

Meeting of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly
5 October 2021
16:00 – 18:00 (GMT +3 – Nairobi time)
Online meeting

Meeting Summary

*Meeting background documents and presentations are available on the [meeting portal](#).
A list of participants can be found in Annex 1.*

Agenda Item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. The President of the Assembly, H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, welcomed participants and opened the meeting. In his opening speech, he stressed the need for a green and inclusive recovery while supporting the transition to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals through a substantive and meaningful the resumed session of UNEA-5 (UNEA-5.2). He then invited opening remarks from Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director UN Environment Programme, who gave a brief progress update on the preparations for UNEA-5.2 from a secretariat perspective, including with regard to the efforts to re-open the UN meeting facilities in Nairobi in cooperation with the UN Office in Nairobi.
2. The [agenda](#) of the meeting was adopted.

Agenda Item 2: Preparations for the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

a) Draft ministerial declaration

3. The UNEA President introduced a [zero draft declaration](#) and a proposed timeline for the consultation process, underlining the importance that the world's ministers of environment provide guidance under current circumstances of insecurity, agree on priorities going forward and align different goals. He recalled that an early version of the draft was considered at the UNEA Bureau meeting on 8 October 2020 and that it was valuable to safeguard results of several rounds of rich written inputs received from Member States and Stakeholders during the first half of 2020, and informal consultations of the presidency. He underlined that the draft remains focused on the UNEA-5 theme – Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals – and calls for a green and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. He also underlined the importance of referring to ongoing global processes and noted the General Assembly mandate to provide input to Stockholm+50. The President welcomed views and advice on how to take this process forward to ensure the widest possible support for the declaration, in view of adopting it at the resumed session of UNEA-5 in February/March 2022.
4. Members of the Bureau broadly supported the zero draft and the timeline for consultation as proposed by the President and acknowledged the importance to adopt a strong and ambitious ministerial declaration. Several members specifically supported the reference to nature-based solutions and the placeholders on marine litter and climate change. One Member proposed that the

declaration is considered as UNEA's input to Stockholm + 50 and further emphasized the need to address environmental data management and capacity building. Another stressed the need to avoid duplication with other declarations that are being prepared, such as the under General Assembly resolution 73/333 process. The president noted that the declarations at the level of drafts are indeed complementary. One Bureau member also highlighted the importance of inclusive and transparent consultations with a view to reach broadest possible consensus and raised a question to clarify whether the draft should be negotiated under the resumed session of the Open-Ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. It was emphasized that enough time be given to achieve a negotiated outcome. The president noted it will be widely consulted as usual.

5. The President thanked the members for their support and valuable inputs. He took note of the suggestions and expressed his intention to share the draft Ministerial Declaration and roadmap of consultations to all Member States and Stakeholders. He also indicated that the Presidency would provide a briefing to the CPR at the 8th meeting of the annual subcommittee to allow for Member States to share their views on content and process, and underlined that the declaration could be a vehicle for UNEA inputs to Stockholm+50.

b) Guidance on draft resolutions

6. The President introduced a draft joint [letter](#) to be jointly signed by the Chair of the CPR which provides guidance on the submission of draft resolutions, acknowledging that UNEA-5.2 is subject to extraordinary circumstances and uncertainties. With a view to ensure that the agenda and organisation of UNE-5.2 is manageable and realistic, delegations are recommended to share or announce their draft proposals at the 8th Annual Sub-committee meeting scheduled for 25-29 October, and by 20 December 2021 at the latest together with an accompanying cover note that explains the rationale and context of the proposal. The President asked for comments on the draft letter, in view of finalizing and making it available to all Member States.
7. Members of the Bureau welcomed the guidance and supported the approach to encourage member States to submit the concept of ideas of resolutions at an early stage, if possible before or during the 8th Annual Subcommittee meeting. It was also considered useful as guidance for in view of upcoming meetings of regional ministerial fora.
8. The President thanked the members for their comments and concluded that the letter and zero draft declaration will be circulated to all Member States and Stakeholders within short.

