



United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

**Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme**

Eighth meeting

Nairobi, 25 – 29 October 2021

12:00 – 18:00 (GMT+3)

Hybrid meeting

Conference Room 2

Agenda Item 4: Preparations for the resumed session of UNEA-5

a) Consideration of key areas of importance in accordance with mandates from previous UNEA resolutions

This note, entitled “Consolidated recommendations from the official working documents for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly”, has been prepared as a background document for the discussions under Agenda Item 4 a): Consideration of key areas of importance in accordance with mandates from previous UNEA resolutions.

The note outlines a comprehensive and consolidated list of recommendations and suggested actions deriving from relevant official working documents for UNEA-5 which were submitted in advance of the online session of the Assembly held on 22-23 February 2021, and remain valid for the resumed session of UNEA-5 to be held on 28 February – 2 March 2022.

The document responds to the request for a review during the 8th meeting of the annual subcommittee of [the official working documents for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly UNEA-5](#), as outlined in UNEA decision 5/4 (paragraph 4), which reads: “*Takes note of the reports of the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme submitted to the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session on progress achieved in the implementation of resolutions of the Assembly, as listed in the annex to the present decision, and decides to review those reports at the eighth annual subcommittee meeting in 2021 and defer taking action thereon until the resumed meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in February and March 2022*”

Consolidated recommendations from the official working documents for the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

All official working documents for UNEA-5 are available online through this link:

<https://www.unep.org/environmentassembly/pre-session-working-documents-unea-5>

UNEP/EA.5/4: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/1 on innovative pathways to achieve sustainable consumption and production: Report of the Executive Director

29. The Environment Assembly may wish to encourage UNEP and Member States to create an exchange space that allows identification and filling in of the knowledge and governance gaps hindering the uptake of coherent product policies and sustainable design practices at the global level; to share and disseminate lessons learned and successful policies and practices; and to enhance dialogue and cooperation at the global and regional levels. Securing the engagement of all relevant stakeholders in this initiative would enhance the coordination of efforts and ensure greater impact.

30. The Assembly may also wish to encourage UNEP to provide technical support to policymakers for the formulation of coherent product policies and to develop a robust methodology for assessing the potential benefits of product policies for the environment and other sustainability dimensions

31. The Assembly may wish to take note of the outcomes of the work of the task group on catalysing science-based policy action on sustainable consumption and production and encourage the International Resource Panel and the One Planet network to use the value chain approach systematically to guide their work, with the objective of strengthening the interface between science on natural resources and action on sustainable consumption and production in relation to the 2030 Agenda.

UNEP/EA.5/5: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/2 on promotion of sustainable and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste: Report of the Executive Director

18. The Environment Assembly may wish to take note of the present report and provide further guidance as appropriate.

UNEP/EA.5/6: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/4 on addressing environmental challenges through sustainable business practices: Report of the Executive Director

30. The Environment Assembly may wish to invite Member States to (a) strengthen enabling policy frameworks for sustainable business practices and cross-ministerial collaboration, and (b) strengthen mechanisms for scaling up capacity-building for the development and strengthening of such enabling policies.

31. The Assembly may wish to invite Member States to (a) consider their efforts to strengthen their economies by using the COVID-19 pandemic as a crucial opportunity to mainstream resource efficiency, eco-innovation and circularity into policy instruments, and (b) note that structuring recovery packages to accelerate the green transition can provide important incentives and enablers for businesses, especially the most vulnerable actors in the value chains, including small and medium-sized enterprises, to continue transitioning to more sustainable business models and strengthening their resilience.

32. The Assembly may wish to (a) encourage the consideration of traditional and local know-how to support the identification of innovative upstream solutions, and (b) note the need for all decisions to be informed by a value-chain approach and life-cycle thinking in order to identify the most impactful intervention points and avoid burden-shifting.

33. The Assembly may wish to note the need for more coordination between business support programmes and to invite Member States to continue their support of the I-GO solution, which aims to strengthen coordination between organizations to maximize use of their existing resources, as a key factor in the facilitation of a central resource efficiency database for businesses and SMEs.

