

**Statement by H.E. Mrs. Callista Jennie Mutharika, High
Commissioner of Malawi And Permanent Representative to UNEP On
Agenda 5 During The 162nd Meeting Of The Committee Of
Permanent Representatives (CPR) Held On 16th June 2023**

- 1) Thank you Chair for this opportunity to make these remarks on behalf of Malawi.

- 2) At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement ably delivered on behalf of the African group.

- 3) Let me from the start, join those that have spoken before in applauding the Executive Director and her team for the excellent work undertaken in the last quarter and for the report produced to provide information on the same.

- 4) Before I proceed, and in the spirit of highlighting engagement with and role of the Secretariat, my delegation recalls with appreciation the recently concluded working visit to Malawi by Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director in May, last month. My delegation believes the visit was useful as it led to strategic and useful engagements with Malawi's leadership and implementers of environmental interventions. Moving ahead, my delegation is already working with Secretariat in concretising one or two key outcomes that arose out of the visit.

- 5) Malawi aligns itself fully with the communication sent on June 2023 from the Ambassador of South Sudan on behalf of the African Group to the Director General of UNON and copied to the Chair of UNEP CPR. The communication follows the unwarranted and horrible racist remarks uttered by the Ambassador of Romania to Kenya.

6) Malawi believes that the African Group did the right thing under the circumstances and within its remit and power to call out this unwelcome behaviour. The onus to undertake other rightful and necessary actions rested with other parties central to this matter.

7) Malawi calls upon all parties, especially those that are party to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination, to adhere to the spirit and intent of the Convention (Article 2) to take concrete measures that discourage and condemn racial discrimination.

8) As I continue, it will be remiss for my delegation not to applaud and appreciate the many evolutions that the ED's report has gone through, reflecting suggestions and recommendations from members. My delegation has always insisted that these reports are important in member states' oversight role on the Secretariat, especially where it concerns UNEP's mandate and work.

9) In this regard, let me refer to one aspect of the First Quarter report.

10) This concerns the report on African regional developments specifically the item on the inaugural meeting of the Platform for Environmental Protection Agencies that took place in Rwanda in March of this year. My delegation had one big concern on the heels of this item, but following a bilateral engagement with Director for the Regional office, Dr. Rose Mwebeza, the Mission has received a satisfactory, comprehensive and useful response. We certainly look forward to continued collaborative engagement with the Regional Office.

11) The convening of the meeting referred to above, which follows a decision by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) at its 18th Session, in our view, roundly emphasises, the critical role that regional structures play in environmental actions. It reaffirms the viability of Regional Forums of ministers responsible for the environment, including in fostering sharing of experiences, knowledge and best practices; enhancing science to policy interface; mobilising partnerships; addressing technical and operational challenges and supporting implementation of regional and global outcomes.

12) It further speaks very well to the wisdom that led to member states adopting Governing Council decision 11/7 and UNEA Resolution 2/2, “On the role and functions of regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities”. In this spirit, my delegation remains appreciative of the role UNEP Secretariat plays in supporting AMCEN, through the Secretariat role provided by the Regional Office for Africa, as per Governing Council decision 11/7, and subsequent UNEA resolutions.

13) In addition, and having just spoken about the Regional Office for Africa, the meeting in Rwanda, in my delegation’s view, further reaffirms the viability and continued necessity of Regional Offices within UNEP Secretariat, for purposes of implementation of inter-governmental processes, including convening ability, capacity building and partnership building.

14) In this regard, my delegation appreciates the collaboration that exists between UNEP Regional Office for Africa and African permanent missions in terms of, amongst others copying them invitation letters to capital whenever such forums as the one in Rwanda are held, ensuring

their effective participation, where possible, in such meetings and regularly updating them on progress in implementation of AMCEN decisions.

15) Let me conclude on this issue by indicating that my delegation is in the process of sponsoring at UNEA 6, an outcome that continues to recognise and support the role and success as well challenges facing regional offices, and also consolidates their existence.

16) Once again, as I conclude, I want to commend the Secretariat for the wonderful work they are involved, even within the midst of funding challenges.

17) I thank you all for your kind attention.