

**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 comments

EU and its Member States 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 DG 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) - universal membership**

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) - 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) - headquarters functions and regional presence**

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 UNEPs 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) - 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 hacketons 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.