34. The Assembly may wish to invite Member States to strengthen RECPnet, which while originally established and nurtured by UNEP and United Nations Industrial Development Organization has now become an independent entity while remaining closely linked to the work of UNEP, including as a partner in the Green Industry Platform.

**UNEP/EA.5/7: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/5 on sustainable infrastructure:
Report of the Executive Director.**

18. The Environment Assembly may wish to recognize the importance of sustainable infrastructure to “building back better” and a green post-COVID-19 recovery, and to consider how investments in social, economic and ecological infrastructure can support economic recovery, create green jobs, and build resilience to future crises as well as inclusive and healthy societies.

19. The Assembly may wish to consider adopting sustainable infrastructure guidelines that, together with associated policy and regulatory incentives to promote compliance, can help Member States implement resolution 4/5 on sustainable infrastructure, including by developing and strengthening national and regional systems-level strategic approaches to infrastructure planning and promoting Nature-based solutions as key components of such approaches.

**UNEP/EA.5/8: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/6 on marine litter and microplastics:
Report of the Executive Director**

41. The Environment Assembly may wish to take note of, and welcome the completion of, the work of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics established under Environment Assembly resolution 3/7, as set out in the meeting reports of the expert group and in the chair’s summary.

42. The Environment Assembly may wish to decide on the future direction of its work on marine litter and microplastics in the light of the response options identified by the ad-hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics.

43. In preparation for its resumed fifth session, the Environment Assembly may wish to request the Executive Director to organize an informal expert group on marine litter and microplastics. 44. The Environment Assembly may wish to take note of the findings of the assessment on sources, pathways and hazards of litter, including plastic litter and microplastic pollution.

45. The Environment Assembly may wish to invite Member States and relevant stakeholders who have not yet done so to join the Global Partnership on Marine Litter and the Clean Seas campaign.

46. The Environment Assembly may wish to invite Governments, the private sector, foundations and other organizations to support the work of the United Nations Environment Programme on marine litter and microplastics through voluntary financial contributions.

UNEP/EA.5/9: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/8 on sound management of chemicals and waste: Report of the Executive Director

42. The Environment Assembly may wish:

- a) To consider extending the duration of the Special Programme, as provided for in its terms of reference, and contingent upon a recommendation by the Executive Board of the Special Programme, in order to accelerate action by recipient countries towards the sound management of chemicals and waste;
- b) Acknowledging the efforts undertaken, to consider highlighting the need to continue to enhance support to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the new framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste and its implementation, including with sufficient staff and resources for the secretariat;
- c) To consider encouraging all Member States and relevant stakeholders to consider and apply the green chemistry and sustainable chemistry manuals, which, together with the Global Chemicals Outlook II, highlight the crucial importance of environmentally sound innovation;
- d) To consider calling upon all relevant stakeholders to consider the findings of the recently issued report An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern: Chemicals and Waste Issues Posing Risks to Human Health and the Environment² and the conclusion in the Global Chemicals Outlook II that the global goal of minimizing the adverse impacts of chemicals and waste was not achieved by 2020;
- e) To recognize that a broader set of issues of concern may need to be considered and identified by the international community in the future;
- f) To consider urgently calling for more ambitious worldwide action, including on heavy metals, by all stakeholders;
- g) To consider encouraging further development and analysis of the addendum to the report An Assessment Report on Issues of Concern: Chemicals and Waste Issues Posing Risks to Human Health and the Environment, to take stock of the existing national- and organization-level initiatives relating to each issue, and to identify gaps and appropriate future actions;
- h) To consider the options put forward in the report providing an assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste and suggest a way forward in order to reinforce the science-policy interface in a comprehensive way and thus address the multiple facets of sound management of chemicals and waste;
- i) To consider drawing attention to the role that the sound management of chemicals and waste can play in addressing legacy pollution and shaping the future, from the design of environmentally sound innovative products, processes and value chains to sustainable consumption and production systems, as reflected in the medium-term strategy.

