

Chair's Summary

The second meeting of the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme

15-19 February 2016

1. The second meeting of the Open Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives was opened at 9.35 a.m. on Monday, 15 February 2016, by Ms. Julia Pataki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Romania and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
2. The meeting was attended by 405 participants from over 120 members and 3 observer missions including over 40 participants from major groups and stakeholders.
3. Following the adoption of the agenda, the Committee heard opening remarks from Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly of the United Nations at its seventieth session, via a recorded message; and Mr. Achim Steiner, Executive Director of UNEP.
4. In his recorded message, Mr. Lykketoft said that he had accepted the invitation to address the current meeting and to attend the second session of the Environment Assembly because both meetings were strongly linked to one of the key priorities of his presidency, namely, kick-starting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. The meeting constructively reviewed and discussed 12 draft reports of the Executive Director pertaining to the implementation by UNEP of the Environment Assembly's resolutions on issues ranging from illegal trade in wildlife to air quality and environmental law prepared in accordance with UNEA-1 resolutions and Governing Council decisions. The meeting anticipated minimum changes in these reports, which will be transmitted to all member States for consideration at UNEA-2 within established deadlines.
6. The meeting also had an opportunity to discuss UNEP's programme performance in the past biennium, 2014 and 15 and, on this basis, to further build on the medium-term strategy for 2018-21 and the programme of work and budget for 2018-19. The meeting welcomed the progress made so far in developing these strategic documents in close consultation with member States and recommended that improvements be made, for example, to accelerate the recruitment process and achieve gender parity.
7. On the draft resolutions, the meeting considered more than 20 proposals as per the attached table of clusters of resolutions, some new such as on oceans and environmental

protection in conflict areas and others follow-up to previous decisions and resolutions of the UNEP governing body. Through hard work undertaken in two parallel negotiation sessions, the CPR made a significant progress in completing the reading of all resolutions and agreed to continue working on these resolutions in the CPR subcommittee during the intersessional period. In this process, we will keep in mind the collective preference to have a fewer number of impactful resolutions for consideration by UNEA-2.

8. In addition, participants positively regarded two important documents – the concept note on “Delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, and the draft report on “Healthy environment, healthy people” – which will underpin the ministerial discussion at the second session of the United Nations Environment Assembly. In this context a ministerial panel was organized on Wednesday, February 17 to discuss the findings and recommendations of these documents, which demonstrated their policy relevance and paved the way for more effective engagement by Ministers at UNEA-2.
9. On the critical issue of the high-level segment outcome, while the divide remains between those who want a negotiated ministerial document and those who prefer a President’s summary, the OECPR was able to discuss the zero draft prepared on the basis of the elements received at the subcommittee level. It was agreed by participants to utilize the intersessional period until May to collect more inputs from member States and develop a short, concise and appealing document for further refinement in consultation with capitals.
10. On the organization of the high-level segment, the Chair informed the meeting of the agreement to convene a ministerial plenary on the overarching theme on Thursday May, 26 followed by a policy review session on Healthy Environment, Healthy People to be held in the morning of Friday 27th. This would be followed by a lunch-time multi-stakeholder dialogue on Friday, 27 May, the modalities for which were sent in due course to member States.
11. In addition the Executive Director announced his intention to convene two symposia to be held on Wednesday May, 25th entitled “Mobilizing Ressources for Sustainable Investements” and “Displacement, Environment and Root Causes”, followed by a ministerial luncheon convened on Thursday May, 26th entitled “Mobilizing Ressources for Sustainable Investements” to allow Ministers and other high-level participants to have a dialogue on the key findings of the symposia. In addition, the Executive Director informed the meeting on the Science-Policy Conference, the International Day of Biodiversity, and the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum to be held prior to UNEA-2.

12. The Executive Director announced a selection of 26 official side events to be held in the margins of the second session of the Assembly. The Executive Director also announced the organization of a Sustainable Innovation Expo which will be held in parallel to the Assembly from 23-25th, May to allow various stakeholders, including representatives of the business community, UN organization and other Major Groups and Stakeholders to take part in focused thematic discussions and exhibition events.
13. During the intersessional period, the CPR Bureau expects to work closely with the Secretariat to develop a detailed scenario for UNEA-2 high-level segment, which is of utmost importance for many delegations, in particular the plenary dialogues on the overarching theme "Delivering on the environmental dimension of the Post-2015 Development Agenda" to be held on Thursday, 26 May 2016 and the Ministerial Policy Review Session followed by Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue to be held on Friday, 27 May 2016. These developments will be promptly communicated to Member States through the Secretariat, and will be submitted to the Bureau of UNEA for approval.
14. The CPR has been discussing the possibility of changing the UNEA session cycle from the current even years to odd years to better align with the programmatic and budgetary processes in place in New York. While a degree of consensus has been reached on the need to hold UNEA in odd years, member States are waiting for the Secretariat to provide concrete options to achieve this transition and their respective political and budgetary implications. In the negotiation process, one of the key contentious issues would be on how to reconcile the demands of different regional groups on the term in office of the UNEA Bureau.
15. A detailed calendar of work during the intersessional period will be elaborated by the CPR Bureau and distributed to all Member States to allow their meaningful participation.