

African Group's Statement: UNGA Resolution 73/333

The first informal substantive consultation meeting on the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/333 on: "Follow-up to the report of the Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group established pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 72/277"

Online meeting, broadcasted from Nairobi, from 21 to 23 July 2020

Agenda item 3: General Statement by Regional: African Group's Statement.

Co-Chairpersons,

Executive Director,

Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Senior Officials from your respective capitals,

Distinguished Delegates and Dear Colleagues,

I am honored to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group. The African Group aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Hazem Shabat, Ambassador of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Co-Chairpersons,

The African group takes this opportunity to thank you and the UNEP secretariat very much for preparing the co-facilitators document containing guiding questions on how the UNGA resolution 73/333 can be taken forward. We note that the co-facilitators document is based on five objectives guiding the recommendations and thirteen substantive recommendations as outlined in the General Assembly resolution 73/333. We are confident and we believe that our discussions during this first substantive consultation session on these important matters will allow us to

move towards “a Political Declaration”, which, though a non-binding document, will spell out the way forward and will lead us to more actions towards sustainable development and specially its environmental pillar. And, it is important to also note that our consultations this week are an opportunity to have a dynamic exchange of ideas, and is not by any means a negotiation. As the world continues to grapple with the severe disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to recognize that virtual meeting modalities are not suitable for inclusive substantive negotiations or far taking formal decisions.

Co-Chairpersons,

At, this juncture, it is important to recall that these substantive recommendations are the outcomes of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group established under the GA resolution 72/277, which concluded, after extensive consideration over three meetings here in Nairobi that there was no need to negotiate “A Global Pact For the Environment” in order to fill the gaps caused by fragmentation of international Environment Law principles. Nevertheless, we believe that there is a common consensus that there is a gap when it comes to the implementation of environment agreements. And, in order to resolve this gap, we need to address the issues of “implementation” and “means of implantation for developing countries, in line with Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Providing the requisite means of implementation will enable developing countries to implement existing obligations under various Multilateral Agreements.

Co-chairpersons,

It is crucial to preserve the fundamental principles of common but differentiated responsibilities and equity in this process, keeping in mind that the right to sustainable development and poverty eradication must remain at the forefront.

Environmental ambition and progress can only be achieved by living up to obligations and commitments under existing conventions and agreements. This ambition requires enhanced means of implementation, including finance, technology transfer and capacity building, in line with the relevant provisions and

previous commitments in the Multilateral Environment Agreements, political declarations and resolutions. This must all be done in the context of the specific national circumstances and development imperatives of member states.

Co- chairpersons,

The Africa Group also notes that the resolution 73/333 reaffirms the role of UNEP 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. In this regard, the African Group calls for the full implementation of paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Outcomes document, “The future we want”, in order to make sure that UNEP is strengthened and equipped to fulfil its mandate. In this regard, we can draw on the work that is already being undertaken by the secretariat of UNEP to devise an action plan for implementing paragraph 88 of “The Future we want”, including by ensuring secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources for UNEP, and progressively strengthening Headquarters functions, and by enhancing the role of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives in the intercessional period. It is also worth noting that the ambitious narrative of “building back better” and of raising environmental ambition needs to be supported with the requisite resources.

In the same spirit, the African group supports increased cooperation and coordination between UNEP and the various Multilateral Environmental Agreements in order to achieve synergies and complementarity with their work

In view of the above, the group wishes to see an action oriented outcome from this process that is aspirational but not prescriptive.

Co-Chairpersons,

The African Group believes to have productive discussions and to attain “consensus” in preparing a Political declaration, we should focus the substance of our discussion within the scope of objectives and substantive recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group as contained in GA resolution 73/333. Consequently,

the African Group is not expecting any negotiation by now, but to hear different views and possible approaches from Member States. Any consideration of matters outside the scope of these recommendations would not be conducive to attaining consensus on a draft declaration.

I thank you Co-Chairs.