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## United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

158<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme  
Nairobi, 26 May 2022  
Hybrid meeting  
10:00 – 13:00, 15:00 – 18:00 (GMT+3)

### Agenda Item 5: Assessment and lessons learned from UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50.

This paper serves as a background document for Agenda Item 6: Assessment and lessons learned from UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50. The document outlines observations, lessons learned and recommendations from the meetings of the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2), held from 28 February to 2 March 2022, the Special Session to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP@50) held on 3 and 4 March 2022, and the resumed fifth open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-5.2), held from 21 to 25 February 2021.

The document has been prepared by the Secretariat, taking into account views expressed by Member States and Major Groups and Stakeholders at meetings of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) held on [11 April](#) and [5 May](#) 2022, and by the Bureau of the CPR at its meeting on [4 May](#) 2022.

Textual changes, as compared to the [initial draft](#) presented and discussed at the CPR subcommittee meeting on 5 May, are marked in **bold**. Notably, following comments by several Member States and one Regional Group, an entire new section has been included, entitled “Preparatory process under the auspices of the Committee of Permanent Representatives” (section IV).

## The resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and the UNEA Special Session on UNEP@50:

### ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

#### **I. Background**

1. The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is the world's highest-level decision-making body on the environment within the United Nations system. It was created following a decision in June 2012 at Rio +20 with the objective to strengthen and upgrade the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and ensure a more coherent system of international environmental governance, with a universal membership including all 193 UN Member States.
2. UNEA meets biennially to:
  - set the global environmental agenda;
  - provide overarching policy guidance and defining policy responses to address emerging environmental challenges;
  - undertake policy review, dialogue and exchange of experiences;
  - set the strategic guidance on the future direction of UNEP;
  - organize a multi-stakeholder dialogue; and
  - foster partnerships for achieving environmental goals and resource mobilization<sup>1</sup>.
3. Through its **ministerial declaration**, resolutions and **decisions**, the Environment Assembly provides **global** leadership and catalyzes intergovernmental action on the environment and addresses emerging issues. The Assembly is also the governing body of the UN Environment Programme.
4. Prior to UNEA meetings, Major Groups and Stakeholders organize a Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum to strategize and consolidate their inputs to UNEA.
5. The [first](#), [second](#), [third](#) and [fourth](#) sessions of UNEA in 2014, 2016, 2017 and 2019 tackled major environmental themes such as *illegal trade in wildlife, environmental rule of law, financing the green economy, pollution, delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production*, and adopted three ministerial declarations and numerous resolutions and decisions.
6. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States decided that the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) should take place in a two-step approach. The first session of UNEA-5 ([UNEA-5.1](#)) was held fully online on 22 - 23 February 2021, and the resumed session of UNEA-5 ([UNEA-5.2](#)) took place in-person (hybrid format) in Nairobi on 28 February - 2 March 2022. The overall theme for UNEA-5 was "[Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals](#)."
7. A first [UNEA Special Session](#) to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme took place in-person (hybrid format) on 3-4 March 2022, under the theme "Strengthening UNEP for the implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development."
8. UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 were held in-person, with strict COVID-19 protocols in place. These included mandatory daily rapid COVID testing, a cap on the size of delegations for Member States, Major Groups and Stakeholders and international organizations, limited access to meeting rooms through temporary badges to ensure social distancing, and mandatory wearing of masks. A full account of the COVID measures in place for the meetings is available in the [Secretariat notification](#) for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50.
9. All meetings were also open to interactive online participation for delegates not in a position to participate in-person, or who would choose to participate virtually for any other reason. Accredited delegates

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<sup>1</sup> As set out in Governing Council decision 27/2

participating online enjoyed full speaking and interpretation rights for all formal sessions through the meeting platform “Interactio”, and were offered the possibility to actively attend all negotiations taking place in dedicated working groups during OECPR-5.2 and the Committee of the Whole established by UNEA.5.2.

