

Mulig innlegg av Elin Rognlie på vegne av UNEA-president Rotevatn ved starten av det 151. CPR

Thank you very much, ambassador Coimbra, for giving me the floor. I am very sorry to have experienced technical problems with the connection, so allow me kindly to share my intervention now, while there may have been other appropriate timings.

It offers me an opportunity to convey the warm regards from the UNEA5 president minister Sveinung Rotevatn, to the CPR.

I appreciated your opening words, chair, and the comprehensive report from our ED Inger Andersen.

At the bureau meeting on Friday, Minister Rotevatn noted an ongoing high level of engagement in the preparations for UNEA-5 ministerial declaration. The environmental problems we face with inter alia climate change and loss of biodiversity, continue even as we continue to deal with the COVID pandemic. I encourage you all to check out some of those valuable contributions from others on the dedicated page under Assembly at UNEP website.

The joint bureau meeting last Friday, as I believe the CPR chair said, was the first time we jointly considered how to approach the actual format, conduct and timing of UNEA-5 with the limitations imposed by COVID-19. It was a good exchange of views and perspectives, but there is a clear need for more consultations. Positions varied, but not in an insurmountable way.

There did appear to be some agreement that putting off the whole of the Assembly would have disadvantages, while some bureau members made a case for how we should ensure technical negotiations that can best ensure the full and active participation of all member states and stakeholders.

The UNEA president underscored that ~~health and safety is an overriding concern, and that~~ we should choose the format and timing that is most robust in face of great uncertainty. UNEA-5 must be about messages of solidarity and sharing of scientific knowledge of the true role the environment plays for our wellbeing, safety and livelihoods.

If we consider postponement, an important question is by how long? The uncertainty as to when a “normal” meeting is possible will remain with us for a good while to come, and the second part of 2021 is already quite busy. The UNEA president invites you all to consider *what components of the Environment Assembly can (and must) be carried out earlier and what may need to be postponed*. It is especially important that UNEP is able to continue to serve and work, and gets direction in terms of an adopted Medium term strategy, a Programme of Work and a Budget in time for 2022.

These, at the same time, would offer very good opportunities for building strong and relevant political messages, from the high level dialogues and ministerial roundtables, and perhaps through the ministerial declaration. Can UNEA, as the World Health Assembly and other UN fora have done send a message that we are open for business and stand ready to work for a stronger, more resilient post-pandemic world? The UNEA president does believe we should seriously consider this.

Allow me finally to share that the roadmap for the ministerial declaration includes two virtual open-ended informal consultation meetings convened with support of the Secretariat. The UNEA President will convene and lead the consultations. The active participation of the CPR as well as capitals, as has been the case with recent UNEP meetings, is important to ensure the UNEA president has all the inputs he needs for preparing drafts for the ministerial declaration. There is a clear advantage with the online format which enables all member states and stakeholders to hear each other's positions,

something which ensures even greater transparency and inclusivity. Beyond those two meetings, the presidency team is extremely grateful for the support of the CPR chair in convening open-ended meetings to keep you informed of developments and in any other way necessary. Of course, the current roadmap is based on the understanding that at least the high level component of UNEA-5 will take place as scheduled in February 2021.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.