is UNEP monitoring / measuring the impact of these efforts in the light of the objective to raise awareness, including on emerging environmental issues? EU+MS believe that UNEP should continue to improve the effectiveness of their communication activities, building on lessons learned under the mentioned campaigns. EU+MS would welcome further engagement on the Communication Strategy in the context of the preparations for the PoW/B and the MTS.

- **Paragraph f) on capacity building:**

We commend UNEP's global activities. We also note the support UNEP is providing to facilitate access to technology through multiple activities, including the CTCN, as well as UNEP's involvement in pilot and demonstration projects on waste management with the IETC and through the 10-YFP. In particular, we note UNEP's assistance through the activities aimed at enabling the access to finance, for example for the uptake of renewable energy, actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, etc.

With regard to UNEP's support to countries on environmental governance (at the national level), we are interested in hearing how the different activities can be brought together systematically, in order to enhance the capacity to deliver.

Background:

- As agreed per the roadmap for the discussion towards an Action Plan for the implementation of paragraph 88 of The Future We Want, the Subcommittee will discuss the following paragraphs:
 - (a) Establish universal membership;
 - (c) Enhance the voice and coordination function;
 - (g) Progressively consolidate headquarters functions in Nairobi, as well as strengthen its regional presence;
 - (h) Ensure active participation of all relevant stakeholders.
- Paragraph 88 of The Future We Want (with paras to be discussed on 5 March in bold):

88. We are committed to strengthening the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment. We reaffirm General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 establishing the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant resolutions that reinforce its mandate, as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme of 7 February 1997 and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration of 31 May 2000. In this regard, we invite the Assembly, at its sixty-seventh session, to adopt a resolution strengthening and upgrading the United Nations Environment Programme in the following manner:

(a) Establish universal membership in the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as other measures to strengthen its governance as well as its responsiveness and accountability to Member States;

(b) Have secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations and voluntary contributions to fulfil its mandate;

(c) Enhance the voice of the United Nations Environment Programme and its ability to fulfil its coordination mandate within the United Nations system by strengthening its engagement in key United Nations coordination bodies and empowering it to lead efforts to formulate United Nations system-wide strategies on the environment;

(d) Promote a strong science-policy interface, building on existing international instruments, assessments, panels and information networks, including the Global Environment Outlook, as one of the processes aimed at bringing together information and assessment to support informed decision-making;

(e) Disseminate and share evidence-based environmental information, and raise public awareness on critical, as well as emerging, environmental issues;

(f) Provide capacity-building to countries, as well as support, and facilitate access to technology;

(g) Progressively consolidate headquarters functions in Nairobi, as well as strengthen its regional presence, in order to assist countries, upon request, in the implementation of their national environmental policies, collaborating closely with other relevant entities of the United Nations system;

(h) Ensure the active participation of all relevant stakeholders, drawing on best practices and models from relevant multilateral institutions and exploring new mechanisms to promote transparency and the effective engagement of civil society.