10. The Secretariat conducted an online survey sent to all registered participants in mid-March 2022 with about 400 respondents representing an 8% response rate (for more information on registration see section IV). About half of the respondents were Member States delegates, and a quarter of the responses were provided by Major Group representatives. For almost all the survey questions, the responses were overwhelmingly positive, indicating a 70-95% satisfactory rate. A detailed presentation of the results of the survey is available [here](#).
11. In accordance with [UNEA decision 5/4](#), the sixth session of the Assembly will convene in Nairobi on 26 February to 1 March 2024, preceded by OECPR-6 to take place from 19 to 23 February 2024.
12. Additional relevant background information is available here:
  - [UNEA main website](#)
  - [Programme of Work for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50](#)
  - [UNEA-5.2 proceedings report](#)
  - [Outcomes from UNEA-5.1](#)
  - [Outcomes from UNEA-5.2](#)
  - [UNEA-5.2 key background documents](#)
  - [Outcomes and background documents from UNEP@50](#)
  - [Outcome of the Consensual Process for Review by the CPR](#) (as endorsed at UNEA 5.2)
  - [UNEA Rules of Procedure](#)
  - [Meeting Roadmap for the UN Environment Governing Bodies](#)

## **II. Key outcomes from UNEA-5.2**

13. Key outcomes from the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly are:
  - A [ministerial declaration](#) entitled “Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”
  - Adoption of the [following resolutions](#):
    - UNEA resolution 5/1: Animal welfare environment and sustainable development nexus
    - UNEA resolution 5/2: Sustainable Nitrogen Management
    - UNEA resolution 5/3: Future of Global Environment Outlook
    - UNEA resolution 5/4: Sustainable Lake Management
    - UNEA resolution 5/5: Nature-based Solutions for supporting sustainable development
    - UNEA resolution 5/6: Biodiversity and Health
    - UNEA resolution 5/7: Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste
    - UNEA resolution 5/8: Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution
    - UNEA resolution 5/9: Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure
    - UNEA resolution 5/10: Environmental dimension of a sustainable, resilient and inclusive post COVID-19 recovery
    - UNEA resolution 5/11: Enhancing Circular Economy as a contribution to achieving sustainable consumption and production
    - UNEA resolution 5/12: Environmental aspects of minerals and metals management
    - UNEA resolution 5/13: Due regard to the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in accordance with paragraph 3 of article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations
    - UNEA resolution 5/14: End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument
  - Adoption of the following decision:
    - [UNEA decision 5/4](#): Provisional agenda, date and venue of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

- Two leadership dialogues on the theme of UNEA-5, with active participation of high level representatives from Member States, Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other relevant organizations and stakeholders (more information [here](#) and [here](#)).
  - One [multistakeholder dialogue](#), allowing representatives of Major Groups and Stakeholders to interact with high level decision makers under the sub-theme [“Building back greener: international environmental protection and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic”](#).
  - 51 recorded video statements and 44 written statements from Member States, international organizations, and stakeholders. All statements are available [here](#).
  - Based on a [proposal from the Secretariat](#) which was [endorsed](#) by the [UNEA Bureau](#) at its meeting on 8 December 2021, [22 official side events](#) were organized at UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50. Eight of these side events were in-person / hybrid “flagship” events organized at the meeting location, while 14 side events took place fully online. In addition, Major Groups and Stakeholders organized 17 unofficial side events in the [“Green Room”](#).
14. UNEA-5.2 was supported by [UNEA-5.2 pre-session working documents](#) and [UNEA-5.2 pre-session information documents](#).

### III. Key outcomes from UNEP@50

15. Key outcomes from the Special Session to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme are:
- A [political declaration](#) to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme.
  - A report of the Executive Director on the science-policy interface, entitled [“Reflecting on the past and imagining the future: a contribution to the dialogue on the science-policy interface”](#)
  - [Two leadership dialogues](#) under the themes “Looking back: 50 years of UNEP” and “Looking forward: Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development for people and planet”, held on 4 March 2022.
  - One [multistakeholder dialogue](#) under the theme “Strengthening UNEP for the implementation of the environmental dimension of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, held on 4 March 2022 and informed by the Major Groups and Stakeholders report [“The UNEP We Want”](#).
  - 108 recorded [video statements](#) and 12 written statements from Member States, international organizations, and Major Groups and Stakeholders.
16. The Special Session on UNEP@50 was supported by [pre-session working and information documents](#).

