



**UNITED  
NATIONS**

**UNEP/CPR/168/L.1**



**United Nations  
Environment  
Programme**

Distr.: Limited  
8 October 2024  
English only

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**Committee of Permanent Representatives  
to the United Nations Environment Programme  
168th meeting**  
Nairobi, 17 December 2024

## **Draft minutes of the 167th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 12 September 2024**

### **Agenda item 1**

#### **Opening of the meeting by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

1. The meeting was opened at 10.20 a.m. on Thursday, 12 September 2024 by Firas Khouri, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.
2. The meeting was attended by 75 participants representing 61 members and 1 observer mission.
3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Jonathan Tan (Canada), Sidenio Acosta Aday (Cuba), Tshibangu Tshishiku David (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Daniel Schaer (Estonia), Leslie Ramsammy (Guyana), Akram Jameel Slaiman (Iraq), Caitriona Ingoldsby (Ireland), Evelyn Maris (Ireland), Gertrude Angote (Kenya), Eimantė Lastovkaitė (Lithuania), Madou Diallo (Mali), Jeronimo Rosa Joao Chivavi (Mozambique), Henk Jan Bakker (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Joost van den Broek (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Sunghyun Jang (Republic of Korea), Khaled Saeed Al-Zahrani (Saudi Arabia), Shakir Hassan Al-Sharif (Saudi Arabia), Mirko Giuliatti (Switzerland), Sasilada Kusump (Thailand), Anouar Ben Youssef (Tunisia), Edward Barnett (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Caroline Payne (United Kingdom), Jakhongir Talipov (Uzbekistan).
4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Robert Bunbury (Canada), Juan Manuel Rodríguez Vázquez (Cuba), Giovanna Valverde Stark (Costa Rica), John Nyakeru Kalunga (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Salma Qadoori Jabir (Iraq), Jill Clement (Ireland), Fatin Zafirah Haris (Malaysia), Fafre Camara (Mali), Daniel Antonio (Mozambique), Gudi Alkemade (Kingdom of the Netherlands), Kwanghyun Shim (Republic of Korea), Nasser Mohammed Al-Faridi (Saudi Arabia), Mohammad Jamil Al-Matrafi (Saudi Arabia), Chol Ajongo (South Sudan), Valentin Zellweger (Switzerland), Theerawee Gurratdphop (Thailand), Illia Karandas (Ukraine), Josephine Gauld (United Kingdom), Asif Choudhury (United Kingdom), Kapampa Joyce Kasosa (Zambia).

### **Agenda item 2**

#### **Adoption of the provisional agenda of the 167th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/167/1).

### **Agenda item 3**

#### **Adoption of the draft minutes of the 166th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 166th meeting, held on 13 June 2024, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/167/2).

### **Agenda item 4**

#### **Report of the Executive Director to the 167th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

7. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the document entitled “Quarterly Report to the 167th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives: April–June 2024”.
8. In her oral briefing, the Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, said that the upcoming period of intense environmental diplomacy could set the course of sustainable development for the coming years. The Pact for the Future, which world leaders were expected to adopt at the Summit of the Future in New York in September, was likely to address the need for action on the three environmental planetary crises of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, as well as other issues that were critical to humankind’s common future.
9. At the Summit, UNEP would continue to champion young voices from every corner of the world, including during Youth Action Day, helping to assist youth leaders to achieve the meaningful engagement they sought. UNEP would take opportunities to lead and engage during the high-level week of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, including at the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance, where it would work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health, among other partners, on new targets and practical steps to address antimicrobial resistance.
10. All three Rio conventions were due to hold sessions or meetings of their conferences of the parties before the end of 2024, and she described some of the aspirations for those events. At the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Cali, Colombia, from 21 October to 1 November, progress was needed on the means of turning the commitments of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework into tangible action, strengthening resource mobilization and the financial mechanism for implementation, and operationalizing the benefit-sharing mechanism for digital sequencing information on genetic resources.
11. At the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Baku, in November, attention would focus on increasing work on transparency, in accordance with the upcoming first submission of the biennial transparency report; delivering a new quantified goal on climate finance; and preparing for enhanced nationally determined contributions to be submitted by countries in early 2025. The submission of significant numbers of new, ambitious contributions, especially by the largest emitters, would be a positive sign of the commitments needed to achieve common climate goals ahead of the thirtieth session.
12. At the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, to be held in Riyadh from 2 to 13 December 2024, key areas of work would include the achievement of land degradation neutrality by 2030; the integration of commitments into national development plans; the restoration of degraded lands; and better incorporation of the land agenda into the work of the three Rio conventions. Thanking Saudi Arabia for agreeing to host the sixteenth session, as well as for hosting the 2024 celebration of World Environment Day, she said that a protocol on drought would be among the key issues under discussion at the session.
13. Raising the ambition of Africa in the reduction of desertification, land degradation and drought had been the subject of the Abidjan Declaration adopted by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment at its tenth special session, held in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire, from 30 August to 6 September 2024, which she had attended. Supporting regional groups to prepare and align their negotiating positions for meetings of conferences of the parties was part of the commitment of UNEP to multilateral environmental processes, providing science, support and advocacy for the rapid delivery of solutions. As part of those efforts, the Deputy Executive Director, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, was, at present, attending the special session of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of

Latin America and the Caribbean to support discussions on climate action, biodiversity, and land degradation and restoration priorities for the region.

14. Over two years had passed since the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme had, at its fifth session, agreed to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, by the end of 2024. At the fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, to be held in Busan, Republic of Korea, it would be in the hands of Member States to forge an ambitious, effective, credible and just global instrument that responded to the needs and calls of all peoples. The purpose of the instrument would not be to ban plastics, which would remain highly useful in fields such as clean transport, energy, construction, food safety and healthcare. It was vital, however, to be deliberate about how and where plastics were used, and to tackle the short-lived and single-use plastics that ended up in the environment. A full-life-cycle approach was needed to ensure that plastics stayed in the economy rather than leaking into the environment. Noting that the essence of negotiation was understanding one another, she urged parties to listen as well as talk. Commitment and engagement were needed from all stakeholders, along with strong political support to develop a deal that could be strengthened and refined over time. She called on Member States to do their utmost to achieve an agreement that had precise, legally binding elements, including targets, in the understanding that it would bring an end to plastic pollution, and then, after the fifth session, to work to bring about adoption, ratification and implementation of the instrument.

15. In October, she would attend the meeting of the ministers of environment of the Group of 20 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Calling on the countries that were members of the Group to instruct their delegations to take the lead on plastic-related issues, she said that their action was crucial in addressing environmental challenges. Commending Brazil for its leadership on the environment throughout its presidency of the Group, she said that UNEP would continue to provide support as South Africa assumed the presidency later in 2024, coinciding with the celebration of one year since the African Union had joined the Group.

16. To achieve the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, it was crucial to invest in a reliable and affordable supply of clean energy, which would require critical energy transition minerals. Committee members had been briefed on progress in the work of the Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals of the Secretary-General, which had recently released its seven guiding principles on critical energy transition minerals. The guiding principles had been designed to transform mineral value chains by bringing to the fore human rights, justice and equity, and environmental protection.

17. Extraction presented both opportunities and risks. The countries in which such minerals were found, many of which were in Africa, could use the revenues generated for poverty reduction, sustainable development and long-term investments, but only by breaking exploitative colonial patterns and ensuring that value addition was done at home. Ramping up unsustainable mining, meanwhile, was likely to further damage the environment and would eventually exhaust the supply of the minerals. As such, clear policies on circularity and environmental stewardship were needed when addressing mineral extraction and use.

