

Summary of the Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme

11 September 2020

On 11 September 2020, Members of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the UN Environment Programme held a virtual meeting. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, President of the UN Environment Assembly and Minister of Environment and Climate of the Norway, and H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil. A list of participants is available in the annex to this summary. Agenda and meeting documentation is made available on the [meeting portal](#).

The Joint Bureaux meeting addressed the following topics:

- Consideration of the timing and format of UNEA-5 in view of COVID-19;
- Preparation of a UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration;
- Update on the preparations for the 7th meeting of the Annual Sub-Committee;

This document summarizes the key decisions and points of discussion during the joint Bureaux meeting.

Before commencing its work, the meeting extended a warm welcome to Ms. Bérangère Abba, State Secretary for Biodiversity of France and H.E. Ms. Andrea Meza Murillo, Minister of Environment and Energy of Costa Rica who are designated Members of the Bureau, pending their formal election.

Overview of main decisions:

- The Members of the two Bureaux jointly agreed that further consultations with member States and stakeholders should take place on the timing and format of the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly, scheduled for 22-26 February 2021, in Nairobi, Kenya, taking into account possible travel and meeting restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and recommended that the matter be considered at a meeting of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and that the Chair of the Committee report back to the UNEA Bureau at its meeting on 8 October in view of taking a decision.
- The Members of the two Bureaux welcomed the efforts made by the President to develop a draft a Ministerial Declaration for UNEA-5 through a transparent and inclusive consultative process and supported the proposed roadmap.

Agenda Item 2: Consideration of the timing and format of UNEA-5 in view of COVID-19

1. The Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme informed the meeting that UNEP is working closely with the UN Office in Nairobi as well as with Kenya as host Country to determine when and under which conditions the UN compound in Gigiri will reopen for UN staff and delegates, and that the Secretariat will learn from relevant experiences from UN meetings in other UN headquarters, such as the upcoming meeting of the UN General Assembly, as they may be relevant for the organization of UNEA-5. An update on the situation is likely to be provided by the end of October.
2. The Executive Director presented the Secretariat [options paper on the timing and format of UNEA-5 in view of COVID-19](#), underlined that the Secretariat will remain flexible in supporting the final decision to be taken by Member States, and called for a solution that will ensure a timely decision on UNEP's Medium Term Strategy as well as its programme of work and budget to allow UNEP to prepare and deliver on them starting January 2022.

3. The UNEA President noted that, with regard to the timing and format of UNE-5, the first concern must be to ensure the health and safety of all participants and of the host country, and that it is important to look for a solution that is acceptable to all and that will not delay important and urgent decisions related to the global environment agenda, while at the same time ensuring meaningful participation of Member States and Stakeholders and an ambitious outcome of the meeting.
4. The representative of the host country informed the meeting that the Government of Kenya is committed to holding a successful UNEA even under these uncertain times and confirmed that the matter of when and under what conditions international meetings may resume in Kenya was under careful consideration with relevant authorities.
5. In the ensuing discussion, Members of the two Bureaux converged on the importance of a successful UNEA-5 and welcomed the background paper as a useful basis for discussions. Considering the wide range of views on the matter, they called for more time to consider and consult with their regional groups.
6. Several Members expressed their preliminary preference for a meeting with limited physical presence in Nairobi in February 2021, but with some elements taking place virtually (option 1), underlying the need for UNEA-5 to provide timely political messages and decisions to promote urgent action important environmental issues such as climate change and biodiversity, as well as green recovery post COVID-19 plans. One Member supported a fully virtual meeting (option 2), if necessary. Several other Members considered that a postponement of UNEA-5 to 2022 (option 3) or to later in 2021 (option 4) may be necessary to allow for universal participation by all member States, especially in negotiations on sensitive matters and the need for in person preparatory meetings. Some Members also considered that it may be possible to combine some of the options, such as 1 and 3.
7. Following the discussion, the President noted that a wide range of options was still on the table and underlined the need for this important decision to be taken in a transparent and inclusive manner.
8. Members of the two Bureaux agreed that further consultations with member States and stakeholders should take place and at the proposal from the CPR Chair, recommended that the matter also be considered at a dedicated meeting of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives by the end of September/early October.
9. The CPR Chair was invited to report back to the next meeting of the UNEA Bureau scheduled for 8 October, in view of taking a decision on the date and format of UNEA.
10. Bureaux members were also encouraged to consult with their respective regional groups, to facilitate a participatory and open consultation.