### IV. Preparatory process under the auspices of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

17. The outcomes of UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 were prepared and negotiated by the [resumed fifth open-ended meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) (OECPR-5.2), held 21-25 February 2022. In total, the Committee considered 16 draft resolutions and one draft decision. At its closing plenary on 25 February, the Committee agreed to submit three of the drafts for adoption by the Assembly, and recommended no further action on two of them, since the substantive content of those drafts would be considered under another draft resolution. The Committee also engaged in informal consultations on a draft UNEA-5 Political Declaration, under the leadership of the UNEA-5 Presidency, and on a draft ministerial declaration for the special session on UNEP@50, under the leadership of two CPR Bureau Members representing the Eastern European States Group and the Asia-Pacific States Group, in preparation for final consideration at the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. More details are available in the [report from OECPR-5.2](#).
18. The political outcome of the Special Session on UNEP@50 was prepared and negotiated through a process established by the implementation of General Assembly Resolution 73/333 which was organised under the auspices of the CPR - which resulted in the adoption of a political declaration at UNEP@50. More information is available [here](#).

19. In accordance with a decision by the CPR at its [extraordinary meeting held on 24 June 2021](#), the CPR Bureau divided some of the key responsibilities among themselves, as follows:
- The Vice-Chair representing the Latin American and Caribbean States Group was tasked with the coordination of the negotiating processes of draft UNEA decisions and resolutions.
  - The Vice-Chair representing the African States Group was tasked with the facilitation of the preparations within the CPR of the Special Session on UNEP@50.
  - The Vice-Chair representing the Eastern European States Group and the Rapporteur representing the Asia-Pacific States Group continued to be entrusted with the co-facilitation of the informal consultations under the auspices of the CPR on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333, which resulted in the adoption of a political declaration at UNEP@50.
- This division of work greatly facilitated the organization of the preparatory process for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 and may be considered as exemplary for future UNEA preparatory processes.
20. OECPR-5.2 was preceded by an open and transparent consultation process involving all interested Member States and UNEP-accredited Major Groups and Stakeholders, held under the auspices of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its Bureau, starting in mid-September 2021, when the first draft resolution of UNEA was submitted by Member States, and ending on 11 February 2022, shortly before the opening of OECPR-5.2.
21. At the [8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the annual subcommittee of the CPR](#) (ASC-8), held on 25-29 October 2021, the CPR promoted the early submission of draft resolutions and initiated in-depth consideration of nine draft resolutions that were presented by Member States at the meeting. Furthermore, six draft resolutions were announced by Member States at the meeting, to be submitted at a later date. Committee called for the nomination of Co-Facilitators from the Regional Groups to lead the consultations on the drafts, and requested the Secretariat to provide technical guidance in writing for each draft resolution, with a focus on the following three aspects: i) Relation to UNEPs Medium Term Strategy and Programme of Work; ii) Legal aspects; and iii) Budget implications. Finally, the Committee found agreement on the [Final outcome of the Consensual Process for Review by the CPR](#), which was later endorsed by the UNEA-5.2 through paragraph 1 of [UNEA decision 5/4](#), and provided guidance on the preparations for the Special Session on UNEP@50 and for the Stockholm+50 International Meeting.
22. During the intersessional period between ASC-8 and OECPR-5.2, under the guidance by the CPR Bureau and under the leadership of the Vice-Chair representing the Latin American and Caribbean States Group, the CPR held a total of 13 meetings, devoted in full or in part to in-depth consultations on the draft resolution and decisions for UNEA-5.2. The CPR also held 2 regular meetings, chaired by the Chair of the CPR, whereby the Committee took stock of progress and provided additional guidance on the preparatory process. A full account of all CPR meetings, including links to the respective meeting portals with agendas, background documents and meeting summaries, is available on the [2021 and 2022 roadmaps of UNEP governing bodies](#).
23. Following the guidance of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly and of the CPR, and on the basis of nominations from the regional groups, 10 Co-Facilitators were appointed to lead the informal in-depth consultations on all draft resolution and decisions, which were divided into [clusters](#) and made available online through a secure [papersmart portal](#). The Co-Facilitators, with the support of the Secretariat, contributed significantly to information sharing, in-depth consultation and consensus-building on all outstanding issues.
24. On 28 February 2022, at its opening plenary, the Environment Assembly decided to establish a Committee of the Whole, chaired by a representative of the Latin American and Caribbean States Group of the UNEA-5 Bureau, tasked to conclude negotiations on any outstanding matters. The Committee met four times in plenary and set up three informal contact groups to prepare for the finalization of draft resolutions. At its final plenary meeting held on 1 March 2022, the Committee agreed to recommend nine finalized draft resolutions and one draft decision for adoption by the Environment Assembly. It also agreed that further consideration of one outstanding aspect of one remaining draft resolution should continue on an informal basis with a view to presenting a consensual text for possible adoption by Assembly. A detailed report on the work of the Committee of the Whole is set out in annex III to the [UNEA-5.2 proceedings report](#).