18. Critical minerals, circularity and resource efficiency were also central to accelerating the digital revolution, and Member States had asked UNEP to consider the environmental dimensions of digital technologies, both in terms of opportunities and impacts on the environment. At the Summit of the Future, UNEP had developed an issues note on the environmental impacts of the artificial intelligence life cycle, which would address critical minerals and metals, energy and greenhouse gas emissions, and water and electronic waste, with the aim of contributing to minimizing environmental impacts so that the benefits of artificial intelligence could be realized without damaging the planet.

19. Work on the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and the programme of work for the biennium 2026–2027, as well as on the focus of the next session of the Environment Assembly, was under way. The work of the Global Environment Outlook process would be crucial in framing the medium-term strategy, and UNEP had been delighted to host a meeting of 200 Global Environment Outlook authors.

20. To mark the 10-year anniversary of the Environment Assembly, she would be holding a series of informal lunches with permanent representatives based in Nairobi, in order to gather insights, experiences and suggestions and to make UNEP and the Environment Assembly as results-focused as possible. She thanked the permanent representatives who had contributed to date, and said that she looked forward to hearing from others.

21. Reiterating the importance of stable and adequate funding for the delivery of the UNEP mandate, she thanked Member States for their active participation, support and advice at the discussions on funding at the annual meeting of the subcommittee in July. Member States had noted the important role of the Environment Fund in enabling UNEP to execute its mandate and she encouraged all Member States to contribute their full share. By the end of August 2024, 70 Member States had contributed to the Fund, pledging \$73.66 million of the total budget of \$100 million. She thanked those Member States that had contributed, but with the end of 2024 approaching, noted that additional contributions were needed. She gave particular thanks to the least developed countries and small island developing States that had paid their contributions.
22. She concluded by expressing the hope that, at its next meeting, the Committee would be able to discuss the ambitious outcomes of the upcoming events and ways in which UNEP, with strong leadership from Member States, could translate them into action.
23. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the Executive Director for the quarterly report. One representative expressed gratitude to the Executive Director and to UNEP for their dedication and leadership on the world stage.
24. A number of representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, highlighted the importance of the upcoming fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, with much work remaining to be done in order to achieve an agreement to secure a planet free of plastic pollution. Some representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked UNEP and the secretariat of the intergovernmental negotiating committee for their work in convening the fourth session of the committee in Ottawa, in April, and the meetings of the two ad hoc intersessional open-ended expert groups on an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, in Bangkok in August.
25. The fourth session had begun with lofty ambitions and confidence that a strong treaty would result, one representative said, but it had become clear that reaching agreement would not be simple. Thus, said one representative, the meetings of the expert groups represented an innovative attempt by the Chair of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to complete the necessary work in the required time frame, and several representatives said that meaningful progress had been made at those meetings on building the consensus needed to deliver a final agreement by the end of 2024. Nevertheless, one representative asked whether sufficient time remained to achieve a comprehensive, legally binding instrument that addressed the full life cycle of plastics, in accordance with the mandate set out in Environment Assembly resolution 5/14, since effective planning, sound policy and legislative measures, stronger regulatory institutions, private sector and resource mobilization, technology development and transfer and sharing across nations were all required. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed continuing commitment to achieving a comprehensive, legally binding instrument, in accordance with resolution 5/14. One representative remarked that the instrument should work for all Member States.
26. Several representatives, including a representative speaking on behalf of the major groups and stakeholders, invited Committee members to attend events on the side lines of the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly that would seek to identify areas of convergence and increase momentum to facilitate negotiations on the future instrument. One representative reiterated the call that the secretariat of the new instrument be hosted at the headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi, which would improve the status of the region as an environmental hub and boost the ability of UNEP to effectively carry out its mandate, pursuant to paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, “The future we want”.
27. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, congratulated UNEP on the success of World Environment Day and noted that its theme had been particularly pertinent, as the need for action on drought, desertification and land degradation was urgent. One representative said that the celebrations had been a source of pride and hope, owing both to their focus on the need to accelerate progress on the protection of 30 per cent of land and sea, and the restoration of 30 per cent of degraded ecosystems, and the growing number of cities committing to nature-based solutions, including six in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. A number of representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed the hope that meaningful outcomes would emerge from the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it was alarming that up to 40 per cent of land had been degraded, affecting half of the world’s people, which augured badly for climate, biodiversity and livelihoods, noting that it was essential to

restore 1.5 billion hectares by 2030. One representative said that insufficient work had been done on desertification, land degradation and drought under the climate stability thematic fund. Calling on UNEP to increase its efforts in that area, he highlighted the importance of the Great Green Wall initiative. One representative commended UNEP for co-organizing the third Arab Forum for Environment, held in Riyadh in June, which had focused on land degradation challenges in the Arab region, among other things.

28. Many representatives, including several speaking on behalf of groups of countries, welcomed the preliminary assessment of the environmental impacts of the conflict in Gaza, with one representative recognizing the difficulty of producing the report in the current circumstances. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked for information on the steps UNEP had taken to share the information from the preliminary report with other United Nations entities working on the ground in Gaza, and the tools that were available to try and prevent land degradation as a result of conflict. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that she looked forward to receiving the final report, in accordance with paragraph 4 of Environment Assembly resolution 6/12, while another representative expressed the hope that the work that had contributed to the preliminary report would continue. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that such reports showed the growing importance of UNEP in the global arena, and another representative thanked UNEP for its support to countries facing situations of conflict.

29. One representative requested the secretariat to update the Committee on the status of the rapid damage and needs assessment mentioned in the preliminary report, which was to have been undertaken by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank. Noting that 10 months had passed since the preliminary report had been issued, she asked whether that assessment had been conducted and, in the case that it had, whether it would enable UNEP to prepare an interim assessment. One representative commended UNEP for co-chairing the debris management working group in Gaza, which aimed to support planning and coordination of sound management for safe and sustainable debris removal, and asked the secretariat to continue updating the Committee on the latest developments in that regard. One representative said that the worsening situation for people and the environment in Gaza required urgent international intervention.

30. Several representatives thanked UNEP for its work on the platform for action on the green recovery of Ukraine, which would contribute to the post-war recovery of the environment in that country. One representative called on UNEP to continue to identify acute environmental risks in order to minimize the negative impacts of the conflict, as part of efforts to preserve the environment for future generations.

31. Several representatives thanked the secretariat for keeping Member States informed about the financial status of UNEP and of the Environment Fund. Several representatives congratulated UNEP on its successful collection of voluntary contributions and thanked all new contributors. One representative said that the strategy adopted would future-proof the UNEP budget over the coming years. Several representatives urged Member States that had not yet done so to contribute to the Environment Fund, and one representative said that effective multilateralism, which was essential for both planet and people, required a well-functioning and fit-for-purpose UNEP, with a broad, diversified funding base. One representative said that improved coordination with United Nations country teams could encourage more Member States to contribute their full share in accordance with the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, as well as helping UNEP to respond better to the priorities of Member States.

32. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked for further information on the vision of the secretariat for philanthropic contributions and their allocation to UNEP thematic programmes. One representative requested the secretariat to provide information on how UNEP accounted for in-kind contributions, while another representative said that most funding for UNEP should continue to be non-earmarked or softly earmarked funding. One representative, welcoming the work of the UNEP Finance Initiative in implementing the programme of work and budget for 2022–2023, which had been extended by two years to the end of 2025, said that, while it was preferable that any money provided by the global financial sector was not earmarked, the value of outputs like the *Climate Risk Landscape Report 2024* and the engagement with the financial sector on plastics and sustainable finance taxonomies were clear. One representative, noting that hers was the only developing country that had contributed to the thematic funds, said that such funding provided a useful middle ground that allowed Member States to earmark their contributions to an area in which they wanted to encourage UNEP to work, while granting it flexibility in allocating the resources within the area. Another representative said that his country had contributed to the climate stability thematic fund, which was in line with his country's goals, particularly with regard to climate change adaptation.

33. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, cautioned against the use of wording that had not been agreed upon within the United Nations system, and recalled General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) on institutional and financial arrangements for international environmental cooperation, under which no priority was given to specific environmental challenges over others. On that basis, she urged UNEP to adopt a comprehensive approach that did not neglect the needs and priorities of developing countries.
34. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern about the continuing difficulty in mobilizing finance for matters related to biodiversity and pollution and waste. He asked the secretariat to provide information on the steps it was taking to mobilize resources in those areas, particularly with regard to finance for developing countries.
35. One country said that the international sanctions to which his country was subject had weakened its capacity to deliver an adequate environmental programme, to access funding from the Global Environment Facility and to contribute to the Environment Fund.
36. Underlining the importance of the outcomes of the upcoming meetings of the conferences of the parties to the three Rio conventions, one representative requested the secretariat to provide information on how to make the best use of the consecutive holding of those meetings in order to raise awareness of the urgent need for financing for implementation in developing countries.
37. One representative requested that future quarterly reports list challenges and lessons learned, including those relating to delivery, collaboration within the United Nations system and institutional learning, alongside achievements. One representative requested that the impacts of specific UNEP initiatives be made more visible in the service of transparency and accountability, as well as to help make information about the work of UNEP more widely available.
38. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended the ongoing efforts by UNEP to achieve more geographical diversity in its recruitment, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 5/13. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, encouraged UNEP to continue working to achieve equitable geographical distribution in the allocation of leadership posts at the professional level, and to continue to expand its outreach events to underrepresented regions. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recalled that UNEP was to base its recruitment on the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, while another representative said that no candidature should be rejected on the grounds of nationality.
39. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended the efforts of the Executive Director and the secretariat to achieve gender parity among UNEP staff, and encouraged it to continue that work. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked for information on the efforts to increase recruitment from the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested the secretariat to increase representation from the Asia-Pacific region.
40. One representative expressed concern that the liquidity challenges facing the United Nations were causing a hiring freeze that affected vacant posts. Noting that UNEP was prioritizing non-staff allocations to fulfil the mandates of the Environment Assembly and the Global Environment Outlook, she emphasized the importance of all areas of work and expressed the hope that the secretariat would streamline efforts and increase efficiency, as well as using funding of all types, including private.
41. One representative requested that future quarterly reports show the changes in recruitment patterns over time, rather than at a particular moment in time.
42. One representative asked for more information on the ways in which addressing the three environmental planetary crises was being integrated into the work of the United Nations development system.
43. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, referred to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, requesting information on the measures taken by UNEP in its modalities of work, alongside other United Nations entities, and in coordination with United Nations country teams and resident coordinators, to better address the pressing environmental needs of Member States. Thanking UNEP for sharing the external assessments of projects, one representative noted that of the six projects shared, four had been assessed as “partially satisfactory”, and requested information on what performance improvements UNEP planned to make.

44. One representative urged members of the Committee to reflect on ways in which the headquarters of UNEP could be strengthened in order to ensure it was the centre of bilateral engagement on the environment.
45. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed continuing support for the efforts to establish a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 5/8. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked UNEP for its efforts to convene the third ad hoc open-ended working group on a science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution, held in Geneva in June. It was unfortunate, said one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, that the open-ended working group had been unable to conclude its work as planned, and she encouraged all countries to work constructively at the resumed third session to finalize the work on the establishment of the panel.
46. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked UNEP for its efforts with regard to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, which had improved understanding of the instrument and would aid coordination between United Nations entities and the secretariat of the Agreement. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed commitment to the swift ratification and implementation of the Agreement, and urged all Member States to do the same. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended UNEP for its contribution to the organizational meeting of the preparatory commission for the entry into force of the Agreement.
47. One representative congratulated UNEP for the successful organization of the Bern III Conference on Cooperation among the biodiversity-related conventions for the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, held in Bern, Switzerland, in January, and urged UNEP to dedicate sufficient resources to maintaining the momentum of that process. One representative noted the great strides being taken during the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, and reiterated her country's support for the work of UNEP to achieve the goals of the Decade.
48. One representative requested the secretariat to provide information on the reported decrease in the submission of nationally determined contributions, national biodiversity strategies and action plans and multilateral environmental agreements.
49. One representative commended UNEP for its work in preparing for the high-level meeting on antimicrobial resistance, which addressed a growing problem that was sometimes called a silent pandemic. UNEP participation in the meeting would help to raise awareness of the significant relationship between environmental degradation, the spread of antimicrobial resistance and the transmission of resistance genes. One representative, speaking on behalf of the major groups and stakeholders, said that the increased participation of young people on that issue, within the framework of the One Health approach, could help encourage innovation.
50. On critical energy transition materials, one representative commended UNEP for its leadership on the launch of the Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals, and one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed the hope that the Panel's report would contribute to building trust, justice and equity throughout the value chain for such minerals, as well as security in their supply. It was important, one representative said, to give consideration to the origin of such minerals, and to continue work on formulating recommendations on extraction in conflict-affected areas. It was no less important, one representative said, to ensure that the energy transition and the resulting demand for minerals did not contribute to pollution or the pressure on biodiversity. To meet such increased demand, technology transfer strategies would also be required.
51. The representative of the Philippines informed the Committee that, as the recently elected host of the board of the fund for responding to loss and damage, her country had granted to the board the legal personality and juridical capacity needed to negotiate and enter into a hosting agreement with the World Bank, which would be the interim trustee of the fund, operationalize the financial intermediary fund and host the fund's secretariat.
52. One representative welcomed the reflection on the lessons learned from the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, which could help to guide work on future sessions and preserve the spirit of cooperation in which UNEP had always sought to work. One representative recalled that discussions at the sixth session had underlined the need for collaboration between Member States, international organizations, the private sector and civil society, which showed the importance of partnerships and

multilateral cooperation in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Such partnerships should therefore be strengthened. Several representatives expressed their support for UNEP efforts to increase the involvement of major groups and stakeholders, particularly with regard to Environment Assembly processes that sought to achieve comprehensive environmental policies, given the importance of civil society's contribution to strengthening global environmental governance. One representative said that it was important to recall that negotiation processes should not be politicized and that a balanced approach to the inclusion of the interests of all countries, particularly developing countries, should be maintained, including in the allocation of time to deliver national statements during high-level segments of meetings.

53. One representative welcomed the evaluation of the climate action projects of UNEP, particularly with regard to climate adaptation and resilience in developing countries, and urged UNEP to continue to promote international cooperation, knowledge-sharing and the transfer of climate technology to empower developing countries in their climate efforts. One representative, noting that current climate change commitments were insufficient to meet the obligations of the Paris Agreement on climate change, said that Member States should strengthen their nationally determined contributions in order to address the gaps. One representative said that it was important to ensure that the transition towards decarbonization and the improvement of degraded habitats was fair and included support for countries with fewer resources. The Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Spain in June 2025, would focus on the need to incorporate environmental capacity-building and knowledge-building into international development assistance programmes.

54. Several representatives stressed the importance of climate-resilient housing, which was mentioned in the report, and asked the secretariat for information on whether UNEP was working with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on the matter. One representative, speaking on behalf of the major groups and stakeholders, said that climate-resilient housing could empower local communities, particularly in coastal regions, by integrating sustainable energy and water systems that increased communities' sustainability and self-reliance. One representative, speaking on behalf of the major groups and stakeholders, expressed satisfaction at the increasing number of cities participating in the generation restoration cities initiative, given that the majority of environmental challenges were in urban areas. He called for more funding, particularly for cities in the global South, to enable them to implement the project, and for the empowerment of city stakeholders.

55. One representative commended UNEP for co-organizing the high-level conference on peace, justice and inclusive societies for sustainable development held in May in New York. UNEP was well-placed to provide the specialized inputs required to advance the environmental components of Sustainable Development Goal 16, given its capacity to promote environmental justice, including, as part of environmental rule of law, social and racial justice. Another representative said that justice should be the guiding principle of the environmental agenda.