UNEP/EA.5/10: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/10 on innovation on biodiversity and land degradation: Report of the Executive Director

31. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider:

- a) Urging Member States to use holistic, inclusive, long-term strategies that proactively protect or restore biodiversity, maximizing the myriad of ecosystem services that nature provides, and urging them to explicitly factor these services into policies across governments and all economic sectors. Key areas of transformation are needed to advance sustainable food and agriculture systems, integrate natural capital and nature-based risks into financial systems, and improve patterns of consumption and production in key sectors, including infrastructure, tourism and transport, and green global and regional supply chains;
- b) Enhancing the mandate of UNEP to convene and develop actionable and systemic solutions to address these complex issues. The United Nations Environment Assembly offers an opportunity to mobilize support for evidence-based policy recommendations, including by focusing attention on the role that the sustainable wildlife trade plays in advancing biodiversity conservation in line with global commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, among others;
- c) Requesting UNEP to play a key role by building capacity, convening and in some cases pioneering proof-of-concept instruments to leverage public finance to unlock and garner private capital to address deforestation and other types of ecosystem degradation. Furthermore, UNEP can play a key role by informing Member States about the total public and private investment that is directed to nature-based solutions and compare that to what is needed. Highlighting the difference can help build momentum to close the gap between the two.

UNEP/EA.5/11: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/15 on innovation in sustainable rangelands and pastoralism: Report of the Executive Director

16. The Environment Assembly may wish to encourage Member States and stakeholders to increase their engagement and support, including financial resources, to raise awareness and promote innovation solutions for sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism, including traditional knowledge.

17. The Assembly may also wish to encourage Member States to strengthen global efforts to conserve rangelands and use them sustainably, in particular in the context of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

18. Finally, the Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to develop national plans to combat sand and dust storms and to collaborate at the regional and subregional levels on collective action to combat cross-border transport of sand and dust.

UNEP/EA.5/12: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/17 on the promotion of gender equality and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance: Report of the Executive Director

54. The Environment Assembly may wish take note of the present report.

UNEP/EA.5/13: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/18 on the poverty-environment nexus: Report of the Executive Director

26. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider adopting the Multidimensional Poverty Index as a tool for poverty analytics, to be used in new areas and countries to provide the information and statistics needed to support delivery of Sustainable Development Goal 1 of ending poverty.

27. The Assembly may also wish to consider using inclusive wealth statistics to guide policy efforts towards enhancing the capacity of Member States to deliver the 2030 Agenda, shape the post-COVID-19 recovery and accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

UNEP/EA.5/14: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/19 on mineral resource governance: Report of the Executive Director

A. Material intensity of recovery following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic

14. Minerals, in particular in the context of infrastructure development, and the metals associated with renewable energy will play an important role in the infrastructure-related stimulus packages to build back better following the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The sourcing of those minerals from sustainable and responsible mineral supply chains, in particular mineral aggregates, could play an important role in “building back better”. In that context, the Environment Assembly may wish to request UNEP to convene a dialogue on the role of mineral resources in “building back better” following the COVID-19 pandemic. That dialogue could be enhanced through parallel efforts to consider (a) the role of the minerals sector, especially construction materials, in disaster recovery and planning; and (b) the strengthening of the technical and sustainability standards of development banks for the sourcing of construction materials, including sand.

B. Platforms for cooperation and capacity-building

15. To accelerate action on sustainable mineral governance, the Environment Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to develop and advance, with the support of UNEP and in cooperation with other relevant organizations, the scoping of mechanisms to enhance implementation of existing governance initiatives, share knowledge across regional and international boundaries, and enhance connections between different stakeholder groups throughout the minerals supply chain. The following could be considered:

- a) Establish an intergovernmental working group on the sustainable development of minerals and metals to identify priorities for future action and advance specific themes;
- b) Expand and regionalize existing forums through wider participation to include environment and mining ministries; ministerial-level representation and engagement; partnership with regional economic communities; and enhanced dialogue between producers, financiers and consumers;
- c) Dialogue with Member States and multi-stakeholder governance initiatives to set minimum standards, 11 which should take a holistic and human rights approach and consider effective transparency and accountability aspects, and may include options for legal remedies and minimum standards for community benefit-sharing;
- d) Establish a funding mechanism to scale up capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and cooperation between Member States and other stakeholders in mineral resource governance.