**25. The CPR thus played a fundamental role in the preparation for the successful outcomes of Assembly for the adoption of all its political outcomes, including by ensuring an open, transparent and inclusive consultation process on the draft declarations, resolutions and decisions, paving the way for their successful adoption at UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 by consensus. For future preparatory UNEA processes, the role of the CPR may be further fine-tuned and refined, as guided by the outcome of the [outcome of the Consensual Process for Review by the CPR](#).**

**Lessons learned and recommendations for future hybrid and online UNEA or CPR meetings:**

➤ **Implement the [Outcome of the Consensual Process for Review by the CPR](#), including paragraph 5 and 13, which read as follows:**

“5. Under the guidance of the UNEA Bureau and with the support from the Secretariat, create an optimal balance between political negotiations, the UNEA high-level segment, and official and non-official UNEA events, to ensure political ownership and to enable, as far as possible, all Member States to participate in the negotiations on UNEA resolutions, by:

- a) rationalizing the number of side events and other events.
- b) avoiding overlaps in the scheduling and structure of UNEA sessions.
- c) minimizing the number of formal and informal negotiation groups working in parallel at the OECPR and UNEA.

[...]

13. Without prejudice to the UNEA Rules of Procedure, in particular rule 44 and to relevant decisions by the Governing Council of UNEP and by UNEA, encourage an early, inclusive and transparent inter-sessional preparatory process with appropriate Secretariat support for the timely submission, consideration and negotiation of draft resolutions and decisions tabled for adoption at future sessions of UNEA by recommending Member States to:

a) Devote at least half a day of the meeting of the annual subcommittee in the year preceding a UNEA session, to identify areas suitable for the tabling of draft resolutions and decisions and indicate, where possible, early intentions to submit draft resolutions and decisions.

b) If delegations indicate their intention to submit draft resolutions on a same or similar topic, engage with each other to foster collaboration, co-sponsorship, consolidation of the proposals, avoiding duplication of work.

c) Include a standard agenda item in all CPR meetings in the period between the ASC and the OECPR, whereby Member States and the Secretariat are invited to provide status updates to the Committee on the development and/or preparation of draft resolutions and decisions.

d) Include a standard agenda item in joint meetings of the UNEA and CPR Bureaus between the meeting of the annual subcommittee and the OECPR to facilitate, in close consultation with the CPR, the identification of facilitators to chair the informal consultations on the draft resolutions and decisions as soon as possible for their in-depth consideration and to make efficient use of the intersessional period.

e) Respect, as far as possible, the following guidance:

- i. Announce the intention to table a draft resolution or decision at the annual subcommittee or at least 12 weeks in advance of UNEA;
- ii. Provide a concept note for the draft resolution that explains the rationale and context behind the initiative, which may include relevant information on the UNEA theme, the UNEP Programme of Work, the

Sustainable Development Goals, and emerging global issues that may have an impact on the environment, and UNEP's Programme of Work.

iii. Submit a draft resolution or a decision at least 10 weeks in advance of UNEA, for further consideration and in-depth discussion by the CPR and its working groups in preparation for the OECPR.

