



**155<sup>th</sup> meeting  
of the Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP  
28 September 2021**

**Interventions on behalf of the European Union  
and its Member States**

*Ukraine and Serbia align themselves with this statement.*

*Agenda Item 4: Report by the Executive Director*

- Allow me to start by thanking the Executive Director and her team for the informative Quarterly report giving a overview of UNEP’s activities that took place before the summer break.
- The EU and its Member States appreciate the leadership of the Executive Director in ensuring that UNEP continues to deliver on the implementation of the Programme of work during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- The EU and its Member States thank UNEP, UNON and the Government of Kenya for the excellent coordinated efforts working towards a safe reopening the UN compound.
- We welcome the proposed plans for reopening of the compound in Gigiri and look forward to presentation of the revised guidelines by UNON to the Diplomatic Corps. Today marks the first time the CPR is meeting in the compound since March 2020, albeit still in a very restricted in-person representation format. However, the decision to welcome the representatives from the Bureau and the regional and political groups is a welcome step towards broader in-person sessions that are expected to restart in October.

- Today’s meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives is essential for preparing the ground for the very busy months ahead of us and especially in view of the preparations for the Annual Subcommittee meeting.
- We look forward to a constructive discussion under the Agenda Item 6, which should result in a joint conclusion on how to effectively conduct the Annual Subcommittee meeting, balancing the discussion between UNEA 5.2 preparations and the Programme Performance Review.
- We also take this opportunity to thank the Executive Director for the recent consultations with the regional groups on the preparations for UNEP@50 and look forward to the oral update today on the regional preparations.
- The EU and its Member States remain committed to working with all regional groups to prepare for a memorable UNEP@50 event to pave the way for strengthening of UNEP.
- The EU and its MS stand ready to work with all MS, here and elsewhere, and with UNEP to prepare for “Stockholm+50: to be held under the Theme “A healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity.”
- We are pleased that the UN General Assembly has decided that UNEP@50 and Stockholm+50 can and will be mutually reinforcing with UNEP@50, avoiding overlap and duplication.
- We hope that UNEA-5.2 will provide strong messages and input to Stockholm+50, based on its own experience and expertise.
- Finally, the EU and its Member States would like to thank UNEP for the support with the organisation and successful conclusion of the Marine Litter and Plastics Conference, held in Geneva on 1 and 2<sup>nd</sup> of September. The EU and its member States remain committed to take an ambitious action at resumed session of UNEA5, and support the establishment of an International Negotiations Committee for a legally binding Global Agreement on Plastics.
- On this topic we further welcome the other informal processes related to the combat of marine litter and plastic pollution, namely the creation and activities of a Group of Friends here in Nairobi.

## **The EU and its Member States views on Annual Subcommittee preparations and on UNEP@50 preparations**

- EU and its MS welcome the early preparations for the 8th Annual Subcommittee Meeting and relevant documents prepared by the Secretariat, especially the timely submission of the background note entitled “Possible key areas of importance for consideration at the resumed session of UNEA-5”.
- The EU and its MS welcome the plans for a phased and safe reopening of the UN compound in Nairobi, including for in-person/hybrid meetings, as previously said by the Executive Director. Nevertheless, it remains important and wise at this stage to prepare well in advance contingency plans regarding the format of UNEA-5.2 and the preceding OECPR.
- The utmost priority for the EU and its MS remains to ensure a substantive resumed session (UNEA-5.2), which delivers tangible outcomes.
- For this reason, the EU and its MS support a streamlined and manageable substantive discussion at the ASC-8 to prepare for UNEA-5.2, in order to find a balance in expected UNEA-5 outcomes, keeping in mind that the resumed session of UNEA-5 will be a three-day meeting.
- In that regard we recall the decision 5/3 taken by UNEA-5.1 “*To take note of the reports of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme submitted to UNEA 5 on progress achieved in the implementation of resolutions of the Assembly and to review those reports at the eighth annual subcommittee meeting in 2021 and defer taking action thereon until the resumed meeting of UNEA 5 in February and March 2022;*”, while noting that the review is currently not proposed on the agenda of the ASC-8. We would like to seek clarification by the CPR Chair and/or the Secretariat to understand why this decision has not been followed and recommend that this important discussion is included in the programme of ASC-8.
- The EU and its MS see the need to ensure the most efficient preparations and negotiations of resolutions and decisions to be adopted at the resumed session, while we maintain openness to discuss proposals related to the UNEA-5 theme “*Strengthening Actions for Nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals*” and/or in follow-up of the review of the reports presented at UNEA-5.1, provided they are streamlined and can generate support, and the number of resolutions remains manageable.
- Furthermore, we emphasize the importance of finding the right balance during the ASC-8, for the discussion on resolutions and the preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5 with sufficient time for discussion on the follow up on lessons learned from the Programme Performance Review.
- The EU and its MS suggest a further discussion on how to better organize our preparatory work, in particular on how to approach the exchange and preparation and submission of draft resolutions.

- The EU and its MS are mindful of the time constraints and therefore welcome the explanation of rule 44 of the UNEA Rules of Procedure in the note and also recalling the operative paragraph 9 of UNEA Decision 5/3, which encouraged Member States to submit draft resolutions at an early stage, hence by no later than 20 December 2021.
- The EU and its MS consider the adoption of the ministerial declaration as a key deliverable for the resumed session of UNEA-5, by setting the global agenda on the environment, as well as keeping the political momentum and maintaining the discussions alive on the achievement of the environmental dimension of sustainable development and addressing major challenges – climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution – together as one.
- The EU and its MS are looking forward to receiving a detailed update on the preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of UNEP (UNEP@50). The EU and its MS wish to support UNEP in efforts to work towards a successful and meaningful special session. We see UNEP@50 as a way of raising awareness of the added value of UNEP and its fundamental role for driving the international environmental agenda and environmental and sustainability governance, as well as recognizing potential synergies with the work undertaken to follow up on UNGA Resolution 73/333 on international environmental governance and international environmental law, and in that regard recall the Decision 5/3 of UNEA-5.1 inviting UNGA to consider the appropriate event for the adoption of the Political Declaration negotiated in the follow-up of this process.
- The EU and its MS emphasize that the international meeting entitled “Stockholm+50: a healthy planet for the prosperity of all – our responsibility, our opportunity” constitutes a way of promoting awareness on interlinkages between environmental challenges and the threat they represent to sustainable development, and a more holistic and coherent approach. We consider that this event should significantly contribute to a global transition of our social and economic systems to stop the environmental decline that is eroding progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. We stress that UNEA-5.2 should provide strong messages and input to Stockholm+50, based on its own experience and expertise, on the need of safeguarding our survival – stave off hunger, ensure clean water, air to breath and a healthy soil.
- Regarding the structure and list of documents for the 8th Annual Subcommittee Meeting, the EU and its MS welcome allocation of time foreseen for consideration of any remaining open issue(s) and/or specific issues to be addressed in smaller informal working groups, to allow for an informal dialogue. In addition, the EU and its MS would also like to stress the importance to receive the documents for the meeting well in advance.