

AFRICAN GROUP INTERVENTION DELIVERED

BY

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AMBASSADOR OF THE STATE OF ERITREA

AT THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COMMITTEE OF

PERMANENT

REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE UNITED NATIONS

ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

23 JUNE 2021

NAIROBI

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At the outset the African Group wishes to thank the outgoing Chair of the UNEP CPR and his Bureau for their leadership and guidance during their tenure. The Group also wishes to congratulate the incoming Bureau of the UNEP CPR for their nomination and to extend our commitment and support.

The African Group thanks the Chair of the CPR for facilitating the discussions of this time consuming but necessary debate which, at its centre, has revealed some of the policy and governance issues we need to tackle as a collective.

In this regard, the African Group wishes to at the outset discourage tendencies seen during this debate of linking the difficulty of the process with the functioning of the Nairobi station and this UN Headquarter in particular. As far as we are concerned, several debates on issues of processes/governance are taking place all over the world in all the UN Headquarters. Therefore, the location of this debate and the fact that it is taking place should not be turned into a Nairobi-problem. As a matter of fact, most challenges on this debate can be attributed to the way we are meeting through online platforms, which as has been seen previously present challenges in our interaction and the ability to reach a consensus in good time.

Mr Chair,

The African Group is taking a significant step from its original position in constructing a compromise on this matter in order to allow for finalisation on the matter and moving forward. In this regard, the Group sees the document on the 'Draft elements for a decision of the Committee of Permanent Representatives' as a good basis for moving forward. It must be however registered that the optimal scenario for the African Group would not have been the one of having the same regional group chairing the UNEP CPR and UNEA at the same time. In this regard, the issue of overlap should be fully discussed whereby we can at least agree on how to avoid this situation in future.

Nonetheless, in the spirit of compromise and moving forward, the African Group can accept the draft decision as it at the least ensures no overlap in the preparations for UNEA-5 part two and the UNEP@50 preparatory process, and is in line with the Rules of Procedure.

Mr Chair,

The African Group wishes to make the following comments to the document and to raise a few questions, which we hope can be clarified before its adoption:

- We seek clarification on options for the “format” of the document and what difference, if any, there would be if the document is adopted as a chair’s summary rather than as a decision? Furthermore, the Group has taken note that in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5, the CPR makes recommendations to its Bureau. This may be misplaced in that the CPR should be deciding, just as we know that the Bureau does not decide for the CPR but can only recommend. Therefore can the recommendations in the text be framed as an agreement, rather than a recommendation, so as to maintain common understanding?
- On paragraph 3, the Group understands that geographical representation and balance will be maintained in regards to the preparations and finalisation of UNEA-5, in this regard and understand that some of the issues will make clearer sense in practice. In this regard, certain practical issues such as the chairing of joint Bureaux meetings will require further clarity.
- On paragraph 5 - it may be recalled that two countries from developed and developing countries have been appointed to co-facilitate the process, in this regard clarity is sought on whether these countries will also be representing the regional groups in the UNEP CPR Bureau in order to avoid undermining the current process on UNGA 73/333
- On op 6 – the African Group appreciates the clear commitment to Africa serving its full and meaningful term for the UNEA-6 Presidency. Therefore, it must be clear that the exceptional basis referred to in this paragraph relates to the year for UNEA -6 and not the Presidency of its Bureau
- The Group would like to propose a paragraph based on UNEA-5 part one decision to discuss an important element on how to ensure that there is no overlap in the chairmanship of the CPR and the presidency of UNEA in the future. This OP 7, which is being proposed in good faith, indicates that the CPR based review process should take up the matter in its deliberations and reads as follows:
“Requests the co facilitators of the CPR based review process to continue the discussions about the systemic problems regarding the cycle of the term of

office of the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives in relation to that of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly”.

Mr Chair,

The African Group hopes that the proposals and questions raised, which were shared with the secretariat yesterday will be acceptable to member States in order to reach finality on the matter. Furthermore, it would be appreciated if this decision was to be adopted by consensus with the inclusion of paragraph 7 and of course clarity on the questions raised. This will ensure a clear direction as we deliberate in the intersessional period.

It is hoped that the views of the African Group will be taken in a positive spirit in line with the core positions of the Group as expressed in several meetings. Lastly, the African Group has exercised exceptional flexibility in dealing with the situation that has led to this elements paper. In this regard, we call for all regional Groups to show flexibility as we finalise the debate.

The African Group remain committed to working with the elected Bureau members in moving the environment agenda forward.

I thank you!