

USA Intervention at the ASC, Agenda Item 5

Thank you, Madame Chair. I would like to begin by echoing the Executive Director's recognition of your excellent leadership on this important matter. I'll hem remarks as closely as possible to your outline.

First, the United States supports the proposed meeting structure.

Second, The United States does not see the need for an additional negotiated political declaration for UNEP@50. As the United States has said in previous meetings, we must be realistic about the quantity of negotiations that can be handled given the limited time and the less than ideal working conditions caused by COVID. To that end, we support the UNGA 73/333 declaration being the substantive outcome for UNEP@50.

Rather, a chair's summary of the plenary discussions and leadership dialogues makes much more sense. However, given that limited national participation is likely, and perhaps even personal opinions will be expressed, such dialogues should not be considered as the basis for mutually-agreed conclusions.

Madame Chair, UNEA Decision 5/3 clearly states that the point of UNEP@50 is to "commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP." That is its purpose and no further clarification is required. If delegations wished to clarify or better define the theme of UNEP@50, the place to do so was UNEA 5.1.

We also note the Secretariat's proposals regarding fair-share, VISC, and the establishment of new trust funds. In our view, the UNEP@50 commemoration shouldn't be about funding issues.

As such, we do not support the proposal for a MOI Gap Analysis; such work is not envisioned in UNEP's work program.

At UNEA 5.1, the U.S. delegation and other compromised regarding UNEP@50's duration and status. As well, UNEP's achievements over the last 50 years give us much to celebrate, so there is no need to expand the scope of this event beyond what is already agreed.

Finally, Madame Chair, we would like to respond to the comments by several delegations about the right to healthy environment. The United States has consistently said in the Human Rights Council and other fora, that there are no universally-recognized human rights specifically related to the environment, and

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we do not believe there is a basis in international law to recognize a “right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.” We do not see the recent Human Rights Council decision as altering the content of international law or establishing a precedent in other fora, including UNEA or UNEP@50.

Thank you.