Agenda Item 3: Preparation of a UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration

11. The President of UNEA provided an update to the meeting on the preparation of a UNEA-5 Ministerial Declaration and referred to an [outline document](#) shared with all Member States and stakeholders on 29 June, which had received substantive feedback made available on a dedicated [website](#). He also referred to a short [note from the President](#) made available in advance of the meeting, that summarized the main takeaways from the feedback received so far from member States and Stakeholders, and outlined a roadmap for next steps including several planned virtual consultations with member States and Stakeholders.

12. Members of the two Bureaux acknowledged the efforts made by the President and his team in ensuring an inclusive and transparent consultative process towards the development of a substantive and ambitious Ministerial Declaration of UNEA-5, and encouraged him to continue undertaking consultations open to all Member States and suggested to consider the Committee of Permanent Representatives as a useful platform involving both Nairobi and capital-based representatives.
13. The President thanked the Members of the Bureaux for their guidance and committed to share an updated roadmap for consultations in due time.

Agenda Item 4: Update on the preparations for the 7th meeting of the Annual Sub-Committee

14. The Chair of the CPR provided an update on the preparation of the 7th meeting of the Annual Sub-Committee, 12 to 16 October 2020, referred to the recent invitation sent to Member States and stakeholders, and highlighted key items on the agenda – many of which will contribute to a successful preparation of UNEA-5.

Agenda Item 5: Other matters

15. No other matters were raised.
16. The Chair of the CPR thanked all Members of the Bureaux for their continued support and partnership towards a successful UNEA-5.
17. The President of the Assembly thanked all Members of the two Bureaux for their inputs and guidance to the discussion.

Agenda Item 7: Closing of the meeting

1. The meeting closed at 17:30

List of participants Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, 11 September 2020

UN Environment Assembly Bureau	
COUNTRY REGIONAL GROUP	NAME DESIGNATION
Norway Western European and Others Group	H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, President, Minister of Climate and Environment
Costa Rica Latin America and Caribbean Group	Ms. Ana Campos, Representing H.E. Ms. Andrea Murillo, Vice President and Minister of Environment and Energy of the Republic
Estonia Eastern European Group	Mr. Ado Lohmus Vice President and Permanent Representative of Environment
Indonesia Asia-Pacific Group	Ms. Laskmi Dhewanthi, Vice President and Senior Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Forestry
Serbia Eastern European and Group	H.E. Mr. Goran Trivan, Vice President and Minister of Environment
Suriname Latin America and Caribbean Group	H.E. Mr. Reggy Nelson, Vice President and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
France Western European and Others Group	H.E. Ms. Béangère Abba, Vice President, Secretary of State for the Biodiversity
Bahrain Asia-Pacific Group	Ms. Suzan Mohammed Al Ajjawi, Representing H.E. Dr. Mohammed Bin Dainah, Vice President and Chief Executive of the Supreme Council for Environment of Bahrain
South Africa Africa Group	Hon. Ms. Barbara Creecy, Rappourteur, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries
Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau	
Brazil Latin America and Caribbean Group	H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Chair, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Netherlands Western European and Others Group	Ms. Gudi Alkamede, Representing H.E. Mr. Maarten Brouwer Vice Chair, Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Pakistan Asia-Pacific Group	H.E. Ms. Saqlain Syedah, Vice Chair, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative
Ghana Africa Group	H.E. Mrs. Francisca Ashietey-Odunton, Rapporteur, High Commissioner and Permanent Representative
Nairobi Based Representatives	
Norway	H.E. Ms. Elin Rognlie Ambassador and Permanent Representative; Ms. Guri Sandborg Deputy Permanent Representative
France	H.E. Mrs. Aline Kuster-Ménager Ambassador and Permanent Representative Ms. Estelle Halimi Deputy Permanent Representative
Burkina Faso	H.E. Mrs. Madina GANOU DIABY KASSAMBA Ambassador and Permanent Representative Mr. Yago L. Abdoul Kader First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative
Brazil	Mr. Patrick Luna

	Counsellor and Deputy Permanent Representative
Kenya	Ms. Peris Kariuki First Counsellor
Netherlands	Mrs. Gudi Alkemade Deputy Permanent Representative
South Africa	Ms. Amanda Mkhwanazi Deputy Permanent Representative
Serbia	H.E Ambassador Dragan Zupanjevac Ambassador and Permanent Representative
UN Environment Programme	
	Ms. Inger Andersen Executive Director
	Ms. Joyce Msuya Deputy Executive Director
	Mr. Jorge Laguna-Celis Secretary of Governing Bodies and Director – Governance Affairs Office
	Mr. Rafael Peralta Chief of Staff a.i.
	Mr. Ulf Bjornholm Deputy Secretary of Governing Bodies and Deputy Director – Governance Affairs Office
	Mr. Stadler Trengrove Legal Officer