

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Tuesday 17 March 2020
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Virtual Meeting

MEETING SUMMARY

Background documents and other documentation are available on the [meeting portal](#).

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representative, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, opened the meeting in virtual format.
2. The Chair thanked the Committee for the willingness to meet virtually and expressed solidarity for those dealing with the COVID-19 situation in many parts of the world.
3. The Secretariat provided an overview of the Member States and accredited Stakeholders present in the meeting.
4. The meeting agenda was adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Contribution of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

5. The Secretariat presented an overview of the revised version of the draft contribution of the UN Environment Assembly to the 2020 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development which was circulated on 13 March 2020. The revised version attempted to reflect the inputs submitted in writing by Member States and accredited Stakeholders since the first version of the draft was circulated on 6 March 2020. The Secretariat also informed the Committee that the subcommittee meeting had been called for in an unprecedented manner due to the limited time between the circulation of the draft and the deadline stipulated by the ECOSOC President to receive inputs to the High-Level Political Forum.
6. A representative of the Presidency of the UN Environment Assembly expressed her general appreciation for the draft document submitted by the Secretariat and noted the improvement the inputs by Member States and stakeholders brought to the draft contribution document and looked forward to further guidance from Member States.

7. Member States expressed their appreciation for the preparation of the draft contribution document by the Secretariat and of the convening meeting by the Chair, and provided the following comments:

- Underlined the importance of the contribution of UNEA to the HLPF, considering the Assembly's unique position relating to the environmental dimension of sustainable development.
- Underscored the need that the process of consideration of the input to the HLPF by UNEA should adhere to the mandate established by the Assembly through resolution [UNEP/EA.3/Res.3](#) entitled "Contributions of the United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development," including by affording the CPR the necessary time to perform adequately its mandate. There was a general sentiment that not enough time was afforded to the CPR during the current cycle to allow for the proper consideration of the draft circulated by the Secretariat. One member representing a political group supported by several Member States requested for clarification on the deadlines that were given by ECOSOC Secretariat so that additional feedback can be provided. It was also highlighted that, going forward, the Secretariat should circulate the draft to delegations well in advance of the deadlines given by ECOSOC Secretariat.
- Member States recalled past efforts to ensure that UNEA President be accorded the opportunity to speak on key points emanating from UNEA in an address to the HLPF and converged on the importance of preserving this practice.
- There was a general request for clarity on the process after that Subcommittee meeting and for additional information on the practical arrangements for the participation of the President of UNEA to deliver an oral statement to the HLPF.
- Several Member States stressed the need for the document to reflect consensually agreed language that is aligned with the resolutions and decisions adopted at previous assemblies in a holistic manner and include an annex reflecting all the outcomes reflected by the Assembly. Furthermore, several Member States requested that sustainable consumption and production be more adequately taken into account.
- One Member State raised concerns over the incorporation of subjective expressions such as - "inspiring" and "need to be upscaled and replicated" when referring to agreements that have not yet been ratified or signed by many Member States, such as the Escazú Agreement. In that regard, proposed to make reference to the agreement in a more factual manner.
- One Member State stressed that the term "nature-based solutions" has not yet been defined or agreed-upon by Member States at the UN and remained unclear, so it requested that it be replaced for "ecosystem-based solutions" and also proposed that the term "low carbon" be referred to as "low emissions".
- Several Member States stressed that the document should give more prominence to issues such as international cooperation, partnerships and means of implementation.
- One Member State raised the need to include a reference to adaptation as well as mitigation with regards to climate change. One Member State suggested that the term "climate resilience" be used to reflect adaptation and mitigation parity.

- One Member State highlighted that “afforestation” is not synonymous with ecosystem restoration, noting with concern that the term itself is still quite controversial and suggested that it not be used in the document.
 - One accredited Stakeholder highlighted that the process should be aligned with the post-2020 Global Framework for Biodiversity.
8. The Secretariat took note of the comments received and proposed that Member States provide additional substantive input for further consideration at the subcommittee meeting on 24 March 2020, so as to allow for a final version to be submitted to the ECOSOC Secretariat before the end of March. The Secretariat also underlined the importance of a strong submission to the HLPF in order to strengthen the role of the UN Environment Programme and the UN Environment Assembly.
 9. The meeting agreed that the Secretariat will circulate the document to Member States for additional written inputs by 18 March 2020, after which a revised version taking into account comments received will be made available to Member States on 20 March 2020, to be considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its meeting on 24 March 2020.

Agenda Item 3: Other matters.

10. The Chair provided a short briefing of the meeting of the Bureau of the CPR which was held on 17 March 2020 and informed the Committee of the agreement to continue with the programme of work through virtual meetings in light of the ensuing COVID-19 situation.

Agenda 4: Closing of the meeting

11. The meeting closed at 11:30 a.m.