

Meeting of the Bureau of the UN
Environment Assembly
11 March 2026
14:00 – 15:00 (GMT+3)
Online meeting

Agenda Item 2: Introduction to the work of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA)

This note, entitled “Role and responsibilities of the President and the other members of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly”, serves as a background document for consideration under agenda item 2 - Introduction to the work of the UNEA Bureau. It is based on the UNEA rules of procedure, the final outcome of the Consensual Process for Review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and on established practices.

Bureau Members are invited to take note of the information provided and ask for any further clarifications, as needed, with a view to ensure broad understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

Role and responsibilities of the President and other members of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly

1. Summary

The role of the President and other members of the Bureau of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) is formally governed by the [rules of procedure](#) of UNEA (ROP). It is also guided by the [final outcome of the Consensual Process for Review by the Committee of Permanent Representatives](#), and by established practice. In summary, the roles and responsibilities of the UNEA President and the other members of the Bureau can be reflected as follows:

- The UNEA Bureau consists of a **President, eight Vice-Presidents and one Rapporteur**, elected during the final meeting of a regular session of UNEA. All Bureau Members are elected by name as a representative of his/her government and hold office until their successors are elected, normally at the closure of the next regular session. The current composition of the UNEA Bureau is available [here](#).
- The UNEA President, with the assistance of the other Bureau members, is **responsible for the general conduct of business of UNEA**.
- An overview of the governance structure of the United Nations Environment Programme, is available as [Annex 1](#).

2. The role of the UNEA President

Rules of procedure

- The President shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of UNEA, shall direct the discussion, ensure observance of the rules, accord the right to speak, put questions to the vote and announce decisions (rule 33)
- The President shall rule on points of order and, subject to the rules, shall have control of the proceedings of UNEA and over the maintenance of order at its meetings (rule 33).
- The President may propose to UNEA the limitation of time to be allowed to speakers, the limitation of the number of times each representative may speak on any question, the closure of the list of speakers or the closure of the debate (rule 33).
- The President may also propose the suspension or the adjournment of the meeting or of the debate on the question under discussion (rule 33).
- The President, in the exercise of her or his functions, remains under the authority of UNEA (rule 34).
- The President shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak (rule 35).
- The President may call a speaker to order if remarks of the speaker are not relevant to the subject under discussion (rule 35).
- When the debate on an item has a time limit, and a speaker has spoken her or his allotted time, the President shall call the speaker to order without delay (rule 38).
- During the course of a debate the President may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Assembly, declare the list closed (rule 39).

CPR-based review

- The President presides at Bureau meetings.
- The President may consult with Member States and other stakeholders for the purposes of preparing and facilitating agreement on key high-level outcomes of UNEA.
- The President represents the Environment Assembly in relevant intergovernmental meetings both at regional and global levels in order to convey key outcomes of the Environment Assembly, such as the High-level political forum on sustainable development (see [UNEA resolution 3/3](#)).
- The President may designate a Bureau Member to perform representative functions.

Ministerial declaration

According to established practice, the President also prepares a draft ministerial declaration (see section 3). The ministerial declaration of UNEA 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 (CPR decision on lessons learned from UNEA-6). Pursuant to UNEA decision 7/7, on the basis of the preference expressed by Member States, UNEA-8 will not have a theme, and decision 7/7 precludes the CPR and the Bureau and the President of UNEA-8 from establishing or defining one on behalf of Member States.

The President of UNEA is to ensure, with the support of the secretariat, 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. The President, as the penholder, and in consultation with the other members of the Bureau, finalizes the roadmap for the finalization of the draft ministerial declaration.