Taking into account different working processes of Member States, draft resolutions and decisions shall be given the same status and recognition regardless of the timing of their submission or communication of the intention to submit draft resolutions or decisions.

f) Outline, in the operative part of draft resolutions, the actions to be taken or promoted and the addressees of the action (e.g. member States, the UN system and specific stakeholders), as well as guidance to the UNEP Secretariat to facilitate reporting and follow up."

- *Consider other areas of improvement to make optimal use of the intersessional period between the annual subcommittee meeting of the CPR and the OECPR, for example by 1) further reinforce the recommendation to Member States to submit draft resolutions as early as possible; 2) further clarify the purpose of preparatory informal consultations under the CPR subcommittee; 3) schedule and structure meetings of the subcommittee in a way that maximizes preparedness for the final negotiations; 4) organize dedicated question-and-answer sessions between (co-)sponsors of draft resolutions and interested Member States to better understand of the purpose of the submitted drafts as well as emerging positions of Member States; and 5) make better use of the Executive Director's reports on the implementation of relevant UNEA resolutions to inform the (co-)sponsors of draft resolutions.*
- *Consider additional proposals and comments put forward by Member States at the CPR subcommittee meetings [on 11 April](#) and [5 May](#) 2022, which were dedicated to the evaluation of UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50 (meetings summaries are available [here](#) and [here](#)).*
- *Offer in-person and/or online trainings for delegates well in advance of UNEA sessions to 1) familiarize themselves with the online meeting platform; 2) learn how to prepare draft UNEA resolutions and decisions; and 3) act as chairs/facilitators for informal consultations and formal negotiations.*
- *Develop a Secretariat Handbook for delegates, in consultation with the UNEA Bureau and the CPR, in accordance with paragraph 15 of the outcome of the CPR Process for Review.*

## V. Participation and registration

26. Statistics from the registration platform Indico provide the following information for UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50:

- 169 Member States were registered, of which 147 Member States were represented in-person and 22 Member States online
- 5199 meeting delegates (of which 2396 were Member State delegates) were approved, with 3653 attending in-person and 1546 attending online; this is more than previous UNEA sessions where for example UNEA-4 saw 4942 approved participants incl 1713 Member States delegates.
- 10 Heads of State and Government / Deputy Heads of State and Government attended either of the meetings
- In total, 147 Member States participated at ministerial level (90 Ministers and 17 Vice Ministers in-person; 40 Ministers/Vice Ministers attended online); this is the highest number of Ministers attending a UNEA session to date.
- **Statistics on gender distribution demonstrate that a minority of all registered participants were women (44%). Among Member States delegations, 45% of delegates were women, while for Major Groups and Stakeholders, a majority (53%) were women. Notably, only 30% of Member States' Heads of Delegations were women. The gender distribution among UN organizations representatives was very close to 50%.**

27. Persistent challenges relating to registration include late registrations, and a complex registration format on the registration platform Indico due to the separation of in-person and online delegates in combination with many different delegate categories, resulting in a complex process and extra work for UNEP staff.
28. Thanks to generous financial contributions of several Member States, the Secretariat offered financial assistance to support travel and accommodations for up to two representatives from developing countries to attend UNEA-5.2, UNEP@50 and their preparatory meetings. In total, travel support was provided to 120 government delegations from 71 member states, and to 50 representatives from Major Groups and Stakeholders. The delegations who contributed are as follows (in order of contribution amounts): Norway, France, European Union, Sweden, Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Portugal, Monaco, and Hungary.