56. One representative commended UNEP for its work on achieving climate stability, including initiatives on climate finance, mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and sustainable energy, and for the support it provided for countries to revise their nationally determined contributions. One representative emphasized the importance of the work of several foundational subprogrammes, including on the movement of transboundary wastes, the illegal transfer of genetic resources and emerging threats from the exploitation of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. One representative commended UNEP for establishing an operations and risk management unit.

57. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked UNEP for its support to regional initiatives. One representative said that the links built through regional meetings and events were essential in the fight against the three environmental planetary crises, as well as for the development and growth of countries and regions with fewer resources. Commending UNEP support for the fourth meeting of the ASEAN Environmental Rights Working Group and the third meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement), one representative said that his country was in the process of ratifying the Escazú Agreement. Noting that the national focal points under the Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme V) at their second global meeting had listed the links between environmental and racial justice among their emerging topics, one representative requested the secretariat to provide information on whether South-South exchanges had been considered on those matters, given the benefits of sharing experiences, advances and instruments from different regions.



58. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation for UNEP activities in their regions, and encouraged it to continue to strengthen its regional offices and increase its support for United Nations resident coordinators to ensure that its initiatives responded to countries' needs, including respective sustainable development frameworks, thereby maximizing local impact. Expressing appreciation for UNEP efforts to align regional strategies with global commitments, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended UNEP for its contributions to the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. One representative emphasized the importance of national campaigns to raise awareness of environmental conservation and to address common environmental issues. One representative said that the regional training on spill management conducted by UNEP for the Africa region had significantly improved the understanding and capacity of the countries involved to address environmental emergencies.
59. One representative commended UNEP for its actions to promote the circular economy and sustainable consumption and production in his region. Another representative said that circular economy approaches were important for reducing waste and managing resources sustainably, particularly as traditional economic models based on extraction, use and discarding had become unviable. One representative said that Governments and private entities should take pride in recycling and reusing materials. One representative welcomed UNEP work with the private sector and subnational governments in his country, and highlighted the memorandum of understanding signed between UNEP and Mercociudades, which, alongside UNEP work to promote sustainability reporting among small and medium-sized enterprises, showed how UNEP could promote environmental policies at the local and productive level.
60. One representative congratulated UNEP on the twentieth anniversary of the course on multilateral environmental agreements conducted in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland, the latest edition of which had been held in Helsinki from 27 May to 6 June, and had included 28 participants from 22 countries.
61. One representative requested that UNEP consider opening a dedicated office in Somalia, as part of UNEP efforts to expand its regional presence. In Somalia, he said, the environment was not a concept, but lay at the heart of the country's survival and livelihoods, as 80 per cent of its people were affected by climate change and 80 per cent of the economy was dependent on nature.
62. One representative said that the recent heatwave in southern Europe, as well as other parts of the world, showed that there was no turning back on climate change. Nevertheless, with continued effort and the scientific and political leadership of UNEP, climate stability was achievable. One representative said that her country was suffering environmental changes related to climate change, nature and biodiversity loss and problems associated with pollution and waste. The changes had resulted in reduced productivity, food insecurity and higher cost of living, affecting the poorest and most vulnerable communities, which had the effect of reinforcing unsustainable practices that resulted in further degradation.
63. One representative, commending UNEP for its engagement with ministries and high-level representation, emphasized the importance of regular engagement with permanent representatives based in Nairobi to ensure the direct, practical exchange of ideas and information. He welcomed the proposal of the Executive Director to meet with representatives based in Nairobi.
64. The representative of Ukraine delivered a statement regarding the conflict in his country, saying that, in particular, attacks on key energy infrastructure risked causing significant environmental damage.
65. The Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments and for highlighting the areas of UNEP work that they found to be particularly important and beneficial.
66. On insufficient funding for initiatives related to biodiversity and pollution, she expressed satisfaction that the parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity had agreed to establish a biodiversity fund, which would be among the matters for discussion at the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention. She acknowledged with great appreciation the Kunming Biodiversity Fund established by China. On pollution, she recalled that the fund established for the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management had received a number of significant contributions. She also drew attention to the three thematic funds of UNEP, thanking Belgium, Finland, Norway and the Philippines for their contributions to those funds.
67. On funding for the Environment Assembly, she said that, notwithstanding the pressure on the regular budget of the United Nations, it was important that the Environment Assembly was celebrated

in a fitting manner. UNEP sought to streamline and make the best use of the limited resources available in the Environment Fund, including with regard to the Global Environment Outlook reports.

68. She clarified that in-kind contributions, such as the provision of land or staff, tended to be allocated to specific projects. The financial statement included information on in-kind contributions to UNEP, including office space. The total in-kind contribution for 2023 amounted to the equivalent of \$864,000. Loans of staff were not recognized as revenue in the United Nations.

69. On gender and geographical diversity, she reiterated that the secretariat was cognizant of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, including paragraph 3 of Article 101. While it was true that UNEP had historically recruited more staff members from among qualified people from the Western European and other States, and from Africa, the same was true of other United Nations organizations, and more competent candidates from other regions had not been disregarded. Recently, the net had been cast more widely, but that did not preclude the recruitment of the best candidates for each position. The next quarterly report would include information that showed the progression over time, as requested.

70. In 2024, the first cohort of the “Young Talent Pipeline” had been onboarded, and the recruitment of the next cohort was under way. In particular, more speakers were needed of Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish, and outreach events had been conducted in several languages. In the third quarter of 2024, three in-person outreach events had been held, one of which she had attended, along with five online outreach events. Three of the events had focused on Eastern Europe, two on Latin America and the Caribbean, and one on Asia and the Pacific, while events had also been held that focused on people of African descent and on Indigenous Peoples. She noted that, in 2024, Asia and the Pacific had accounted for 27 per cent of recruitments, the highest of any regional group. She also noted, however, that 28 regular budget positions remained unfilled due to the ongoing funding gap, and she echoed the call of the Secretary-General for Member States that were in arrears to meet their funding commitments. Until those posts were filled, UNEP would be unable to do much of the work it had planned.

71. Turning to Environment Assembly resolution 6/12, on environmental assistance and recovery in areas affected by armed conflict, she said that work was under way on data collection techniques, including innovative practices; a detailed concept note would be made available in November outlining the associated costs and timeline. Expressing the hope that donors would make the resources available for what was undoubtedly important work, she said that it was likely that the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 would also include provisions relating to armed conflict. UNEP was working actively with the European Union, other United Nations entities and the World Bank on the recovery strategy for the Gaza Strip, in close consultation with the Government of the State of Palestine. Among the key areas of concern for UNEP, she highlighted debris management, which posed significant challenges for local authorities. Such debris had to be handled with care, as it may contain human remains, toxic substances, metal or unexploded weapons, and the management of debris could increase or decrease its environmental impact. UNEP would continue to contribute to the rapid damage and needs assessment, which involved several United Nations system entities. No publication date for the final report had been set due to the ongoing uncertainties.

72. On environmental racism and environmental justice, she said that the secretariat of Montevideo Programme V was exploring South-South approaches, particularly with regard to access rights, and that the Escazú Agreement was an example from which other regions could learn. She said that the issue would be addressed in the next report on the environmental rule of law, to be published in 2026.

73. On climate-resilient housing, she confirmed that UNEP was collaborating closely with UN-Habitat on the matter, including in Bangladesh, India and Senegal, to produce road maps for resilient, affordable housing.

74. With regard to the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, she thanked the Government of Korea for agreeing to host the fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee. The meetings of the open-ended expert groups in Bangkok had made important contributions, and she expressed her strong belief that sufficient time remained to achieve the desired agreement. To do so, it would be necessary to understand the interests of others.

75. She expressed her condolences to the people of Botswana and to the family of Dumezweni Mthimkhulu, the country’s former Minister of Environment and Tourism, who had recently died.

