

## **AFRICAN GROUP STATEMENT DURING THE 153RD MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES**

**ON TUESDAY, 26TH JANUARY 2021**

### **Agenda Item 5: Preparation for the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Creation of UNEP**

The African Group wishes to thank the secretariat for the presentation and to reiterate the importance of the discussions on the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP in the meetings of the CPR and other related meetings.

The Group has been engaged in the discussions by the CPR, on the commemoration in Nairobi of UNEP@50 as per UNEA decisions 4/2 and has overall emphasized an outcome that seeks to strengthen this UN Headquarter and highlight the principles of means of implementation and CBDR through a process that ensures equal consultation, participation and transparency at all times.

Chairperson,

The African Group has taken note of the draft strategic plan prepared by the secretariat for the commemoration of UNEP@50 and wishes to make the following remarks:

- The Group acknowledges that the UNEP@50 event will remain the main event and echoes its earlier statements indicating readiness to work collaboratively with the President of UNEA-5 in the preparations towards a successful commemoration. We reiterate that it is in everyone's interest that UNEP@50 succeeds in being a substantive commemoration which reinforces the centrality of UNEP in the global environmental agenda; and as the global environmental authority.
- The Group welcomes the proposal to use the inter-sessional period to give prominence to the commemoration including through the relevant meetings of the High Level Political Forum and Multilateral Environment Agreements. This

can be done through side events/discussions organized side by side with some of the meetings listed in the document. Important to this proposal are common substantive messages that will be used during these events.

- The African Group observes that it is imperative for the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives to play a significant role in this process and to further pronounce itself on the sequencing of actions for UNEP@50 so that it complements other related events.
- We have taken note of the stance to highlight the science policy input on the global environment for UNEP@50 and wish to underscore the need for geographic representation in the science research more particularly for Africa's voice and that of the global south to be transmitted.
- The Group supports kick-off of UNEP@50 celebrations during the first part of the online UNEA-5 and further takes note of the activities by relevant stakeholders that are currently ongoing. In this regard, the Group would appreciate more details on what the intercessional activities between the launch of the commemoration and the culmination in 2022 will entail; as we see a big role that can be played by regional and political groups during this period.
- It is said that in order to build momentum, the titled UNEP Global Assessments Synthesis Report will be launched, in conjunction with the kick-off event. While the proposal remains interesting given the recent work and updates on the resolution that called for the report, it would be of assistance if the secretariat could clearly define the role of this Report leading to the envisaged outcomes of the commemoration in 2022.
- The Group has taken note of the idea for UNEP@50 to provide an opportunity to, either, take stock of, endorse, or adopt the outcomes of consultations on UNGA73/333. While we continue to substantively discuss some of the proposals contained hereto, the Group wishes to get clarity on the process in order to be able to determine what is possible as we shape a way forward.

- In this regard, the group seeks clarification on the way forward procedurally. Based on the mandate given to UNEA through UNGA resolution 73/333 to “prepare” and not to finalize a political declaration, does Nairobi have the mandate to propose a way forward in terms of the adoption of the final “political declaration”. Given that resolution UNGA 73/333 does not specify which event would adopt a political declaration. Further to this, The Group seeks clarification regarding the role of New York and Nairobi in this process moving forward, once the draft political declaration has been prepared by UNEA 5 part 2 in 2022.
- The Group has in the past suggested the idea of holding a Special Session for the commemoration of UNEP@50. In this regard, we support the suggestion to convene the commemoration as a Special Session under the leadership of the President and the Bureau of the Sixth session of the Environment Assembly. Further articulation on this will be put forward by the African Group as discussions within the CPR, on the commemoration continue to develop.

I thank you!