*Lessons learned and recommendations for future online or hybrid UNEA or CPR meetings:*

- *Continue to initiate online registration early to avoid registration bottlenecks and delays.*
- *Simplify the registration portal to maximize its user-friendliness.*
- *Share adequate instructions and information on the registration procedure to all Member States and Major Groups and Stakeholders in a timely manner.*
- *Explore use of alternative registration platforms e.g. the e-registration portal on the e-deleGATE platform used at the UN Headquarters in New York.*
- *Continue to offer financial support for travel and accommodation for 1-2 eligible representatives from developing countries, as nominated by Member States, and Major Groups and Stakeholders, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary financial resources.*
- *Consider additional measures to promote a more gender-balanced representation of delegates, especially with regard to Heads of Delegation.*

## **VI. Challenges and opportunities stemming from the organization of hybrid meetings**

29. UNEA-5.2, UNEP@50 and OECPR-5.2 demonstrated that organizing hybrid meetings, whereby all Member States and stakeholders are invited to attend in-person but with the choice to attend online both for negotiations and for the formal session is challenging but possible. No concerns were raised by Member States relating to hybrid format regarding transparency, inclusivity and universal participation.
30. The in-person format of the meetings was paramount as a condition for the successful outcomes achieved from UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50, as well as for the high level of participation.
31. The hybrid format of the meetings and negotiations was well supported by online infrastructure, including online availability of key documents, effective communication of information from the Secretariat, and the use of the [UNEA papersmart portal](#) for the management of the draft resolutions in a safe IT environment.
32. While future technology developments will likely make it easier to organize hybrid meetings, this will inevitably pose an additional workload and requires a different skillset for the Secretariat.
33. Benefits from hybrid or online meetings with limited or no in person participation include:
- Participation of delegates who may not have the opportunity to attend in-person, including delegates who are not represented in Nairobi, and Major Groups and Stakeholders;
  - Putting all countries, including those with small delegations, on a more equal footing regarding number of participants;



- Increased flexibility and simplicity to attend meetings e.g. by minimizing the time needed for transportation;
- Significantly lower environmental footprint due to limited travel;
- Cost savings due to limited travel and accommodation costs.

34. Remaining challenges relating to hybrid or online meetings with limited or no in-person participation include:

- Occasional (often temporary) inability for Member States and Major Groups and Stakeholders to take the floor, for example due to instable internet connections or technological shortcomings;
- Internet or power cuts, including in the actual meeting room;
- Limited personal contacts among delegates, undermining necessary trust and limiting “corridor diplomacy”;
- “Screen fatigue”, creating a challenging work environment for delegates during long online sessions;
- Possible challenges relating to formal adoption of decisions/resolutions, including by voting (which is rare in the UNEA context);
- Working odd hours due to different time zones for delegates joining from far.

Lessons learned and recommendations for future hybrid and online UNEA or CPR meetings:

- ***Organize UNEA-6 and OECPR-6 as in-person (hybrid) meetings with a stable, user-friendly online platform whereby all Member States and accredited stakeholders are invited to attend in-person but with the choice to attend online both for formal sessions and negotiations.***
- ***Ensure that online meetings complement rather than substitute in-person or hybrid meetings, and that they focus on information-sharing or informal consultations and do not involve formal decision-making.***
- ***Improve the logistical planning and information-sharing for hybrid meetings to ensure that all delegations are duly informed about the schedule and location of meetings.***
- ***Apply reliable and use-friendly online platforms that ensure full simultaneous interpretation in official UN languages when required and allow for organizing parallel meetings and side events.***
- ***Continue to use and improve user-friendliness of the UNEA papersmart portal and explore alternative options for screen editing also based on practice from other intergovernmental bodies, to facilitate resolution negotiations.***
- ***Allocate sufficient human resources from the secretariat as well as the contracted online platform provider to ensure that adequate technical support is provided to delegations in advance as well as during the meetings, including direct assistance to delegations encountering technical problems as needed.***
- ***Ensure as far as possible that all delegates participating online use stable internet connections, apply the appropriate the browser compatible with the online meeting platform and a headset with inbuilt microphone.***

## **VII. UNEA Documentation**

35. About than 95% of pre-session documents were issued on time and made available online in all official UN languages at least 6 weeks ahead of online UNEA-5.2 and UNEP@50. Many of them were prepared already in advance of UNEA-5.1 and remained relevant as background documentation for UNEA-5.2.
36. Due to the shortened time frame for UNEA-5.2 (3 days) compared to a regular UNEA session (5 days), in-session translation was only possible for the resolutions that were agreed at OECPR-5.2

37. Post-session documents (edited and translated resolutions and meeting reports) were significantly delayed up to the end of April, due to a high workload for the UN Office in Nairobi because several other meetings took place immediately after UNEP@50.
38. The Secretariat technical assessment notes on the draft resolutions, outlining **an estimate of the preliminary** costs for implementation, a legal analysis, and an analysis of how the proposal relates to UNEP's Programme of Work provided useful background information for the negotiations.

