**INTERVENTION(S) ON VARIOUS AGENDA ITEMS BY H.E. AGRINA MUSSA, HIGH COMMISSIONER OF MALAWI AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE (PR) TO UNEP DURING THE SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES (CPR) HELD ON 10TH DECEMBER 2020**

1. ***Agenda item*: Consideration of UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 and Programme of Work 2022-2023;**

Since am speaking for the first time, let me begin by thanking you Madam Chairperson for this opportunity to intervene on this very important matter which concerns the operations of UNEP and the implementation of specific environmental agenda which our ministers always set during their biennial meetings under UNEA.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the African group, as well as that delivered on behalf of G77+ China

Let me use this opportunity to appreciate all Member States and Specialised agencies as well as other stakeholders that have actively contributed to the process of formulating the MTS 2022-2025 and the Programme of Work 2022-2023. I also join others in applauding the Executive Director and her team for the secretarial work done.

Madam Chairperson, my delegation is generally supportive of the three strategic objectives in the MTS targeted at climate, nature as well as pollution actions. While overall, these strategic goals would help ensure planetary stability and sustainability, the important reason while Malawi supports the vision by MTS is that UNEP will undertake its work in a manner that is regionally balanced, sensitive to national needs and using resources, both financial and human in an efficient and globally equitable. It would be very unfortunate that three years down the line, when an evaluation of the MTS is done, challenges and gaps bordering uneven distribution of resources, beneficiaries and outcomes rears its ugly head again. We would like to caution that our support and approval of the MTS, is not in any way meant to give UNEP room to ignore or pay lip service to concerns along these lines that are continually raised by member states, both as contributors to resources and beneficiaries to various initiatives.

As regards the Programme of work for 2022-2023, my delegation looks forward to active, fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation between my country and UNEP. Let me make a comment as regards one of the three action areas of the programme of work; pollution control.

Malawi is currently facing a huge challenge in the management (separation, collection, handling, transportation, treatment and disposal) of waste, where on average, waste generation is estimated at 0.5 kgs per capita per day translating to 633 fifteen tonne lorries. In addition, electric and electronic waste (E Waste) management is also a challenge which is becoming more pronounced in urban centres. Various drivers have contributed to an upsurge in the generation of waste and consequently introduced challenges in the management of waste in Malawi. Indiscriminate waste disposal and lack of biodegradation, has brought out serious negative effects including pollution of open spaces, water sources, and the environment in general, release of greenhouse gases and breeding places for most disease-causing pathogens.

Therefore, my delegation under the pillar of pollution action, looks forward to collaborating with UNEP specifically on adverse impact of thin plastics and on waste management including recycling and energy generation initiatives.

I thank you for your attention and I certainly look forward to intervening on the rest of the agenda items.

1. ***Agenda item*: Consideration of draft decisions on administrative and budgetary matters for the virtual session of UNEA-5 in February 2021**.

Malawi may not have to intervene on this agenda item

1. ***Agenda item*: Preparations for the virtual fifth session of Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives.**

Madam Chairperson, My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the African group.

That said, let me thank the Secretariat for coming up with the document titled ‘Preparations for the virtual fifth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representative’, which is meant to serve as a background document for agenda item 3 regarding preparations for the virtual fifth session of OECPR.

Our view is that since we will have a streamlined and short duration of the virtual session of UNEA 5, we don’t foresee any justification of the OECPR being any different. Therefore, we very much support the proposed structure, in terms of both the duration and items for consideration, that has been done by the Secretariat.

I thank you Madam Chairperson.

1. ***Agenda item*: Preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP.**

I thank you again Madam Chairperson for this opportunity to intervene on behalf of my delegation. Madam Chairperson, My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the African group.

Malawi is of a string belief that the creation by the United Nations of UNEP in 1972 was a very strategic decision, and it remains a momentous milestone given the importance of a healthy environment in the achievement of sustainable development, well-being and prosperity for humanity. Another laudable and historic action was the decision by the United Nations to locate the headquarters of UNEP in the global south, in Africa to be specific. The presence of UNEP in Africa confirms the principle of equality of states as well as the notion of equitable distribution of responsibilities.

While we celebrate these fifty years, Chair, it is time for us to also deeply reflect and put into action measures which 1) strengthen the role of the environment in contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals and 2) enhance the role and visibility of Nairobi as the headquarters of UNEP. Let me add here Chair that it is in our view quite unfortunate that we have to constantly remind each other at every opportunity, including through UNEA decisions, on this issue of respecting and strengthening the headquarter function of UNEP. We have no doubt in our mind that such sentiments rarely come up concerning other UN agencies located elsewhere.

Having said the foregoing Chair, let me go to the document titled, ‘Draft strategic plan for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP’. My attention has been drawn to paragraphs 8 and 9 which talk about something that is not within the mandate of UNEA Decision 4/2. My delegation would like to know what is the specific relevance of these two paragraphs in this document? My delegation is very much interested to get a clear answer to this inquiry.

As regards paragraph 11 of the same document, Chair, my delegation’s preliminary reaction is that we find merit in either of the two and would thus like to thank the Secretariat for the proposal. However, we would have loved to get an idea of what are the logistical, technical and financial implications of either option. This would be very helpful when we are giving thought to the issue. I do hope that the Secretariat, within this short space of time may be able to respond to this request.

All in all, Madam Chairperson, my delegation looks forward to a successful 50th Anniversary celebration of UNEP. This celebration, as I conclude, is an icing on the cake for Africa’s Presidency of UNEA.

I thank you all for your kind attention.