3. The role of the UNEA Bureau

The Bureau shall assist the President in the general conduct of business of UNEA, in accordance with the rules of procedure of UNEA. On this basis, the Bureau is expected to consult with the members of their respective regional group to:

- Carry out the tasks entrusted to it by UNEA and the President.
- Review the credentials of representatives participating in UNEA.
- Prepare for the upcoming UNEA session, including by
 - advising and providing input on the preparation of the provisional agenda, the draft programme of work of the session, and the scheduling of items;
 - facilitating the negotiation of draft resolutions and decisions, for consideration by UNEA, including through the selection of facilitators;
 - recommend the allocation of items to subsidiary bodies of the Environment Assembly;
 - provide guidance on the organization of relevant informal meetings related to UNEA.
- Coordinate with the CPR Bureau including with the CPR Chair, to ensure that the work of the CPR is coherent, complementary and in support of the decision-making process of UNEA.

4. The role of the rapporteur

The Rapporteur introduces the draft proceedings report at the closing plenary meeting of UNEA; the Rapporteur helps in the finalization of the proceedings report, which is drafted by the UN editors and reviewed by UNEP; and the Rapporteur also reviews the summaries of the Bureau meetings drafted by UNEP.

5. Bureau meetings

The UNEA Bureau meets, as necessary, as decided by the Bureau members. Meetings are presided over by the UNEA President and generally takes place online. The Bureau may also meet in-person, for example, hosted by the UNEA President. The Bureau conducts its business in English.

Depending on the agenda, the President, after consultation with the other members of the Bureau, may invite observers from Member States or members of UN Specialized Agencies as well as from organizations.

Meeting invitations are sent 14 days in advance of the meeting and the related background documents are made available online at least 10 days in advance of the meeting.

In accordance with a decision taken at the second Joint Meeting of the Bureaux of UNEA and of the CPR on 22 May 2017, the Chair of the CPR participates in an *ex officio* capacity in the meeting of the UNEA Bureau.

In line with rule 32 of the rules of procedure of UNEA on quorum, the President may declare a meeting open when at least one third of members of the Bureau are present. For a decision to be taken, a majority of Members must be attending. As per established practice and without prejudice to rule 49 of the UNEA rules of procedure, the Bureau takes its decisions by consensus.

A draft roadmap of meetings of the UNEA Bureau, including joint meetings of the Bureaux of UNEA and the CPR, is prepared and regularly updated by the Secretariat in consultation with the UNEA President and the CPR Chair, for information and consideration by the Bureau. All Bureau meetings have a dedicated open webpage, with agenda, background documents, and a meeting summary made available. In addition, all meetings of UNEP's governing bodies are listed in an online roadmap of meetings, available here: <https://www.unep.org/cpr/roadmap-un-environment-programme-governing-bodies>

6. Joint Bureau Meetings

To facilitate consultations between the UNEA and CPR Bureaux, joint Bureau meetings are regularly organized, co-chaired by the UNEA President and the Chair of the CPR. Joint Bureaux meetings are usually held online but they may take place in Nairobi or at a location outside Nairobi, for example, hosted by the UNEA President.

Some joint meetings take the form of a “retreat”, often with a specific topic to be discussed; these meetings are typically longer (1-2 days) and may be hosted by the President.

Relevant decisions are taken separately by each Bureau, in accordance with mandates provided by UNEA.

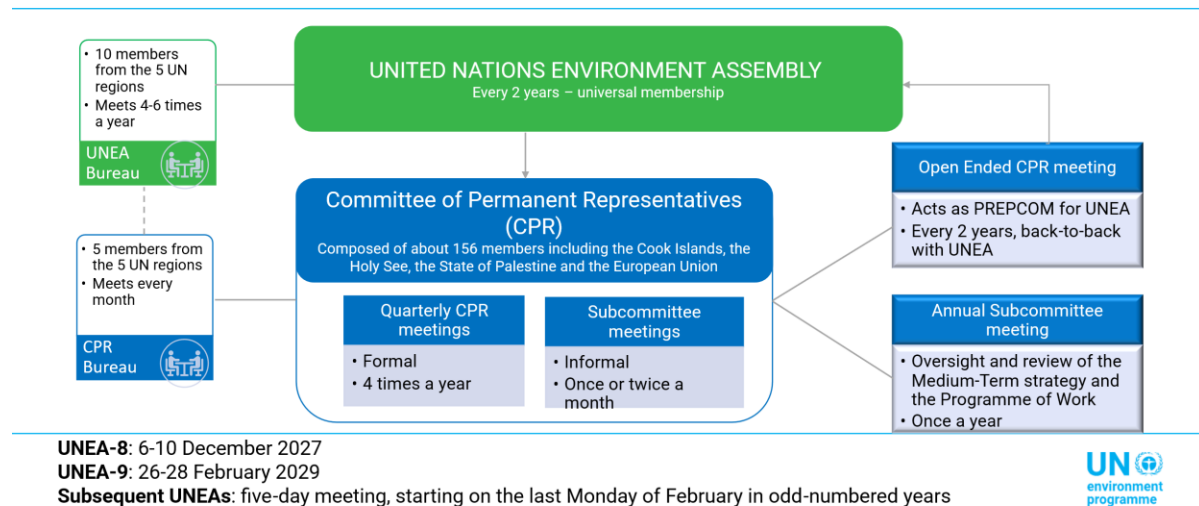
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Annexes:

1. Governance structure of the United Nations Environment Programme
 2. Relevant resolutions and decisions relating to the role and function of the UNEA President and UNEA Bureau
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ANNEX 1: Governance structure of the United Nations Environment Programme

UN Environment Programme Governance Structure



ANNEX 2: Relevant resolutions and decisions relating to the role and function of the UNEA President and Bureau

I. Governing Council decision 13/2

Establishment of a Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decision 11/2 of 23 May 1983 on the periodicity and duration of Council sessions,

Conscious of the need to establish for the intersessional period prior to the fourteenth session of the Council a more formal and regular system of consultation among Governments and between Governments and the Executive Director,

Bearing in mind the positive results achieved by the meetings of permanent representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme during the past two years, in particular as regards preparations for Council sessions,

Taking into account the fact that an increasing number of Governments have permanent missions accredited to the Programme,

1. Decides to establish, in accordance with rule 62 of its rules of procedure, an open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, consisting of permanent representatives to the Programme and/or Government-designated officials, to consider and make recommendations to the Council on the matters mentioned in decision 11/2, paragraph 3, and to take action on any other matters specifically entrusted to it by the Council;
2. Further decides that the Committee will meet regularly with the Executive Director or his representative on the first Wednesday of February, September and December each year, and will also meet six weeks prior to the opening of the fourteenth session of the Council and whenever deemed necessary by the Committee or by the Executive Director;
3. Invites Governments that have not accredited a permanent mission to the Programme to designate a focal point to whom information and documentation pertaining to the meetings of the Committee can be conveyed;
4. Requests the Executive Director to take the necessary measures, in accordance with rule 62, article 3 of its rules of procedure, for the implementation of the present decision, within available resources, by providing to the Committee services and facilities of the same kind as those he has provided in the past to meetings of permanent representatives;
5. Decides to review the present decision at its fourteenth session

II. Governing Council decision 19/32.

Governance of the United Nations Environment Programme

8. *That the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall consist of the representatives of all States Members of the United Nations and members of its specialized agencies, and the European Community, accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme, whether based in Nairobi or outside;*

9. *That the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall elect a Bureau composed of a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, for a period of two years, taking into account the principles of rotation and equitable geographical representation;*

10. *That the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall hold four regular meetings a year. Extraordinary meetings may be also convened by its Chairperson, after consultation with the other members of the Bureau or at the request of at least five members of the Committee. The Committee of Permanent Representatives may establish subcommittees, working groups and task forces as deemed appropriate to carry out its mandate;*

III. Governing Council decision 27/2

Implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development

1. *Recommends to the General Assembly that the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme, an intergovernmental body established pursuant to article 22 of the United Nations Charter, be renamed as the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme;*

2. *Decides that the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme will convene its sessions in Nairobi on a biennial basis, starting in 2014, and will carry out its mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972 and all other relevant resolutions that reinforce its mandate as well as the 1997 Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme, the 2000 Malmö Ministerial Declaration, the 2010 Nusa Dua Declaration and paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development as endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 66/288;*