C. Tailings management

16. The Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management was recognized as a significant advance in tailings governance, with the potential to improve safety and environmental outcomes. The Environment Assembly may wish to:

- a) Highlight the importance of the establishment of an independent entity to oversee, support and provide assurance on the implementation of the Standard;
- b) Encourage Member States to prioritize the decommissioning, removal and rehabilitation of unsafe facilities, in particular those with no responsible owner;
- c) Encourage continued cooperation among United Nations agencies and relevant stakeholders to strengthen tailing governance and request the Executive Director of UNEP to collate and commission further research on innovations in tailings management, reduction, recycling and re-use, in particular the potential to re-use benign tailings material as an alternative to natural aggregate in the construction and land reclamation sectors, and to further develop the Global Tailings Portal to expand access to information.

D. Harmonization and alignment of governance initiatives

17. To streamline dialogue among mineral governance initiatives, as well as among stakeholders in general, the Environment Assembly may wish to encourage and formalize discussions about the alignment and harmonization of those initiatives. Options for incorporating or expanding new areas of governance, especially enhancement of the coverage of environmental issues, could be explored with the aim of improving holistic governance of the sector. Aspects that could be further explored include the following:

- a) Dialogue between Member States and partners on potential avenues for mainstreaming existing voluntary initiatives into national laws and regulatory instruments;
- b) Collaborative initiatives for capacity-building, focusing on “building from below” in order to reduce power asymmetries at the supply base;
- c) Development and implementation of a harmonized approach to auditing existing governance initiatives to enhance efficiency and coherence;
- d) Sharing of information to enable consumers, shareholders and other stakeholders to make informed decisions. 12

E. Artisanal and small-scale mining

18. The Environment Assembly may wish to:

- a) Encourage Member States to action and adapt to the local context the Mosi-oa-Tunya Declaration on Artisanal and Small-scale Mining, Quarrying and Development;
- b) Encourage Member States and other stakeholders to conduct research and share knowledge regarding the scale and geographic extent of the artisanal and small-scale mining sector through country-wide censuses;
- c) Request UNEP to work with other United Nations agencies and other bodies to investigate the development of a standard similar to the Equator Principles to support the financing of artisanal and small-scale mining for transformation, and to investigate options for strengthening artisanal and small-scale mining associations at the international level.

F. Mine waste recycling, re-use and circularity

19. While there have been discussions on the application of circularity approaches, specific programmes and projects are needed to build on previous work calling for better systemic engagement along the

minerals supply and consumption chains, incorporating all relevant actors. The Environment Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to support further research and policy actions on mine waste and circularity. Examples of areas for investigation could include the recycling and re-use of tailings and other mine waste and by-products, re-mine and re-process wastes (including from artisanal and small-scale mining), re-use of demolition waste, and incorporation of waste re-use options in mine planning and closure planning.

G. National-level governance

20. Although significant work has been done to strengthen mineral laws, the Environment Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to continue legal reforms and support sectoral transformation by adopting laws that include aspects of public participation, remedy and redress, transparency, trade agreements, value chain and linkage development, private-sector controls, anti-corruption efforts and long-term environmental liability. Legal frameworks should also extend to minerals that are mined or quarried, processed and used domestically, which are often referred to as development minerals.

UNEP/EA.5/15: Availability of adequate funding to support implementation of the fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law pursuant to resolution 4/20: Report of the Executive Director

11. The Environment Assembly may wish:

- a) To note and welcome the progress made so far towards implementation of Montevideo Programme V;
- b) To invite Member States that have not yet done so to designate national focal points for the Montevideo Programme, pursuant to Environment Assembly resolution 2/19;
- c) To invite Governments, the private sector, foundations and other organizations to provide voluntary contributions to support the implementation of Montevideo Programme V;
- d) To request the Executive Director of UNEP to continue to seek appropriate funding for the implementation of activities under Montevideo Programme V and consider establishing a trust fund for the management of designated funds, as appropriate, in accordance with relevant Environment Assembly decisions and resolutions.