76. The representative of the Russian Federation, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, recalled that the “Nairobi spirit” meant that meetings like those of the Committee were not an

appropriate place for politicization, and stressed that his country only struck military targets that were double-checked in advance.

77. The representative of Ukraine, also speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the world was well aware of the reality of the war in Ukraine and its disastrous environmental consequences.

## **Agenda item 5**

### **Development of a medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and a draft programme of work and budget for the period 2026–2027**

78. The Chair introduced the item and drew attention to the draft road map for the development of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and the programme of work for the biennium 2026–2027, which was set out in document UNEP/CPR/167/5.

79. The Executive Director thanked representatives for the feedback they had provided at the annual meeting of the subcommittee in July on the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and the draft programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, much of which had been incorporated into the draft road map, including the importance of online and in-person exchanges with Member States, major groups, the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements and United Nations entities; lessons learned, including findings and recommendations; critical areas, such as human rights, gender equality and the needs of vulnerable groups and societies; and the needs of countries, including small island developing States, and people living in poverty, facing inequality and living with disability.

80. The world had changed greatly since the last medium-term strategy had been issued: environmental shocks had intensified, conflicts had broken out with catastrophic consequences for people and the environment, and artificial intelligence had advanced. By the time of the approval of the new strategy at the seventh session of the Environment Assembly, in December 2025, the implementation would be under way of the Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework, the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste, and the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States: A Renewed Declaration for Resilient Prosperity, while the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, would have been agreed. She encouraged representatives to participate in the informal discussions on the draft text of the medium-term strategy in October.

81. A representative of the secretariat presented information on the draft road map. Emphasizing the importance of the dialogue sessions, he said that they aimed to provide an informal platform for collective reflection that would feed into the formal process of drafting the new strategy, which would be considered by Member States through established processes, including at Committee and subcommittee meetings. At the 168th meeting of the Committee, to be held in December, the secretariat would provide feedback from the informal dialogues, a preliminary outline and strategic narrative for the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, and a budget options paper for the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027. At the 169th and 170th meetings, respectively, the draft and revised versions of the medium-term strategy and programme of work would be presented to Member States, with the opportunity for further engagement. The finalized versions of the draft strategy and draft programme of work, including the budget, would be considered at the annual meeting of the subcommittee that was due to take place in September 2025. The subcommittee would then be expected to recommend that the Committee endorse the draft strategy and draft programme of work at its next meeting for subsequent consideration and possible approval by the Environment Assembly at its seventh session. Additional informal or formal consultation sessions could be organized as necessary. Engagement and dialogue would also be conducted with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, with major groups and stakeholders, including children and youth, and with the private sector. Key lessons learned from existing planning and monitoring processes, evaluations and audits, had been set out in annex 2 to the draft road map. A formative evaluation of the delivery model of UNEP, which would provide additional lessons learned and guidance for the development of the following medium-term strategy, was under way and would be shared with Member States as early as possible.

82. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the secretariat for preparing the draft road map. Several representatives said that, in the interest of continuity, the next medium-term strategy should build on the previous strategy, while one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the scope of the medium-term strategy should be expanded.

83. A number of representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, welcomed the plans for intersessional consultations. A number of representatives said that it was important to respect the mandate set out in paragraph 9 of Environment Assembly decision 6/7 that inclusive and regular consultation be conducted with Member States and, as appropriate, relevant stakeholders, in the preparation of the draft programme of work and budget and draft medium-term strategy, and that the views of Member States should be fully taken into account, with every effort made to reflect consensual views. One representative requested that the mandate be included in its entirety in the draft road map, in order to ensure that it was respected at all stages of the process. Several representatives said that it was important for the process to be both inclusive and transparent, and one representative said that the continued involvement of the Committee and strengthening of its working methods was one way to ensure such transparency. One representative asked for further information on the organization of the consultations, including when there would be opportunities for written input, and whether the results of the dialogues would be discussed at the subcommittee meetings prior to the 168th meeting of the Committee. One representative requested a clearer timeline for the discussions that included guiding questions. Another representative said that the newly established group of friends for enhanced civil society participation in UNEP-led events, which was mentioned in the quarterly report, could be a valuable forum for discussion.

84. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, requested the secretariat to circulate relevant documents well in advance of consultation meetings and to keep Member States informed about progress in the development of the documents, in order to achieve broad consensus prior to their finalization. One representative requested the secretariat to make available all the scientific analysis that contributed to the strategy and to clearly indicate which key insights were being incorporated from the foresight report. One representative requested the secretariat to share the seventh Global Environment Outlook report at the earliest possible date, in order that it might inform the preparation of the medium-term strategy. One representative welcomed the inclusion of inputs from the reports of the Global Environment Outlook, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, but expressed concern about the use of reports that had been developed without the input of Member States, such as the strategic foresight reports, and questioned whether such reports should be given equal status to the reports of consolidated multilateral platforms.

85. One representative proposed several amendments to the draft consultation plan with Member States set out in table 2 of the roadmap. In the row referring to the twelfth annual subcommittee meeting, he said that the concept of “informal endorsement” was unclear and noted that the submission of the draft document for editing and translation did not require permission from UNEP governing bodies. Similarly, it was more accurate to say that, at its 171st meeting, the Committee would consider the document, rather than endorse it, as the Committee might find that further changes were required. On the structure of the document, one representative requested that the evaluation and audit-related inputs, set out in annex 1 to the draft road map, be presented in chronological order, and that the compilation of lessons learned set out in annex 2 provide more detailed references to sources. One representative said that the strategy should be as simple to understand as possible.

86. One representative reminded the secretariat to use agreed language, specifically, it should refer to “people in vulnerable situations” rather than “marginalized groups”, while another representative sought clarification of which people were included in the category of marginalized groups, noting that different Member States might have different interpretations of the phrase.

87. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, emphasized that the medium-term strategy should reflect regional priorities and challenges. It was important that it could provide tailored solutions for the pertinent issues of different regions. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that regional forums of environment ministers could help in the identification of tailored regional solutions. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that the involvement of regional forums of ministers of the environment would help to enhance the consideration of the role and viability of the regional forums, as requested by the Environment Assembly in its resolution 6/3.

88. One representative proposed that all the resolutions that made reference to the new medium-term strategy be reviewed, in order to ensure that the requests made in those resolutions were addressed. One representative requested the secretariat to clarify whether there would be two programmes of work under the strategy, or a series of extensions of a single programme of work. Another representative said that it was important for UNEP to underpin its medium-term strategy with a realistic but ambitious budget.

89. Many representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, welcomed the efforts to apply lessons learned and recommendations in the development of the new strategy. In particular, several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, welcomed the focus on a holistic approach that left no one behind and considered the socioeconomic dimensions of sustainable development. Noting that global environmental challenges disproportionately affected historically marginalized groups, one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that UNEP should build on the experience of other United Nations agencies and programmes. Another representative welcomed the inclusion of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the proposal to establish a standing surge capacity pool of expertise and to place environment advisors in resident coordinator offices. One representative said that the focus on lessons learned would be clearer if the elements to be carried over from the current medium-term strategy were explicitly listed.

90. Several representatives welcomed the focus on collaborations with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, noting that improved alignment could help to reduce duplication, optimize budgetary resources and contribute to ensuring that international environmental governance was able to coherently tackle global environmental challenges. One representative said that it would be beneficial for the subcommittee to receive information mapping out agreed international environmental goals and targets. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the priorities of the new medium-term strategy should extend beyond the triple crisis of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution, with several representatives requesting that equal consideration be given to desertification, land degradation and drought.

91. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the focus in the road map on the reduction of inequality and poverty. One representative said that the new strategy should continue to acknowledge Indigenous Peoples, their contribution to the sustainability of the environment and the disproportionate impacts they suffered from its degradation. Another representative said that, in accordance with United Nations commitments to the inclusion of people living with disabilities, UNEP should integrate disability, equity and inclusion as a priority in the next iteration of the strategy. Several representatives welcomed the intention to continue work to advance gender equality.

92. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the medium-term strategy should include plans for UNEP to work with other United Nations entities and actions to mainstream the environmental agenda across the United Nations system. Another representative said that the strategy should outline how UNEP and the Environment Assembly would act as a science-policy interface, given that one of the core tasks of UNEP was to keep the environment under review. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that it was important to include the monitoring of progress on outcomes and projects and to find the ways to communicate results and impacts achieved to enhance the visibility and credibility of the work of UNEP.

93. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, proposed that the following topics also be considered for inclusion in the medium-term strategy: sustainable production and consumption, including enhancing circular economy initiatives; partnerships with the private sector and international financial institutions; common but differentiated responsibilities; artificial intelligence; the specific needs of small island developing States; and active commitment to supporting, first, the proposed science-policy panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution and, second, the proposed international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. One representative said that particular attention should be paid, as part of climate action, to the adaptation needs of developing countries.

94. One representative commended UNEP for acknowledging the need to balance normative and development work. Another representative sought clarification of the distinction made in the draft road map between the normative mandate of UNEP and its programmatic role, and asked why the document did not include mention of strengthening equitable geographical representation in the secretariat.

95. Responding to the remarks, the Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments. She confirmed that the new medium-term strategy would focus on land degradation and desertification, as well as drought. Working on those issues brought other concomitant benefits: by working on land restoration, positive impacts were achieved on adaptation and carbon sequestration, which, in turn, impacted biodiversity and ecosystem diversity. She emphasized that the UNEP programme on climate change adaptation was far larger than the equivalent on mitigation and stressed

that matters relating to geographical representation did not belong in the medium-term strategy, which was by nature programmatic, rather than administrative, financial or organizational.

96. The representative of the secretariat, noting the recommendations made by members, clarified that the virtual dialogue sessions were intended to be informal conversations with members in their individual capacities, rather than forums for statements by representatives, and that the discussions would be summarized in a way that made attribution of comments impossible. On the inclusion of regional priorities, he confirmed that the new strategy was intended to be globally coherent but regionally responsive, and would be able to take into account national needs, with the help of the United Nations country teams. He confirmed that two programmes of work would be developed during the period of application of the next medium-term strategy, in accordance with standard practice.

97. The Committee took note of the information provided.

## **Agenda item 6**

### **Consideration of evaluation reports and audits**

98. The Chair introduced the item.

99. A representative of the UNEP Evaluation Office gave a presentation on the evaluation of the UNEP climate action subprogramme, which covered the period 2014–2023, noting that, under new requirements, all the subprogrammes would be evaluated every six years. The presentation was followed by a management response from a representative of the UNEP Climate Change Division. The evaluation had focused on learning, accountability and informing evidence-based decision-making, and the report contained a strong endorsement of the subprogramme, finding that it was strategically highly relevant for UNEP and the global community, and of far greater relevance to global conversations on climate and to the evolution and implementation of the Paris Agreement than implied by its own narratives.

100. The Evaluation Office had conducted 69 evaluations of climate action-related projects, with project performance rated as “satisfactory” on average, with moderate improvement over time. The sustainability of the outcomes of the evaluated projects was rated as “moderately likely” over the whole period evaluated. Compared to other subprogrammes, the climate action subprogramme ranked third in terms of achieving the targets of the programme performance reports, with an average of 86 per cent achieved over the period 2014–2022.

101. The work of UNEP on climate action had achieved significant impact in several areas: influencing Member States, particularly through the provision of accessible and relevant scientific data on climate change; informing debate, notably by means of the UNEP flagship reports; exercising convening power, bringing together diverse stakeholders to collaborate on climate adaptation and mitigation, including in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; and promoting global climate action around specific topics, including ecosystem-based adaptation. Based on the evaluation, seven recommendations had been made.

102. The representative of the secretariat said that the insights from the evaluation had come at a very opportune moment. On the one hand, UNEP had recently established the Climate Change Division, and, on the other, the elaboration of the new medium-term strategy and programme of work and budget was under way, which provided a good opportunity to incorporate the recommendations. The secretariat had accepted all seven recommendations, and the responses of UNEP management had been made available on the web portal of the Committee. He gave a brief outline of the responses to recommendations 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

103. Another representative of the secretariat said that a great deal of positive action had already been taken in the area addressed by recommendation 1. UNEP was in the process of reviewing the sustainability of its engagement with partners, given the importance of linking partnerships to the sustainability of resources and ensuring that UNEP had clear exit strategies. She provided information on the climate action transparency initiative and how it had helped countries to meet their transparency obligations under the Paris Agreement. The establishment of the Climate Change Division had provided a new focus for core resources for climate objectives and it was working effectively across the different divisions of UNEP, as well as with partners. In terms of staffing, she informed the Committee that the deputy director of the Climate Change Division had recently been recruited, as had the director of the Climate Technology Centre and Network and the recruitment of the director of the Climate Change Division was at an advanced stage.

104. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked the Evaluation Office and the secretariat for the information provided, and expressed the hope that, in future, management response to evaluation reports would be made available further in advance of Committee meetings and that evaluation reports would be discussed at subcommittee meetings, if necessary. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, agreed that the work of the climate action subprogramme was of fundamental, and probably underestimated, importance. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked for information on the proportions of earmarked contributions allocated to climate and biodiversity projects, and on ways in which communication across divisions was implemented. One representative requested information on the risk management capacity of the Climate Change Division.

105. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested UNEP to conduct evaluation reports on projects that promoted international cooperation, especially in the areas of knowledge-sharing and the development of climate-related technology and its transfer to developing countries. On recommendation 2, several representatives requested that UNEP develop more strategies to provide countries with applicable information on solutions for mitigation and adaptation measures. One representative noted that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was often asked to provide such information. As that lay beyond the mandate of the Panel, however, she said that UNEP was best placed not only to provide information on solutions for mitigation and adaptation measures, but also to support countries to develop and apply those solutions in their national contexts. On recommendation 4, one representative said that it would be more appropriate to refer to pursuing efforts to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C, rather than 2°C.

106. One representative said that further efforts were needed to improve communication on funding needs between the subprogramme and donor countries, as well as on tracing the flow of contributions. Welcoming the overall performance of the climate subprogramme with respect to achieving its targets, one representative said that UNEP should focus on likelihood of impact and sustainability of results, for which the ratings had been moderately low, as those areas were crucial to the impact of UNEP work. Instead of outputs, UNEP should increase its focus on outcomes and impacts. To guide action on the ground, indicators should be endowed with increased operational relevance and greater emphasis should be placed on adequate reporting. In particular, operational indicators on the medium-term strategy and programme of work should be more qualitative than quantitative.

107. One representative, speaking on behalf of the major groups and stakeholders, said that further work to establish links between the implementation of existing subprogrammes and relevant Environment Assembly resolutions would help in meeting key indicators within the subprogrammes and providing a broader platform for integrating inputs from the Youth Environment Assembly.

108. Responding to the remarks, the Executive Director said that processes were in place to mitigate both climate and fiduciary risks. On recommendation 3, she reiterated that the evaluation was largely based on information from the time before the establishment of the Climate Change Division and that one of the reasons for creating the division had been to improve clarity on the resources that were allocated to climate change. On funding for the climate action fund, she said that she did not have the figures to hand, but that it was many times smaller than the Global Climate Fund. Acknowledging the request on strengthening indicators, she said the secretariat would provide more detail on the matter in due course. In closing, she said that the discussion of the evaluation had been limited because the report had only been released a month earlier, but further discussions could be arranged at a later date.