4. *Decides to discontinue the Global Ministerial Environment Forum;*

5. *Decides that each session of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme will conclude with a two-day high level segment as an integral part of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme, which will take strategic decisions and provide political guidance and will perform inter alia the following functions:*

(a) *Setting the global environmental agenda;*

(b) *Providing overarching policy guidance and defining policy responses to address emerging environmental challenges;*

(c) *Undertaking policy review, dialogue and exchange of experiences;*

(d) *Setting the strategic guidance on the future direction of the United Nations Environment Programme;*

(e) *Organizing a multi-stakeholder dialogue;*

(f) *Fostering partnerships for achieving environmental goals and resource mobilization;*

6. *Decides that the Bureau of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme*

shall be composed of 10 members to reflect the universality of the governing body, in accordance with equitable geographical distribution, and will assist the governing body and perform the functions as set out in the rules of procedure of the governing body;

*9. Decides that **an open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives** will be the intersessional subsidiary body of the governing body of the United Nations Environment Programme and, in addition to its mandate [Governing Council decision 19/32, paragraph 7] and in open and transparent manner, will perform the following functions:*

- (a) Contributing to the preparation of the agenda of its governing body;*
- (b) Providing advice to its governing body on policy matters;*
- (c) Preparing decisions for adoption by its governing body and overseeing their implementation;*
- (d) Convening thematic and/or programmatic debates*
- (e) Promoting effective ways and means to facilitate participation of the non-resident members of the Committee, particularly from developing countries*
- (f) Performing any other functions delegated to it by its governing body;*

12. Decides that the Committee of Permanent Representatives will consider the frequency, schedule and programmatic focus of its meetings to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness and will improve upon its working methods;

IV. UNEA decision 2/22

Review of the cycle of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme

- 1. Decides to hold its regular sessions in odd numbered years commencing with its third session in 2017;*
- 2. Also decides that the above-mentioned cycle shall also apply to the open-ended meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to be held in accordance with Governing Council decision 27/2;*

VII. UNEA decision 7/7

Provisional agenda, date and venue of the eighth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly

*1. Decides, in accordance with **rules 1 and 4 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly**, to hold the eighth session of the Assembly at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme, in Nairobi, from 6 to 10 December 2027;*

*2. Also decides, in accordance with rules 1 and 4 of the rules of procedure of the Environment Assembly, and resolution 2/22 and decisions 3/2 and 5/4 of the Assembly, **to hold the ninth and future regular sessions of the Assembly** at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme, in Nairobi, **commencing on the last Monday in February in odd-numbered years**, unless otherwise decided by the Assembly;*

3. Further decides that, on an exceptional basis:

- (a) Its ninth session will consist of a three-day meeting, without prejudice to the duration and functions of its high-level segment as set out in Governing Council decision 27/2;*
- (b) The ninth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives will consist of a three-*

day meeting and be convened back to back with the ninth session of the Environment Assembly in order to minimize financial costs;

(c) In the light of the reduced duration of the ninth session of the Environment Assembly, Member States will be strongly encouraged to limit the number of draft resolutions submitted for consideration by the Assembly, without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the Assembly, in particular rule 44;

4. Decides that, pursuant to paragraph 10 of Governing Council decision 27/2, the eighth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives will be held from 29 November to 3 December 2027, and requests the Committee of Permanent Representatives to discuss, in consultation with the Bureau of the Environment Assembly, and decide on the format and agenda of the session;

*8. Decides, on the basis of the preference expressed by Member States, **that the eighth session of the Environment Assembly will not have a theme**, and clarifies that the present decision **precludes the Committee of Permanent Representatives, the Bureau and the President of the Assembly** from establishing or defining one on behalf of Member States;*

9. Invites Member States to submit draft resolutions for consideration by the Environment Assembly at its eighth session, and strongly urges them to do so at least 10 weeks in advance of the eighth session, taking into account the limited time and resources available for the negotiation of draft resolutions during the eighth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives and the eighth session of the Assembly, without prejudice to the rules of procedure of the Assembly, in particular rule 44;