

Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Tuesday 17 March,
9.00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Governance Affairs Office Meeting Room
United Nations Office at Nairobi, Gigiri

MEETING SUMMARY

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

H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, chaired the meeting, in which the following participated:

The Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau members:

- H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Romania, Vice Chair, Eastern European Group;
- Ms. Gudi Alkemade, Deputy Permanent Representative of The Netherlands, representing H.E. Mr. Frans Makken, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of The Netherlands, Vice Chair, Western European and Other States Group
- H.E. Ms. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative of Francisco, Rapporteur, Africa Group

The Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly was represented by:

- Ms. Guri Sandborg, Deputy Permanent Representative of Norway, representing H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the UN Environment Assembly and Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway

The UN Environment Programme Secretariat was represented by:

- Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director;
- Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, Secretary of Governing Bodies;
- Mr. Stadler Trengrove, Principal Legal Officer

The Chair opened the meeting and expressed his deepest sympathies with countries undergoing the serious COVID-19 crisis, and commended the Government of Kenya and the UN Secretariat on the manner in which it is dealing with the COVID-19 crisis, noting that different organizations and Embassies are already currently in a semi-lockdown situation, and thus

thanked all participants of the Bureau meeting for embracing technology and connecting to the Bureau meeting virtually.

The Executive Director, Ms. Inger Andersen, briefed the meeting that UNEP undertook immediate mobilization of the organization in response to COVID-19, highlighting that responses to the crisis were not only made in Nairobi alone, but also in Geneva, Paris and New York.

Ms. Andersen informed the meeting that, the UN Office at Nairobi, Director General had invoked the second phase 'Emergency Mode' of the COVID-19 Contingency Plan, and that Ms. Andersen had engaged in walking townhalls within UNEP Divisions and Offices to sensitize staff on preparedness and understanding of COVID-19.

Furthermore Ms. Andersen, mentioned that she will have a meeting with Multi-lateral Environment Agreements to discuss the way forward in case any of the 15 Conference of Parties (COP) are faced with a situation in the future that will result in a COP, to be unable to hold constitutionally expected meetings.

The Secretary, Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis, confirmed that the Secretariat envisions being able to carry out the current calendar of meetings and informed that they will carry out an assessment of the GoTo meeting capabilities after this afternoon's sub-committee meeting and also mentioned that the closed document platform "PaperSmart" may be utilized in context of consultations on several intergovernmental processes such as the follow up of the UN General Assembly resolution 73/333 and the CPR Based Review.

A member of the Bureau emphasized the importance of leadership in this crisis to facilitate that we can continue to work on global issues, while working on providing solutions and recommended that the Committee of Permanent Representatives could continue working in this extraordinary circumstance through innovative modalities of work, that should be evaluated after each session.

The meeting adopted the agenda.

2. Preparations for the meeting of the Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly on 19 March

The meeting was informed of the postponement of the UNEA Bureau meeting set to take place on 19 March due to exigent circumstances of isolation due to COVID-19 that the President of the UN Environment Assembly and members of the Bureau have to undergo, though it was noted that a new date is being sought by the Secretariat and the UNEA Presidency team.

The Chair raised concern on the proposed working methods of the UNEA Bureau meeting seeking written inputs from meeting participants, questioning whether the inputs will thereafter be compiled by the Secretariat into a draft

summary or if the inputs will then be discussed in presential manner at a later date – noting that if it were the latter the deadline of input submission should be reconsidered to allow members ample time to contribute in writing.

The representative of the President informed the meeting that they are working on finding solutions that can help move the agenda forward while dealing with the extreme situation of quarantine of which the President has been. Noting that the idea of written inputs was seen as an opportunity for members to convey their thoughts in writing before a new meeting date is identified and that the short deadline provided to members of 20 March was due to UNEA's contribution to the High-Level Political Forum which is already overdue.

Some members of the Bureau supported the extension of deadline to submit inputs, if that's possible, and recommended flexibility in working methods during the crisis situation.

After the discussions that ensued, the Bureau agreed that it would not be appropriate for the CPR Bureau (through the Chair) to provide written input to the UNEA Bureau and that the Chair be entrusted to provide an update on the CPR discussions, where relevant. The Bureau also agreed that the discussion on UNEA's Contribution to the HLPF and related timelines during the Sub-Committee meeting that immediately followed the CPR Bureau meeting, should be taken into account when addressing this document in the UNEA Bureau.

The Chair encouraged members of the Bureau to send their written inputs on the other substantive agenda items of the forthcoming UNEA Bureau meeting to enable him to communicate on behalf of the CPR Bureau. The deadline for written inputs from the CPR Bureau will be communicated by the Secretariat once the new date for the UNEA Bureau meeting is established.

A member of the Bureau encouraged fellow Members to share their comments and recommendations on documents to be considered by the Bureau in order to understand better respective points of view and maintain transparency.

Before closing a bureau member raised the division of labor amongst members of the CPR bureau on the basis of established practice of cooperation within the CPR .The Chair of the CPR expressed that in case the need arises he will call upon his Vice-Chairs to perform the role of Chair of a meeting should he not be able to do so himself, in particular during the Annual Subcommittee and Open Ended CPR meetings.

3. Closing of the meeting

The meeting closed at 10:00a.m.