

## **STATEMENT OF ASIA PACIFIC GROUP**

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Delivered by the Chair, H.E. Mr. Saleh Al Harthi – Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman - Nairobi  
At the subcommittee meeting of the CPR (UNEP) – 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022

**Madam Chair,**

I have the honour to deliver a statement as the Chair of the Asia Pacific Group with regard to the Joint Meeting of the Bureaux of UNEA and CPR, which took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

During the meeting, UNEA and CPR Bureaux members from the Asia Pacific Group attended and have voiced their views on the proposed dates for convening the UNEA 5.2, UNEP@50 and the related meetings.

We understood that during the Joint Bureaux Meeting, there were divergent views expressed. Some preferred Option 1, some others preferred Option 2, but none supported Option 3.

We also understood that the issue of Ramadhan was brought up by several speakers.

We acknowledge receipt of the email from the Secretariat which was sent last night, as the follow up from the UNEA President's request during the Joint Bureaux meeting.

**Madam Chair,**

In this opportunity, I would also like to inform you that the Asia Pacific Group has met yesterday to discuss further on this latest development.

- A majority of member states from the Asia Pacific Group who spoke in the meeting stated their grave concern on Option 2, mainly because the proposed dates from the Secretariat coincide with the month of Ramadhan, and in particular, the dates proposed for the UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50 are too close to Eid Al Fitr.

- This can significantly discourage attendance from many Capital-based delegations from member states to Nairobi, and in turn, it may affect the weight and the legitimacy of the meeting.
- Furthermore, alteration of dates from February to April may also create disruption on planning and budgeting from Member States, since they have made extensive preparation for UNEA 5.2 to be convened in the end of February.
- A separate concern is that, the proposed dates in April will overlap with the High-Level Meeting on New Urban Agenda in New York (28 April 2022), for those delegations who can be traveling during these dates. The High-Level Meeting in New York is crucial for the advancement of the sustainable urbanization issue, which many Nairobi-based missions have worked hard in collaboration with UN-Habitat. It would be a missed opportunity for many Nairobi-based mission who will not be able to attend the High-Level Meeting of the New Urban Agenda because of this overlapping.

**Madam Chair,**

In light of the above, I would like to reiterate the strong preference of many members of the Asia Pacific Group for Option 1, namely to proceed as planned with the convening of UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50 in the end of February to early March 2022 in hybrid format.

Should there be any change of dates, it should avoid coinciding with the month of Ramadhan. But if alternative dates other than the ones already proposed by the Secretariat are not available, the acceptable way forward is to revert back to Option 1.

The members of the Asia Pacific Group will respond to the email from the Secretariat accordingly before the deadline of 1 February 2022.

**I thank you.**