c) Draft format and structure

9. The President invited the Secretariat to update the Bureau on the [format and structure of UNEA5.2](#). The Executive Director of UNEP provided a brief update on the latest developments regarding the re-opening of the UN complex in Gigiri for vaccinated staff and delegates, and outlined plans to ensure in-person presence for upcoming CPR meetings, including the 8th meeting of the annual subcommittee, with a combination of limited in-person presence and online participation. She also shared the expectation, and dedication to achieving, that the resumed fifth Open-Ended Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and Fifth Environment Assembly, as well as the special session on UNEP@50 will have universal – but possibly limited – attendance by all interested Member States. The secretariat also presented the draft structure for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50.
10. The members of the Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the presentation and considered that more time was needed to decide on the proposed structure and format, also taking into account the

possibility to learn from the organization of upcoming international meetings, including under the UNFCCC, and considering the importance of in-person representation at ministerial level at UNEA. Bureau Members also pointed to the need to allot sufficient time for the leadership dialogues, and requested further clarity on the proposed organization of national statements.

11. The President thanked the Bureau Members and the Secretariat for their contributions and proposed to further consider the structure and format in view of taking a decision at the next joint meeting of the UNEA and CPR Bureaux.

d) Side events

12. The Secretariat provided a [powerpoint presentation](#) on the application process for side events for the resumed session of UNEA-5.
13. Members of the Bureau requested to extend deadline for submission of proposals and asked how many side events were planned for UNEA 5.2.
14. The Secretariat took note of the request to extend the deadline for applications, and clarified that the exact number of side events had not yet been decided and that the Bureau would be given the opportunity to consider and approve a proposal from the secretariat.

Agenda Item 3: Other Matters

15. The President informed the meeting that due to the results of the recently held general elections in Norway, there will be a change of government and he would be leaving his position as Minister for Climate and Environment. Norway would seek re-nomination from the Western Europe and others Group as UNEA president through the new minister and seek acceptance of his nomination by the membership following a letter from the ED Inger Andersen once nominated from WEOG, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure. In the one month interim period, he expressed hope that the other Bureau Member from WEOG representing France would be in a position to function as Acting President. This was confirmed during the meeting. He expressed appreciation of the support given to ensure a successful outcome of UNEA-5.1 and encouraged the Bureau to remain dedicated to a meaningful assembly that makes a true impact for the environment. He underlined that Norway remains dedicated to UNEP and to the tasks of the UNEA presidency, with excellent cooperation with the CPR and its bureau and with the UNEP secretariat.
16. Members of the Bureau and the Deputy Executive Director of UNEP thanked the President for his leadership and commitment and wished him well in his future endeavors.

Agenda Item 4: Closing of the meeting

17. The meeting closed at 6 pm.

Annex 1: List of Participants of the Joint Retreat of the Bureaux of the UN Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

Bureau of the UN Environment Assembly

H.E. Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn, UNEA President, Minister of Environment and Climate – Norway;

H.E. Ms. Bérangère ABBA, UNEA Vice President, Secretary of State for the Biodiversity - France;

H.E. Ms. Andrea Meza Murillo, UNEA Vice President and Minister of Environment and Energy - Costa Rica;

H.E. Mr. Dragan Zupanjevac, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent representative H.E. Mrs. Irena Vujovic, Vice President and Minister of Environment – Serbia; Ms. Layla Sabeel, Senior Environmental Specialist representing H.E. Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak Bin Daina, UNEA Vice President, Special Envoy for Climate Affairs and Chief Executive of the Supreme Council for Environment - Bahrain;

H.E. Mr. Reggy Nelson, UNEA Vice President, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Suriname;

H.E. Ms. Laksmi Dhewanthi, UNEA Vice President and Senior Advisor to the Minister of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia;

H.E. Mr. Ado Lohmus, UNEA Vice President, Permanent Representative of Environment of the Republic of Estonia;

Mr. Yago L. Abdoul Kader, First Secretary and Deputy Permanent Representative representing H.E. Mr. Simeon Sawadogo, UNEA Vice President, Minister of Environment, Green Economy and Climate Change of Burkina Faso;

Ms. Shahkira Parker representing Hon. Barbara Creecy, UNEA Rapporteur, Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of the Republic of South Africa

CPR Bureau as ex officio

H.E. Ms. Luísa Fragoso, Chair of the CPR, Ambassador of Portugal and Permanent Representative to UNEP

UNEP Secretariat

Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director;

Ms. Joyce Msuya, Deputy Executive Director;

Mr. Rafael Peralta, Chief of Staff;

Mr. Ulf Björnholm, Secretary a.i. of Governing Bodies, Acting Director of Governance Affairs Office