109. The representative of the secretariat thanked Member States for their support and confirmed that the Climate Change Division had worked closely with the United Nations Development Programme on ecosystem-based adaptation, which, she said, was a way to improve the resilience of nature.

110. The Chair said that the Committee would consider the presentation on the overview of the audit process in UNEP at a subsequent subcommittee meeting.

111. The Committee took note of the information provided.

## **Agenda item 7**

### **Adoption of the Chair's summary of the eleventh annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

112. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the Chair's summary of the eleventh annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee (UNEP/CPR/167/7) and the draft recommendation on lessons

learned from the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEP/CPR/167/7/Add.1).

113. A number of representatives, speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed appreciation for the work of the representatives of Argentina and the Kingdom of the Netherlands in leading the informal consultations on the lessons learned from the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, which, they said, had reached important conclusions that could provide useful guidance to the secretariat. One representative recalled that the recommendations should not supersede the outcome documents of the sixth session.

114. With regard to the Chair's summary, one representative said that important progress had been made at the eleventh annual subcommittee meeting on the implementation of paragraph 41 (j) of the Chair's summary of the ninth annual subcommittee meeting, as the possibility for Member States to propose recommendations for each agenda item for consideration and possible adoption at the regular meetings of the Committee had improved the working methods of the Committee and the subcommittee, strengthened the multilateral processes in Nairobi and helped focus the outcomes of Committee and subcommittee meetings.

115. The Chair took note of the comments.

116. The Committee endorsed the recommendations as set out in document UNEP/CPR/167/7/Add.1 and adopted the draft decision set out therein. Decision 167/1 is set out in the annex to the present draft minutes.

117. The Committee adopted the Chair's summary of the eleventh annual subcommittee meeting as set out in document UNEP/CPR/167/7.

## **Agenda item 8**

### **Report of the subcommittee**

118. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the revised draft report of the subcommittee (UNEP/CPR/167/8/Rev.1) and the draft decision set out in document UNEP/CPR/167/9.

119. One representative proposed revisions to the preambular paragraphs of the draft decision.

120. The Committee adopted the revised report of the subcommittee and decision 167/2, as orally revised. Decision 167/2 is set out in the annex to the present draft minutes.

## **Agenda item 9**

### **Other matters**

121. The representative of Belgium gave a presentation on the recent renovation of his country's embassy in Nairobi in order to make it carbon neutral.

122. One representative provided information on the first meeting of the Buildings and Climate Global Forum, held in Paris on 7 and 8 March, which had been co-organized by the Government of France and UNEP, and had been aimed at addressing the decarbonization of the building sector. In the Chaillot Declaration, endorsed by the Forum, the Intergovernmental Council for Buildings and Climate had been established, bringing together representatives of national Governments that had endorsed the declaration and observer countries to exchange experiences, share achievements and jointly review the implementation of the declaration. The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction, which was hosted by UNEP, had been tasked with implementing the declaration. Member States were invited to nominate national focal points to participate in the first technical meeting of the body, to be held online on 26 September, and attend a ministerial round table on buildings and construction during the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

## **Agenda item 10**

### **Closure of the meeting**

123. The meeting was declared closed at 6 p.m. on Thursday, 12 September 2024.



## Annex

### **Decision 167/1: Recommendations of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its 167th meeting on lessons learned from the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly**

*The Committee of Permanent Representatives,*

*Recalling* the outcome of the consensual process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as endorsed by the United Nations Environment Assembly in its decision 5/4,

*Noting* the informal consultations held on lessons learned from the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly,

1. *Takes note of* the document entitled “The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly Assessment and lessons learned: key recommendations”, which is set out in the annex to the present decision;
2. *Encourages* Member States, the President of the Environment Assembly, the bureaux of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and of the Environment Assembly, and the secretariat to take due account of the lessons learned from the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, as set out in the annex to the present decision, in preparing for future sessions of the Environment Assembly;
3. *Invites* the President of the Environment Assembly and the bureaux of the Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and calls upon all Member States, to uphold the “Nairobi Spirit” and avoid the hindrance of environmental processes.

#### **Annex to decision 167/1**

#### **The sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly Assessment and lessons learned: key recommendations**

### **I. On the planning and outcomes of the sessions of the Environment Assembly**

1. The ministerial declaration of the Environment Assembly should focus on the global environmental agenda in a concise, forward-looking, ambitious and action-oriented manner by tackling emerging environmental challenges, and should relate closely to the theme of the session as well as to the theme of the relevant session of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as applicable.
2. The President of the Environment Assembly is invited, with the support of the secretariat and with a view to ensuring an iterative, open, transparent, participatory and inclusive intergovernmental process based on inputs by Member States, to develop the ministerial declaration to be adopted by consensus by the Environment Assembly.
3. The secretariat should continue to effectively update Environment Assembly focal points, including those not represented in Nairobi, on the status and the planning of preparations for the sessions of the Environment Assembly, with a view to increasing transparency, inclusivity and universal participation.
4. The President of the Environment Assembly is invited, in consultation with the bureaux of the Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and with the support of the secretariat, to facilitate open, transparent and inclusive consultations to define themes of future sessions of the Environment Assembly that provide a strategic and focused framework to optimize the relevance of Environment Assembly outcomes and that align with the themes of sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, as applicable.
5. The Bureau of the Environment Assembly is invited:
  - (a) To continue to consider, with the support of the secretariat, facilitating the in-person engagement of ministers at the sessions of the Environment Assembly, including at the high-level segment of the sessions and the side events;

(b) To continue, as appropriate, to promote high-level interactive dialogues at the high-level segment of the sessions, ensuring a balanced representation of Member States and major groups and other stakeholders, without a pre-established list of speakers or preferential consideration;

6. The Bureau of the Environment Assembly is invited, following discussions by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, to consider, with the support of the secretariat, the allocation of time at the high-level segment, in order to provide sufficient time for heads of delegations to deliver their national statements;

2. The Bureau of the Environment Assembly is invited, with the support of the secretariat and in close cooperation with the secretariats of the multilateral environmental agreements, to continue to strengthen the contributions and active participation of the secretariats and presidencies of the multilateral environmental agreements in the sessions of the Environment Assembly in order to promote coherence between the resolutions of the Environment Assembly and the decisions of the governing bodies of the agreements, while fully respecting the autonomy of those agreements and without introducing new and additional requirements for the contracting parties to the agreements, as set out in paragraph 6 of the outcome of the consensual process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

7. The Committee of Permanent Representatives should consider and clarify the process to agree on the contribution of the Environment Assembly to the sessions of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, taking into account Environment Assembly resolution 3/3, as well as on the nature and process for developing the ministerial declaration;

## **II. On the preparatory process under the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

8. Member States are encouraged to consolidate proposals for draft resolutions and draft decisions aiming to strengthen or follow up on the implementation of resolutions previously adopted by the Environment Assembly into a single draft resolution or decision for each Environment Assembly session, subject to the agreement of the proponents;

9. Without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, Member States are strongly encouraged to continue adhering to the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions in accordance with the guidance provided in paragraph 13 (e) (iii) of the outcome of the consensual process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as endorsed by the Environment Assembly in decision 5/4, namely, to announce the intention to submit draft resolutions at least 12 weeks prior to the session of the Environment Assembly at which they are to be considered and to submit draft resolutions at least 10 weeks prior to the session;

10. The secretariat should be available for the provision of technical and legal advice (e.g., on existing UNEP mandates and programme of work, resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly or other relevant decision-making bodies) and proponents are encouraged to engage informally with the secretariat before the submission of a draft resolution to facilitate possible technical improvements of draft resolutions, including to avoid overlap and duplication of existing work;

11. Proponents are encouraged:

(a) To respect, as far as possible, the guidance in paragraph 13 (e) of the outcome of the consensual process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, namely, to provide a concept note for the draft resolution that includes an explanation of the purpose of the initiative, including:

- (i) New guidance to UNEP and/or invitations to United Nations system bodies;
- (ii) New commitments of Member States;
- (iii) Definition of a new global concept;
- (iv) Addressing an emerging issue or an urgent matter;
- (v) Information on already agreed language;

(b) To identify focal points who can make themselves available, preferably in person, at the annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and in person for the meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the sessions of the Environment Assembly;

12. The secretariat is requested:

- (a) To continue to provide technical notes that include: (i) substantive information on relevant existing mandates, resolutions and UNEP activities; (ii) information on alignment with the medium-term strategy; and (iii) a best estimate of additional costs required to implement the proposed resolution;
- (b) To provide a template for draft resolutions and decisions for voluntary use by Member States;
- (c) To create an online searchable repository of resolutions and decisions adopted by the Environment Assembly and the Governing Council;
- (d) To continue, subject to the availability of resources, to offer training and guiding documents to delegates, appointed co-facilitators and on-screen editors well in advance of the Environment Assembly sessions, in cooperation with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements, where possible;

13. Member States, the President of the Environment Assembly, the bureaux of the Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and the Committee of Permanent Representatives, with the support of the secretariat, should make effective use of the intersessional period, including:

- (a) To invite written submissions by Member States on proposed topics to be addressed by the Environment Assembly to allow for an early exchange of views;
- (b) To facilitate consideration of the Executive Director's reports and the secretariat's technical notes at the subcommittee meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
- (c) To facilitate the meaningful participation of all Member States as early as possible in the preparation process for the sessions of the Environment Assembly;
- (d) To encourage early identification of experienced co-facilitators in consultation with regional groups and the bureaux of the Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
- (e) To consider allowing text proposals made by Member States to be reflected in brackets, without preventing delegations from introducing additional text during the meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives;
- (f) To encourage co-facilitators to provide advice to proponents on possible ways to streamline the text of draft resolutions before the start of the meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, building on comments and inputs provided during the intersessional period, as appropriate;
- (g) To consider opportunities, where relevant, and in consultation with proponents, to merge proposals for draft resolutions and draft decisions at an early stage;
- (h) To provide sufficient time for bilateral consultations among Member States and the secretariat, particularly in the run-up to the Environment Assembly session;

14. Subject to the agreement of Member States, the co-facilitators should, if appropriate, have the flexibility to begin negotiations on the operative paragraphs instead of the preambular paragraphs of draft resolutions and draft decisions;

### **III. On inclusive participation**

15. Member States and stakeholders are encouraged to register for the sessions of the Environment Assembly and the meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives as early as possible;

3. The bureaux of the Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, with the support of the secretariat, with a view to ensuring inclusivity and accommodating the participation of smaller delegations in the meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and of the Environment Assembly, should continue the practice of limiting the number of working group meetings and informal consultations taking place in parallel to two meetings on the understanding that, subject to the agreement of the governing body, the convening of additional parallel meetings, as well as of late-night meetings, may be considered;

16. The secretariat is requested, subject to the availability of extrabudgetary financial resources, to continue to provide, upon request, travel support for the participation of two representatives from each developing country, as well as at least two stakeholder representatives from each major group and two representatives of stakeholders from each UNEP region, upon request;
17. Member States and others in a position to do so are encouraged to provide financial contributions in support of the organization of Environment Assembly sessions, in particular to facilitate the participation of representatives from developing countries and major groups and other stakeholders;
18. The bureaux of the Environment Assembly and of the Committee of Permanent Representatives are invited to continue to offer to stakeholders: (i) speaking slots for each of the nine major groups at the opening of the meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the sessions of the Environment Assembly; and (ii) one joint statement at the opening of Environment Assembly sessions, on behalf of the six UNEP regions, recognizing the regional perspective of civil society voices;
19. Co-facilitators and proponents of draft resolutions and draft decisions are encouraged to make themselves available for engagement with stakeholders to exchange views at an early stage of consultations on draft resolutions and draft decisions, as appropriate;
20. The secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, is requested to continue to provide:
  - (a) A meeting facility for stakeholders before and during Environment Assembly sessions;
  - (b) Support to the organization of the sessions of the Global Youth Environment Assembly;

#### **IV. On documents for sessions of the Environment Assembly and meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives**

21. The secretariat is requested:
  - (a) In accordance with rules 12 and 29 of the rules of procedure, to ensure the preparation and distribution of all official working documents in the six official languages of the United Nations at least 42 days in advance of the sessions of the Environment Assembly and the meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, respectively;
  - (b) To introduce the meeting documents for sessions of the Environment Assembly and meetings of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives prior to the relevant meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives;
  - (c) To notify participants in a transparent, accessible and timely manner when updated versions of draft resolutions or decisions are available;
22. Member States are encouraged to finalize negotiations on draft resolutions and draft decisions prior to the closure of the meeting of the sessional committee of the whole to ensure timely translation in the six official languages of the United Nations of the documents to be considered for adoption by the Environment Assembly;

#### **V. On the link between the Environment Assembly and the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities**

23. The secretariat is encouraged, with the support of UNEP regional offices, in accordance with Environment Assembly resolution 6/3, paragraph 1 (a), to include on the agendas of annual subcommittee meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives an item on the contribution of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities to the medium-term strategy and programme of work of the Programme;
24. In the case whereby a regional group considers the presentation of a joint draft resolution, the secretariat is requested to provide, upon request, recommendations to the Chairs of the regional forums of ministers of environment and environment authorities, to ensure that potential draft resolutions build upon existing resolutions and decisions and avoid duplication or contradiction with existing mandates or resolutions;

25. Regional forums are invited to ensure the participation of accredited stakeholders, and the secretariat is requested, subject to the availability of resources, to provide travel support for their participation, as well as for the participation of delegates of developing countries that are members of the regional forums;

## **VI. On Environment Assembly branding, media and communication outreach**

26. The secretariat, subject to the availability of resources, is requested:

(a) To further explore options to enhance the sustainability of the Environment Assembly sessions;

(b) To continue to strengthen cooperation with the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements to enhance the engagement and visibility of multilateral environmental agreements;

(c) To continue to strengthen multilingual content on the Environment Assembly;

(d) To enhance the accessibility of Environment Assembly sessions for people with disabilities and engage with the United Nations Office at Nairobi on possibilities for enhancing the accessibility of documents for people with disabilities;

(e) To engage with the UNEP goodwill ambassador to fully inform them of the content of the decisions and resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly in order to better promote the agreed outcomes of the Environment Assembly sessions.

## **Decision 167/2: Improving the identification, formulation and recording of decisions and conclusions of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

*The Committee of Permanent Representatives,*

*Recalling* paragraph 10 of the outcome of the stocktaking meeting for the process for review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as endorsed in paragraph 1 of decision 5/4 of the United Nations Environment Assembly,

*Recalling also* the note by the secretariat on the implementation of paragraph 41 (j) of the Chair's summary of the ninth annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives,<sup>1</sup> as endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its resumed 162nd meeting,

*Noting* the discussions at the meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives held on 10 September 2024 on the draft recommendations of the Committee of Permanent Representatives at its eleventh annual subcommittee meeting held from 8 to 12 July 2024,

1. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare and present, at a subsequent meeting of the subcommittee and prior to the 168th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, a note on the mandate of the Committee;
2. *Also requests* the secretariat, as a general rule, to compile and circulate, in a standalone document, in a standardized format, any draft decisions or draft recommendations proposed by members of the Committee at subcommittee meetings for consideration by the Committee at its quarterly meetings;
3. *Requests* the subcommittee to continue its consideration of the draft recommendations set out in paragraph 3 (b) of the document entitled "Draft report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives",<sup>2</sup> with a view to preparing a draft decision for consideration by the Committee at its 168th meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> UNEP/CPR/162/7/Rev.1.

<sup>2</sup> UNEP/CPR/167/8/Rev.1.