

Joint meeting of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and
the Committee of Permanent Representatives
24 June 2021
14:00 – 15:30 and 16:00 – 19:00 (GMT+3)
Online meeting

**Agenda Item 5: Preparations for the commemoration of the creation of the United Nations
Environment Programme (UNEP@50).**

This note serves as a background document for consideration of agenda item 5: Preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP.

The note consists of an updated strategic plan for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP, following consideration of this matter at the 153rd meeting of the CPR subcommittee on 26 January and taking into account actions already take, as well as UNEA decision 5/3, by which Member States decided *“to convene a special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme, to be held in Nairobi for two days, on 3 and 4 March 2022, in conjunction with the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly, under the leadership of the Presidency and the Bureau of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.”*

Bureau Members are invited to review the updated strategy and provide further guidance to the Secretariat with a view to facilitate an impactful UNEP@50 commemoration at the UNEA Special Session on 3-4 March 2022, under the leadership of the Presidency and the Bureau of UNEA-6.

Strategic Plan for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP

A. Principles for the commemoration

1. The commemoration of the creation of UNEP (UNEP@50), as mandated in paragraph 8 of [UNEA Decision 4/2 and paragraph 10 of Decision 5/3](#), was launched at the online session of UNEA-5 in February 2021 (UNEA-5.1) and will culminate at a special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme, to be held in Nairobi for two days, on 3 and 4 March 2022, in conjunction with the resumed session of UNEA-5 (UNEA-5.2) . It will be complemented by various initiatives organized in conjunction with other relevant meetings and events in 2021 and 2022, concluding at the World Environment Day on 5 June 2022 (the date of the 50th anniversary).
2. Throughout 2021 and through 5 June 2022, the UNEP@50 commemoration will be given prominence in conjunction with high profile multilateral environmental meetings, such as meetings of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and of multilateral environmental agreements.
3. A successful UNEP@50 commemoration will require close cooperation between the UNEP Secretariat, the current and incoming UNEA Presidencies, the UNEA and CPR Bureaux, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and interested accredited organizations. It will to a large extent rely on the availability of additional extrabudgetary financial resources.
4. UNEP@50 should focus on UNEP's core mandates, in particular its strong science-policy interface, as also highlighted in paragraph 7 of [UNEA Resolution 4/23](#), and international environmental governance. The commemoration should seek to:
 - celebrate achievements in addressing environmental challenges and catalysing impact;
 - set the environmental stage and ambition for the next 50 years; and
 - strengthen UNEP/Environmental Multilateralism/the Global Environmental Agenda.
5. In accordance with paragraph 5 of UNEA decision 5/3, the special session of UNEA 3-4 March 2022, subject to the agreement of Member States, provides an opportunity to take stock of, endorse or adopt the outcome of the consultation process under [General Assembly Resolution 73/333](#), entitled "Follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277".
6. The [General Assembly, in its decision A/75/L.88](#), has on 20 May 2021 decided to convene the international meeting entitled "Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all –our responsibility, our opportunity", in Stockholm, on 2 and 3 June 2022, during the week of World Environment Day, to commemorate the 50 years since the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and its outcome documents, as a contribution to the environmental dimension of sustainable development to accelerate the implementation of commitments in the context of the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development, including a sustainable recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic" (para 1); and that the international meeting should be mutually reinforcing with UNEP@50, avoiding overlap and duplication (para 2)
7. Any political outcome of UNEP@50 has yet to be defined, under the leadership of the incoming UNEA-6 Presidency and Bureau. It is hoped that, in accordance with GA Decision A/75/L.88, the outcomes of the special session will inform and guide the discussions at Stockholm+50 in June 2022.
8. To this end, the Secretariat proposes to invite Member States, through their regional groups to initiate the early nomination of the Members of the incoming Bureau of the sixth session of the Assembly including its Presidency to be nominated by the African Group of States to promote synergies and collaboration with the Bureau of UNEA-5 and with regards to Member States.

