

151st Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
14 September 2020
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Online meeting

CHAIR'S SUMMARY

Note: This Chair's summary complements the detailed minutes of the meeting developed by the UN Office in Nairobi. All pre-meeting and post-meeting documents, including statements provided in writing by member States, are available [here](#).

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

1. The meeting was opened by H.E. Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. The meeting welcomed newly arrived representatives to the Committee and bid farewell to departing representatives.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the agenda of the 151th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

2. The provisional meeting [agenda](#) was adopted.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the draft minutes of 150th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

3. The Committee adopted the draft [minutes](#) of the 150th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 30 April 2020.

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Executive Director.

4. Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UN Environment Programme, provided a statement, available [here](#). The Quarterly Report of the Executive Director to the 151st meeting of the CPR is also available [here](#). In the ensuing dialogue, delegations who took the floor, inter alia:
 - Welcomed the report and statement of the Executive Director.
 - Stressed the need for inclusivity and due process for UNEP/UNEA processes, and noted that UNEP has responded well to COVID-19 especially with the #buildbackbetter initiative, but cautioned against losing focus on climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss when focusing on the COVID-19 response.

- Welcomed the technical information on UNEP’s COVID response and recommended that it should be translated into all 6 UN languages.
 - Congratulated UNEP on achieving better gender parity and noted with concern that there a geographical imbalance persists with regards to the composition of staff members in UNEP.
 - Requested a written update on the state of play with regard to UNEP’s “5 lines of defense”.
5. The Executive Director thanked delegations for their inputs and guidance and expressed her sincere appreciation to member States who had recently contributed to the Environment Fund. With regard to the point raised on geographical imbalance, she invited Member States to support remedial measures by actively sharing information about UNEP recruitments and encouraging eligible candidates from under-represented countries and regions to apply for UNEP senior management positions. She also pointed out that outreach efforts on senior positions could be further enhanced through regional and sub-regional offices and that disaggregated data could be re-introduced in the staffing report. The Executive Director also committed to provide a progress update in writing on the implementation of UNEP’s “5 lines of defense.” to the Committee.

Agenda Item 5: Consultation on the Medium-Term Strategy 2021- 2025 and Programme of Work and Budget 2022-2023.

6. The Secretariat gave a presentation on the [revised draft](#) of the Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) 2022-2025 and Programme of Work and Budget (PoW) 2022-2023, highlighting the improvements made following the feedback received during the CPR Subcommittee meeting of 14 July 2020 and announcing additional complementary elements yet to be made available, including the budget and indicator framework. The presentation is available [here](#).
7. The Committee took note of the changes made to the revised MTS and the PoW, appreciating the inclusive and participatory process for the development of both documents. The Committee also provided following additional guidance:
- Took positive note of the general direction, logic and long-term vision outlined in the MTS, appreciating the programmatic and structural improvements and the interlinkages, while noting the need to further emphasize the underlying theme of sustainable consumption and production in operational terms, including with regard to cross-cutting issues.
 - Supported the ambition of the MTS as well as UNEP’s efforts to build synergies with other organizations and the MEAs, while respecting their mandates, and stressed that UNEP should maintain focus in its core competencies and issues within its mandate, which includes supporting countries to adapt and implement environmental commitments.
 - Commended the strengthened linkage with the Agenda 2030, reiterating the importance of outlining UNEP’s comparative advantage in supporting countries upon their request towards achieving the environmental-related SDGs, as well as UNEP’s ability to deliver and measure results that can positively influence the work of others, in line with its core competencies.
 - Appreciated the streamlined inclusion of the PoW as an annex to the MTS, noting the structural and editorial improvements proposed by the Secretariat for both strategic documents, while emphasizing the need to use multilaterally agreed-upon language, as well as better outline UNEP’s contribution to the UN Reform, the gender and human rights agendas and upcoming post-2020 frameworks. In this context, emphasized that “nature-based solutions” is a notion that still lacks a multilaterally agreed-upon definition.

- Noted that the MTS could be further improved, stressing that the 3 cross-cutting issues of sustainable consumption and production could be better reflected and emphasized in the operative part of MTS.
 - Appreciated adequate focus and coverage given to UNEP's role in assisting developing countries, in particular LDCs, in implementing their environmental commitments. One member State further requested Africa to be prioritized.
 - Took note of the additional elements to be presented by the Secretariat at the annual Subcommittee Meeting of the CPR, underlining the importance of building a sound results framework that delivers accountability and management of results, supported by a realistic budget that builds on lessons learned.
8. Ms Inger Andersen, Executive Director, took note of the additional comments received, reiterating UNEP's commitment to operationalize a strong strategic narrative that sees sustainable consumption and production as the driver of UNEP's action. She underscored that UNEP will continue to support countries working in close synergies with the Multilateral Environmental Agreements, respecting their roles and mandates, while taking full advantage of the UN Reform. UNEP's results framework will deliver a clarity of results, supported by flexible budget, spanning the environmental dimension, while contributing to cross-cutting areas such as development, poverty reduction and gender. The Executive Director also informed the meeting that the report of the Executive Director towards UNEA-5 will cover extensively the issue of nature and the solutions that it provides.

