

Committee of Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee Meeting
Friday 15 October 2021
10:00 am - 1:00 pm
United Nations Office of Nairobi
Hybrid meeting
Conference Room 2

Agenda Item 2a): Preparations for the special session on the commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme - Secretariat note on the preparations for the special session

This document serves as a background note for consideration of Agenda Item 2 a): Preparations for the special session on the commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP@50) - Secretariat note on the preparations for the special session.

The note reflects the [presentation](#) made by the Executive Director during the informal consultations with regional groups and at the [155th meeting of the CPR](#), which also included a summary of initial feedback received at the regional consultations.

Delegations will be invited to provide feedback and ask questions about the note to the secretariat.

Preparations for the special session on the commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme



A. Mandate

UNEA 4/2: “...Also *requests* the Executive Director to prepare, in consultation with Member States, the commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972, making use of contributions from relevant stakeholders;”

UNEA 4/23: “...Also *requests* the Executive Director to prepare a proposal for science-policy input on the global environment, in consultation with Member States and making use of contributions from relevant stakeholders, in commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme, in line with the recommendation of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972;”

UNEA5 Decision 5/3: “*Decides* 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 for two days on 3-4 March 2022 in Nairobi, in conjunction with the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly, under the leadership of the Presidency and Bureau of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly”.

B. Objective

The Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP@50) is an opportunity to strengthen UNEP by positioning the organization at the forefront of a revamped global multilateral environmental system.

Global action to address the three interdependent planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution can reinvigorate and give new meaning to the global multilateral system. The Secretary General’s recent Report ‘Our Common Agenda’¹ notes urgent and bold steps are needed to address the triple planetary crisis and offers the opportunity to inject a new mission for international cooperation; a mission which, under UNEP’s leadership, can spur collective engagement towards common solutions.

To effectively tackle the three planetary crises, a transformative, reinvigorated multilateral system is required – a system that bears greater appeal and vibrancy and that grounds the relationship between people and planet in greater inclusivity, equity, and solidarity. Environmental multilateralism can strengthen the already existing *global environmental movement* where everybody’s voice and action -- *from world leaders to the youth* -- bears weight.

Building on the vision outlined in its approved [Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025](#), UNEP will be at the forefront of this transformation, combining the best of its past achievements from the last 50 years with a

¹ ‘Our Common Agenda’ – Report of the Secretary General (2021) , available at <https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/>

creative and adaptable approach to the future of environmental multilateralism for the next 50 years. UNEP@50 should focus on how to further strengthen UNEP's foundation – *science and governance*, by:

- **Strengthening UNEP's work to promote the environmental science-policy interface** to support the evidence needs of reinvigorated multilateral policies and systems;
- **Strengthening UNEP's role as a catalyst for environmental action; including providing** support to Member States, and their implementation of existing environment agreements in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda and by promoting an environmental governance system informed by 'non-traditional' coalitions and formats, such as multi-stakeholder partnerships towards shaping an inclusive, networked multilateralism, where the power to change is apportioned across all segments and sectors of society;
- **Strengthening UNEP's role as the global environmental authority** within the UN system, and further elevating its Nairobi Headquarters as the global hub for the environment; and
- **Strengthening UNEP's financial capacity** to fulfil its mandate and carry out its approved Medium-Term Strategy and mandate and Programme of Work.

C. Possible political outcomes, building on a high-level Leadership Dialogues informed by UNEP's science-policy contribution

Subject to further guidance from Member States and the President of the sixth Environment Assembly, the secretariat outlines the following proposals regarding possible political outcomes from UNEP@50.

In line with the proposed draft structure for UNEA-5.2 and the UNEA Special Session on UNEP@50 (*see Annex*), two high-level Leadership Dialogues are envisioned:

1. **Looking back: 50 years of UNEP.** Focus on UNEP achievements and foundation of their success. What worked and what did not. Exploring UNEP's contributions to multilateralism and its comparative advantages to inspire new opportunities to today's multilateral challenges of tackling the three planetary crises.
2. **Looking forward: Achieving Agenda 2030 for people and planet.** A reinvigorated environmental multilateralism within the frame of existing and new international frameworks. How the science-policy interface and the global environmental governance system can remain fit-for-purpose, keeping up with societal changes and improving transparency, inclusivity, equity and solidarity, while accelerating global action in response to the three planetary crises.