B. Update on existing and planned outreach activities for UNEP@50 since the launch of the commemoration at UNEA-5.1 in February 2021

9. At the last plenary session of the UNEA-5.1, the Assembly launched the commemoration of the creation of UNEP. Participants viewed a short video showcasing the achievements of UNEP over its 50-year history, following which statements were made by a representative of major groups and stakeholders; the Executive Director; the President of the Environment Assembly; and Mr. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya. A summary of the statements and the ensuing discussion is set out in section V of the proceedings of the session ([UNEP/EA.5/25](#)).
10. In conjunction with the UNEA-5.1, the UN Secretary General and UNEP Executive Director launched on 18 February 2021 the first UNEP Global Assessments Synthesis Report entitled *Making Peace With Nature: A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies*¹. The Synthesis report analyzes the key findings of recent Global Environmental Assessments and high-impact literature and sets out the scientific backdrop for the UNEP outreach activities throughout 2021.
11. UNEA-5.1 marked the beginning of a UNEP@50 communication initiative, designed to raise awareness about the role and value-added of UNEP to policy-makers and the general public throughout 2021 and 2022. The initiative builds on planned and existing communication events in 2021 and 2022, including the World Environment Days, as well as relevant communication initiatives at regional level.
12. In February, the Secretariat produced a [50th anniversary video](#). Then in April, it launched an [anniversary brand toolkit](#) in all six official UN languages as well as in Swahili and Portuguese. The anniversary logo will be used on all digital platforms, publications and other outputs from June 2021 to June 2022.
13. On June 5, World Environment Day, the Secretariat launched a dedicated section on the UNEP website focused on the 50th anniversary. This will be expanded further in coming months as new content is created subject to available resources, including a timeline of UNEP milestones in the form of text, infographics and photo/video stories that highlight major moments. Closer to the UNEP@50 event, an anniversary toolkit will be developed and shared with Member States to be used to highlight their support for UNEP on their own platforms.
14. The Secretariat is also consulting with the secretariats of relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements and their respective Governing Bodies to solicit inputs and create broader ownership for UNEP@50.
15. Regional forums will have the opportunity to contribute to the celebration of UNEP@50 such as: the First session of the 18th AMCEN meeting 13-17 September; the 4th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific 5-7 October; and the First Inter-Sessional Meeting of the LAC XXIII Forum of Ministers and Regional Meetings scheduled for the third week of November 2021.

C. Stakeholder engagement for UNEP@50

16. The Secretariat supports an active engagement of Major Groups and Stakeholders in the commemoration activities, with the aim to facilitate broad participation and ownership for UNEP@50, including a “UNEP@50 Taskforce” initiated by Major Groups and Stakeholders, coordinated by the Science and Technology and the Children and Youth Major Groups, to put in place a broad consultation process for interested civil society organizations and representatives to identify relevant inputs feeding into the UNEP@50 commemoration. Based on surveys and scientific assessments, stakeholders are

¹ More information on this report is available at: <https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/global-assessments-synthesis-report-path-to-sustainable-future>

planning to develop an independent report expressing their own perspectives and expectations on the 50-year commemoration of UNEP, under the working title “The UNEP We Want”, expected to be available by the end of 2021 and launched at the culmination of the commemoration in February 2022.

17. In addition, the Children and Youth Major Group will address UNEP @ 50 and other themes during a series of self-organized *Youth Environment Assemblies* that will take place in various UNEP regions and as an international assembly back to back with UNEA 5.2.

D. Science-policy input on the global environment for UNEP@50

18. UNEA resolution 4/23 requests the Executive Director of UNEP to develop a “science-policy input on the global environment” as a contribution to the UNEP@50 commemorations events. In addition to the Global Assessments Synthesis Report mentioned above, UNEP is developing a publication to review the global environmental science-policy interface over the five decades since the establishment of the UNEP in 1972.
19. This forward looking science-policy publication, will be based on inputs from UNEP as well as, MEA Secretariats, partners and other stakeholders. It will include examples and experiences on science-policy and examine its impact on environmental management and governance. While the publication will build on relevant assessments and reports already available, the key focal areas in drawing up the experiences is expected to be climate change, nature loss and pollution. A draft of the document will be shared with members of the CPR in the second half of 2021.

E. UNEP@50 at the Special Session of UNEA in 2022

20. In UNEA Decision 5/3, Member States decided “to convene a special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme, to be held in Nairobi for two days, on 3 and 4 March 2022, in conjunction with the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly, under the leadership of the Presidency and the Bureau of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.” (paragraph 10).
21. As a thought-starter on how the Special Session may be structured, the secretariat has developed a first draft , as outlined in Annex I.
22. In accordance with decision 5/3, further guidance on the format, structure and any political outcome will require guidance from of the Presidency and the Bureau of UNEA-6.

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Annex I: Draft structure of UNEA-5.2 and the UNEA Special Session on UNEP@50