*Lessons learned and recommendations for future online or hybrid UNEA or CPR meetings:*

- *Further improve the quality assurance process for pre-session UNEA documents, including by assigning experienced staff members to lead the process internally and by strategic planning and division of work at an early stage.*
- *Continue the preparation of Secretariat technical assessment notes on submitted draft resolutions in a timely manner.*
- *Plan and organize in-session documentation to ensure as far as possible that documents ready for adoption are translated to all official UN languages.*
- *Minimize any time lag for post session editing and translation of adopted resolutions and decisions.*

### **VIII. Preparations at regional levels**

39. Hybrid preparations at regional level, including through regional and subregional Ministerial Fora and other regional preparatory meetings, often organized back to back with regional Major Groups and Stakeholders consultations, contributed greatly to the success of UNEA-5.2, but there is a potential to create even stronger links between the national, regional and global levels in the preparations for UNEA meetings, with the support of UNEP's Regional Offices.

*Lessons learned and recommendations for future online or hybrid UNEA or CPR meetings:*

- *Capitalize on the various regional and subregional ministerial fora and other regional preparatory meetings, including those organized by Major Groups and Stakeholders, to promote effective regional contributions to UNEA;*
- *Make better use of the **UNEP Regional Offices** as “UNEA regional hubs” that can support national and regional preparations for future UNEA meetings.*
- *Facilitate early planning for participation and engagement at regional level in preparation for future UNEA sessions.*

### **IX. Stakeholder participation and side events**

40. The [Global Major Groups and Stakeholder Forum \(GMGSF\)](#) was self-organized online by Major Groups and Stakeholders prior to UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50, with 656 participants connected worldwide, and 24,000 recorded visits on the GMGSF online platform. The Forum facilitated Major Groups to strategize and prepare their inputs to UNEA. Internal meetings were also held throughout the UNEA sessions in the “Green Room”, a space provided to Major Groups and Stakeholders by UNEP for their own use. A Major Groups Facilitating Committee helped coordinate stakeholder participation. A total of 17 unofficial Major Groups and Stakeholders hybrid side events were organized in the [Green Room](#).
41. Many Major Groups and Stakeholders representatives welcomed that each of the nine Major Groups was given a dedicated speaking slot at the UNEA opening plenary and asked for this practice to be applied consistently at UNEA-related meetings.

42. Some Major Groups and Stakeholders representatives expressed concern about the hybrid format and the limited access to meeting rooms due to COVID restrictions, arguing that this gives them less opportunity to enrich the intergovernmental decision-making process through making interventions and by proposing alternative approaches. Concerns were also raised about limited funding provided for their in-person participation at both UNEA 5.2 and UNEP@50.

43. Information about leadership dialogues, multistakeholder dialogues and side events is

*Lessons learned and recommendations for future online or hybrid UNEA or CPR meetings:*

- *Improve the opportunities for accredited Major Groups and Stakeholders to participate actively and meaningfully in online or hybrid meetings, including by ensuring access to formal and informal meetings and safeguarding the opportunity to intervene, at the discretion of the meeting Chair.*
- *Continue to offer speaking slots to each of the nine Major Groups at **the opening of the OECPR and UNEA sessions**, taking into account that that Major Groups and Stakeholders consists of nine distinct groups;*
- *Provide a permanent meeting facility for Major Groups for their own use before and during UNEA sessions.*
- *Explore options to make that multi-stakeholder dialogues more interactive.*
- *Provide additional funding for travel of Major Groups and Stakeholder to facilitate in-person participation in UNEA meetings.*
- *Improve the selection process for UNEA side events by ensuring proper oversight and ownership by the UNEA Bureau, and by promoting regional balance.*
- *Consider organizing the Sustainable Innovation Expo and/or meetings of the Science Policy Business Forum in conjunction with future sessions of UNEA, including by exploring hybrid or virtual options.*

