

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Thursday 2 July 2020
9:00 – 12:00
Online Meeting

MEETING SUMMARY

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

1. H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil, opened the meeting.
2. The Secretariat provided an overview of participants at the meeting. A list of the participating member States and Stakeholders is annexed to this summary.
3. The Chair welcomed H.E. Mr. Marek Rohr-Garztecki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Poland, as a member of the Bureau of the CPR representing the Eastern European Group for the remainder of the term, and thanked H.E. Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania, for her contribution during her tenure as a member of the Bureau.
4. The meeting [agenda](#) was adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Preparations for UNEA5.

5. The Secretariat presented a revised note on the preparations for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, to be convened under the theme “Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. The note had been prepared based on the guidance received at the first preparatory retreat of the Bureaux of the UNEA and of the CPR (9 and 10 June), and highlighted four proposed action areas: (i) nature for poverty eradication, jobs and economic prosperity; (ii) nature for human and ecosystem health; (iii) nature for climate; (iv) and nature for sustainable food systems. The Secretariat also emphasized the importance of ensuring that the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) be complementary to the preparations towards UNEA and informed that the first draft narrative of the MTS would be made available to Member States as soon as possible.
6. Member States thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and the note and provided the following guidance, in view of further refining the proposed way forward, to ensure successful preparations for UNEA-5:
 - Noted that the agreed-upon theme for UNEA-5 remains relevant and provides an opportunity to address the impacts and response to COVID-19, as well as the need for

international cooperation and efforts being made for recovery, with some Member States highlighting the need for capacity building in developing countries to build back better.

- Underlined the importance of adopting the MTS at UNEA.
 - Expressed support for the action areas, recognizing their interlinkages and synergies.
 - Several member States were in favor of a reduced number of resolutions, so as to increase their visibility and facilitate the engagement of smaller delegations in the consultations. Some delegations further recommended that resolutions be short, concise and relevant, and where relevant build on previous UNEA resolutions.
 - Several member States expressed appreciation for the online monitoring tool on UNEA resolutions, as requested by with [UNEA Resolution 4/22](#), and indicated that they would participate in the testing phase scheduled for the week of 13 – 17 July.
 - Some member States encouraged the strengthening of the science-policy interface and suggested also addressing pollution, further encouraging the Secretariat to continue with the implementation of the plan “Towards a pollution free planet”.
 - Noted that it would be important to seek synergies between UNEA-5, the MEAs, the 2021 UN Food Summit, the Climate Summit and the Decade of Action, further noting that UNEA-5 should be cognizant of the mandates of the MEAs and other intergovernmental bodies.
 - One member State asked whether the scheduling of UNEA-5 would be affected due to the current pandemic
7. A representative of UNEA-5 Presidency provided a brief update on the preparations of the ministerial declaration and thanked member States for the inputs that had already submitted, informing that the Presidency would share a revised outline document to serve as basis for further consultations.
8. The Secretariat took note of the comments and informed the Committee that they would present a more comprehensive draft synthesis of the Executive Director’s report building on the comments and feedback provided ahead of the 7th Annual Subcommittee, scheduled for 12–16 October 2020. The Secretariat also reassured that the preparations for UNEA-5 will take place according to Decision 4/2 and that any modification of the dates or format of the Assembly would require consultation with Member States.

Agenda Item 3: Implementation of paragraph 14 of UNEA decision 4/2 related to the development of an action plan for para 88.

9. The Secretariat presented a report containing emerging elements that will inform the development of an action plan to further implement paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 outcome document “The future we want” in accordance with UNEA decision 4/2. The report builds on the inputs made at the two subcommittee meetings held on 5 March and 2 April 2020. The inputs provided by member States will guide the development of an action plan for paragraph 88, which will be submitted to the 7th meeting of the Annual Subcommittee Meeting and subsequently to UNEA-5.
10. Member States thanked the Secretariat for the report, welcomed the survey on funding and provided the following guidance:
- On universal membership and UNEP governance, it was noted that the ongoing CPR review process to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the UNEP governing bodies had important contributions to make. In particular, the need to convene virtually in the face of the current pandemic had major ramifications on the efforts to achieve

universality and multilingualism, and Member States emphasized the need to improve digital channels and modalities for remote participation, including interpretation.

- Universality also related to funding, which continues to experience difficulties due to contributions from a limited number of donors. Member States requested the Secretariat to prepare a report analyzing factors that encourage or discourage donor contributions as well as earmarked funding streams, taking into account the impact of COVID-19. It was also stated that the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should be acknowledged in the action plan, while one delegation called for an analysis on the cost implications of UNEP moving to virtual working methods.
- On UNEP's voice and coordination function, CPR members welcomed UNEA's linkage with the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF); however, they emphasized that the process of preparing the annual UNEA inputs to the HLPF needed to be improved, so as to better ensure transparency, inclusivity and timeliness.
- On the UN reform, in addition to reflecting it in the next medium-term strategy and the programme of work, member States called on the Secretariat to undertake more conceptual work to see how UNEP can meaningfully contribute to the reform, including by increasing participation of UNEP in the UN Country Teams, collecting best practices on interagency cooperation and providing regular updates to the CPR.
- The UN Environment Management Group (EMG) remains a critical platform for coordinating environmental activities within the UN system. Delegations expected to see a strengthened role of the EMG and increased opportunities for member States' engagement. They also echoed the importance of greater coordination and synergies across various MEAs, while fully respecting the independence of their respective governing bodies and their formal mandates.
- For science-policy interface, delegations recognized the need to allocate increased funding to the sub-programme on the environment under review for enhanced incorporation of science in UNEP's work. There was also a call for the ongoing process on the "[Future of the Global Environment Outlook \(GEO\)](#)" to be open-minded and involve scientists from developing countries.
- Some delegations reiterated the importance of capacity building and access to technology as a means of implementation for sustainable development, especially for developing countries, in the spirit of common but differentiated responsibilities. South-South and triangular cooperation had an important role to play in advancing ambitious environmental actions. here was a call for the Secretariat to be responsive to the needs of member States to assist in the implementation of environmental commitments.
- On UNEP's headquarters functions, member States focused on the need to enhance conference infrastructure and facilities through cooperation with the host country and the UN Office at Nairobi (UNON). They requested updates on the progress made in this regard. They also supported the joint call by the Executive Directors of UNEP and UN-Habitat on the General Assembly to increase funding allocation for UNON conference facilities upgrade. Some delegations stressed the important role of the CPR as the intersessional governing body, while others encouraged UNEP to cooperate more closely with the UN agencies that have regional presence to enhance environmental impact at the regional level.
- On stakeholder engagement, delegations welcomed the Secretariat's commitment to working with youth and the private sector and requested updated information on the partnership strategy with the private sector. One member State noted the regionally differential levels of stakeholder participation and asked how this unbalance could be addressed.

11. The Secretariat took note of the comments and encouraged interested member States to send additional written comments to the Secretariat by 10 July 2020 and offered to provide more information on the Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contribution for interested Member States.

Agenda Item 4: Other matters.

12. The Secretariat informed that the background documents for the subcommittee on 14 July had been made available on the meeting portal and that the revised note on commemoration of the 50th anniversary of UNEP would be made available by 7 July 2020.

Agenda Item 5: Closing of the meeting.

13. The meeting closed at 12:15 pm.