The dialogues will be open to high-level participants from Member States, multilateral environmental agreements, and Major Groups and Stakeholders. As per the UNEA UNEP@50 mandates, the UNEA special session will be **informed by UNEP's science-policy contribution to UNEP@50** (see section D) and also by the proposed [Action plan for the implementation of Paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development](#). These background documents will stimulate interventions and discussion on a multi-dimensional strengthening of UNEP's science and governance foundation and towards a UNEP that has adequately and sustained resources -- fully enabled to meet its strategic ambitions.

The Leadership dialogues will be expected to contribute to the following outputs:

1. **A Chair's summary**, outlining discussion points and key actions and priorities resulting from the discussion.

2. **A political declaration** in support of a modernized and adequately resourced UNEP for the next 50 years, to be adopted at the closing high-level ceremony.

D. Strengthening UNEP's capacity for implementation

1. **The establishment of a global environmental data centre for Nairobi.** A new based hub at UNEP, Nairobi to provide comprehensive data science and analytics through with a federated data system for the global environment. Once developed it will host an easy-to-use portal enabling access to a wide and varied number of platforms, data sources, analytics and modelling capabilities. It will include a physical, interactive Situation Room making use of the best available technology and innovation. The hub will further the ambition outlined in UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2022-2025 and the UN Secretary General's Data Strategy and the Roadmap for digital transformation and cooperation. It will further UNEP's leadership role on environmental data and will play an important role in consolidating and coordinating global efforts to address data-fragmentation and leverage the best available data for informed decision-making. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity to take action from within the UN system through data-driven assessments, horizon scanning, monitoring, and reporting, communications, and support to UN country teams and country-level processes, as well as externally through facilitating capacity building for partners and enabling their access to digital, platforms, technology, data knowledge and insights.
2. **A science-policy report reviewing 50 years of action at the science-policy interface and providing a fresh outlook on the future.** This publication will propose opportunities to strengthen the science-policy interface while securing that global environmental governance remains socially relevant, economically robust and contributes to inter-generational equity. It will provide reflections on how the science policy interface has contributed to environmental management and governance in the past and will lay out a select number of issues that need consideration by UNEP and its stakeholders in securing the future of the Planet. In doing so, the report will focus on considerations such as need for new models for a more effective science policy interface; the role of technology; behavioural change; equity; and people's participation in enhanced management of our environment.
3. **A renewed universal financial commitment to UNEP: moving towards a universal commitment to a "Fair Share" (voluntary indicative scale of contributions – VISC) principle while also establishing three thematic funds for Climate, Nature, Chemicals and Pollution Action to enable UNEP to achieve its mandate.** The Rio+20 Outcome Document calls for secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the regular budget of the United Nations and voluntary contributions to UNEP to fulfil its mandate. To this end, a decade after Rio+20, it remains essential to advance towards contributions by all Member States to implement the universal mandates of UNEA while, at the same time, also providing adequate support for UNEP in its core areas of work and towards the achievement of the high-level goals outlined in UNEP's Medium-term Strategy 2022-2025. Moving towards a universal commitment to a "Fair Share" (as outlined in the approved voluntary indicative scale of contributions – VISC) and the establishment of these funds responds to the findings of the UNEP survey on funding conducted in 2020, which confirmed Member States' support (96%) for increasing softly earmarked funds in response to the ambition outlined in UNEP's Programme of Work 2022-2023.

E. Communications plan and side events

UNEP will carry out an extensive communications campaign in support of UNEP@50 that will include, but not be limited to, the following deliverables:

- **A revamped website** (unep.org/unep-50) that will be expanded continuously to aggregate all anniversary content, including a timeline of past and present UNEP activities.
- **An anniversary toolkit** to share with external partners and Member States, to enable them to communicate about UNEP's anniversary and their relationship with UNEP.
- **A series of anniversary stories** that will highlight UNEP's legacy over the past 50 years and underscore the importance of multilateralism. These will be prominently promoted to top-tier media.
- **A social media campaign** featuring a series of infographics that will use the anniversary to raise awareness about UNEP's mandate and work and the use of a hashtag #UNEP50 for all anniversary content.

UNEP@50 will also feature side events that will shed light on key topics related to the future of multilateralism, within the context of the three planetary crises. UNEP will undertake an extensive stakeholder engagement in the preparation of these events to ensure an inclusive approach that brings diverse perspectives across sectors and geographical areas. These events will also take note of and link, as much as possible and as appropriate, to existing initiatives undertaken by UNEP partners, including but not limited to other UN Agencies and Major Groups and Stakeholders on similar topics.