UNEP/EA.5/16: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/22 on implementation and follow-up of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions: Report of the Executive Director

14. The Environment Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to continue to provide feedback and guidance for improving the Portal, based on users' experience.

15. The Environment Assembly may also wish to encourage Member States to report, through the Portal, on their efforts to implement Assembly resolutions.

UNEP/EA.5/17: Progress in the implementation of resolution 4/23 on keeping the world environment under review: Enhancing the United Nations Environment Programme science-policy interface and endorsement of the Global Environment Outlook: Report of the Executive Director

24. The Environment Assembly may wish to take note of the present report and provide further guidance, as appropriate.

UNEP/EA.5/18: Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/3 on the contributions of United Nations Environment Assembly to the high-level political forum on sustainable development: Report of the Executive Director

N/A

UNEP/EA. 5/19: Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/6 on managing soil pollution to achieve sustainable development: Report of the Executive Director

11. The Environment Assembly may wish to recognize and welcome the findings of the global assessment of soil pollution report.

UNEP/EA.5/20: Progress in the implementation of resolution 3/10 on addressing water pollution to protect and restore water-related ecosystems: Report of the Executive Director

29. The Environment Assembly may wish:

- a) To invite Member States to engage in and support the World Water Quality Alliance; its monitoring and assessment work; its efforts to foster collaboration between Member States and UNEP in the area of data, information and sharing, including the development of open consensus-based standards to foster citizen science; its stakeholder engagement-based, solution-oriented work streams; and its science and policy processes, including the health nexus, by, for example, identifying partners and resources for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 and its related targets;
- b) To invite Member States to provide additional support to GEMS/Water through the general trust fund to provide support to GEMS/Water and to promote its activities in order to better and sustainably meet countries' demand for water quality monitoring, data management and analysis, and capacity development beyond 2023, including innovative online training, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to reduce options for in-country capacity development.

UNEP/EA.5/21: Progress in the implementation of resolution 2/14 on illegal trade in wildlife and wild products: Report of the Executive Director

24. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider strengthening the environment dimensions of the One Health approach and taking advantage of the expertise of UNEP and other environmental experts by including appropriate work in the mandate of UNEP and providing for expanded environmental expertise within the existing tripartite alliance between the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health.

25. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider encouraging Member States to develop and advance, with the support of the Executive Director, measures to address crimes that have a serious

impact on the environment, as well as to sustain efforts to build the capacity of actors in the enforcement chain to fully appreciate the gravity of offenses relating to illegal trade in wildlife and forest products.

26. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider urging Member States to consider ways to enhance opportunities for indigenous peoples and local communities to participate in decision-making arenas relevant to wildlife, including (as appropriate) by recognizing the need for this in official statements and establishing clear and accessible pathways for input, in order to enable deeper and more meaningful engagement at all levels.

27. The Environment Assembly may wish to consider furthering the mandate of and support for the Executive Director to cover the broader threats to wildlife and biodiversity beyond illegal trade in wildlife, including through analysis and development of measures to address combinations of threats, as a means of identifying where strong and coordinated policy responses are most needed, both globally and at the national level.

UNEP/EA.5/23: Action plan for the implementation of Paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as mandated by UNEP/EA.4/Dec. 2: Report of the Executive Director

N/A

UNEP/EA.5/24: Providing Options for the Future of the Global Environment Outlook: Report of the Executive Director

24. The Environment Assembly may wish to take note of the present report during the online segment of its fifth session and to note that a final report containing recommendations will be submitted for its consideration at its resumed fifth session, in February 2022. The recommendations will be informed by further consideration of the options and approaches identified in section IV for the future of the GEO, and their financial and administrative consequences, as well as possible approaches for process, governance and implementation, based on the criteria presented in section III.

UNEP/EA.5/1; UNEP/EA.5/2; UNEP/EA.5/3 UNEP/EA.5/22

N/A (relating to the approved UNEP Medium Term Strategy for 2022-25 and Programme of Work 2022-23)