## **X. Media and communication**

44. To maximize the impact of the hybrid (in person and online) event, targeted efforts and resources were identified to enhance online outreach and press engagement of the events, based on the UNEA 5 and UNEP@50 communication strategies, to ensure appropriate outreach and impact.

45. News media outreach:

- UNEA-5.2 garnered a significant amount of global press with 14,449 news articles published across 4,290 outlets in 156 countries and 51 languages.
- 321 Journalists were accredited, and 4 hybrid press conferences were held.
- 9 Press releases were issued, and 4 op-eds.
- The 2022 UNEP Frontiers Report “Noises, Blazes and Mismatches”, which was launched in conjunction with UNEA 5.2, resulted in 413 articles published in 335 outlets across 58 countries in 9 languages.
- Similarly, the UNEP Wildfires Report launch led to 2032 articles published in more than 1425 outlets globally across 87 countries in 19 languages.

46. Social media outreach, from UNEP’s 28 social platforms in 8 languages:

- UNEA 5.2 social media had excellent post reach of about 8 million on English-language channels. This resulted in over 45,000 link clicks, 800,000 media views.
- UNEP@50 social media: Post reach was over 3 million on English-language channels, leading to 27,000 link clicks, 570,000 media views.

- In total, about 200 key individual events were streamed online in all 6 official UN languages and in Swahili, including opening and closing plenaries, national statements, leadership dialogues and some side events.
- 24,000 viewed the UNEP@50 opening plenary online.
- Side events did well, with for example 70,000 online viewers of the side event on the World Environment Situation Room launch, and 7,200 online viewers for the side event on the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

47. UNEA 5 and UNEP@50 websites:

- There were 2 million visitors to the revamped UNEA 5.2 website, with the audience staying for 3 minutes on average.
- Over 62,000 visitors came to the UNEA 5.2 Featured Updates page
- The most read article “What you need to know about plastic pollution?” had 24,237 views.
- The “Why Plastics?” video had 263,000 views, and was the most watched, followed closely by the “Plastics resolution announcement video that was viewed 212,000 times.
- 3 News packages were posted to UNIFEED, these were broadcast 181 times by 48 international broadcasters.

Lessons learned and recommendations for future online or hybrid UNEA or CPR meetings:

- *Prepare user friendly websites, with high quality audio visual content and a sophisticated social media strategy to drive visitors to the website.*
- *Time the launching of strategic UNEP reports to attract global media attention.*
- *Pre-produce written, multimedia and social assets to push through breaking news about UNEA and the resolutions that were gaveled.*
- *File video clips to UN headquarters newswire UNIFEED to bring international attention to UNEA and its resolutions.*

## **XI. Looking ahead towards the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

**48. The lessons learned as listed above should be duly taken into account when organizing UNEA-6 and OECPR-6.**

**49. Full implementation of the CPR based review, as endorsed through paragraph 1 of UNEA decision 5/4, will contribute to adequate preparation and organization of UNEA-6 and OECPR-6.**

50. Hybrid meeting formats (a combination of online and in-person participation), is likely to continue also after the COVID-19 pandemic. UNEP as the leading environment entity in the UN should continue to play a leading role in the organization of hybrid meetings, with the aim of finding an optimal balance between in-person and online meetings, thus seeking “the best of two worlds”.

51. To ensure effective hybrid meetings, online meeting platforms must allow for the decision process to be transparent and inclusive, including through full interpretation services.

52. In some cases, especially for informal and/or consultative meetings (including at regional level), fully online meetings may be appropriate, with practical, environmental or financial benefits.

53. Stakeholder and side event meetings facilitated by UNEP may also increasingly be organized as online or hybrid meetings.