Agenda Item 6: Progress update on the consultation process under the UN General Assembly resolution 73/333.

9. The Co-Facilitators for the informal consultation meetings on UN General Assembly resolution 73/333 provided a progress update to the Committee on the outcome of the first substantive consultation meeting held online 21-23 July 2020. The summary of the first substantive consultation meeting is available [here](#). They further informed the Committee that they are preparing a document on the building blocks of the Political Declaration for the second informal substantive consultation, to be held in November. This will be shared with participants in early October.
10. The Committee welcomed the Co-Facilitator's summary for the first informal substantive consultation and provided following comments:
- Recalled that resolution 73/333 defines the scope for the draft declaration.
 - Expressed concern about potential challenges of negotiating a text without holding in person meetings.
 - One member State suggested to postpone UNEA-5, taking the shape of a "Stockholm+50" meeting, and underlined that UNEA-5 would provide the best opportunity to celebrate UNEP's 50 year anniversary.

Agenda Item 7: Progress update on the work of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics.

11. Mr Satoru Iino, Acting Chair of the AHEG Bureau and the Secretariat, provided an [update](#) on the work of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics and the ongoing preparations for the fourth and final meeting of the expert group, which, due to the COVID -19 pandemic, is scheduled to take place online from 9-13 November 2020. The Acting Chair also clarified that while the meeting will take place virtually, it will fully respect the UNEA rules of procedure, and offer online interpretation to all six UN languages.
12. The Committee welcomed the update and underlined the urgency of making progress on this important work stream, while providing the following additional guidance:
 - Requested clarification on the timing, status and format of the two virtual preparatory meetings to be held in advance of the for the meeting of the expert group.
 - Underlined the need for an adequate report from the meeting to inform UNEA-5 and requested further clarification on a possible outcome summary from the meeting.
 - Cautioned against engaging in formal negotiations, given the nature and virtual format of the meeting.
13. The Acting Chair and the Secretariat clarified that the purpose of the virtual preparatory meetings are to share information in preparation for fourth meeting of the expert group, in particular to present the key Secretariat working documents and give the opportunity for experts to ask questions and engage in a dialogue. Member States were reminded that, in accordance with UNEA resolution 4/6, the Executive Director is mandated to report on the work of expert group to UNEA-5, and that the Secretariat will develop a substantive meeting report for AHEG-4 as per standard practice. Further, it will be up to experts at the meeting to decide on the content and format of a possible summary of the meeting. While efforts will be made so ensure the broadest possible support among experts to prepare an adequate outcome form the meeting, no formal negotiations are foreseen.
14. Upon request, the Secretariat also updated the Committee on the latest developments in the preparation for a decision by the Intergovernmental Governmental Review for the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, and proposed that the Committee will address this matter in late November, after the fourth meeting of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics.

Agenda Item 8: Progress update on the implementation of the UNEA-4 Pollution Action Plan.

1. The Secretariat introduced the Implementation Plan “Towards a Pollution-Free Planet”, prepared in response to UNEA3 Ministerial Declaration and welcomed by UNEA Resolution 4/2, and presented a progress summary based on a [written update](#) shared in advance with the Committee. The presentation is available [here](#).
2. The Committee welcomed the presentation and underlined the importance of effectively implementing the Plan and ensuring that the new strategic pillar and respective subprogramme in the new Medium-Term Strategy build on, but also go beyond, the Plan. The Committee also encouraged UNEP to further strengthen the implementation of the Plan and broadly supported the conclusions drawn in the update document regarding the way forward.

3. A representative from Major Groups and Stakeholders proposed to better reflect work and updates on chemicals and waste management within the progress updates of the Implementation Plan.

Agenda Item 9: Report of the Subcommittee.

4. The [report](#) of the Subcommittee was adopted.

Agenda Item 10: Other matters.

5. The Chair informed the meeting that a dedicated subcommittee meeting will be organized on 1 October to further consult on the dates and format of UNEA5.
6. The delegation of China informed the Committee that the meeting of the Conference of Parties of Convention on Biodiversity will be postponed until May 2021.

Agenda Item 11: Closing of the meeting.

7. The meeting closed at 6:45 pm.