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**Committee of Permanent Representatives
to the United Nations Environment Programme
174th meeting
Nairobi, 26 June 2026**

Draft minutes of the 173rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 20 April 2026

Agenda item 1

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

1. The meeting was opened at 10.10 a.m. on Monday, 20 April 2026, by Sultan Hajiyeu, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kenya and Permanent Representative to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.
2. The meeting was attended by 187 participants representing 98 members and 1 observer missions.
3. The new members of the Committee were: Cristian Piña (Chile), Paul Evans Aidoo (Ghana), Miftah Arie (Indonesia), Ida Betty Odinga (Kenya), Francisco Pessanha de Meneses (Portugal) and Piyaporn Putanapan (Thailand).
4. The departing members were: Gonzalo Guaiquil (Chile), Akram Jameel Slaiman (Iraq), Ababu Namwamba (Kenya), Jerónimo Rosa João Chivavi (Mozambique), Mirosław Gojdz (Poland), António Miguel Luís (Portugal), and Khalid Abdullah Al-Salman (Saudi Arabia).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the provisional agenda of the 173rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/173/1).
6. The Chair took the opportunity to remind delegations of the mandate of the Committee.

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 172nd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

7. Following the clarification provided by the representative of the secretariat in response to a question raised by a representative regarding previous recommendations of the Committee pertaining to land degradation and desertification, the Committee adopted the minutes of its 172nd meeting, held

on 24 November 2025, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting. The minutes, as adopted, are set out in document UNEP/CPR/173/3.

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director to the 173rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

8. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report entitled “Quarterly report to the 173rd meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (1 October – 31 December 2025)”.
9. In her briefing, the Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, noted the environmental consequences of the situation in the Middle East and echoed the Secretary-General’s call for the immediate cessation of hostilities. She said that UNEP was working with other United Nations system entities to monitor and report on the environmental situation in the affected region.
10. She highlighted the success of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly and thanked representatives for their contributions and reflections on lessons learned. UNEP was currently focusing on three priority areas: increasing efficiency and effectiveness in delivery and reducing fragmentation in countries, while providing them with strong advice on low-emission, resilient growth; delivering measurable and credible impact; and de-risking investments in the environment through science, law and finance.
11. Noting that the financial health of UNEP was crucial to those efforts, she expressed gratitude to Member States for their contributions to the Environment Fund, as \$85 million of the \$100 million approved budget for 2025 had been received from 108 Member States.
12. As UNEP understood and prioritized the leadership and responsibility of Member States in implementing its mandates, she had engaged in informal consultations with Member States, including the regional and political groups in Nairobi, in the previous months. In New York, in addition to serving as Chair of the High-Level Committee on Programmes, she had briefed Member States on the latest science, work and priorities of UNEP. At the third session of the Preparatory Commission for 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, she had stressed the importance of drawing experience from other conventions and of a strong, efficient and independent secretariat. She noted that UNEP was ready and well equipped to serve as the institutional locus of that secretariat.
13. Furthermore, she had joined Member States and the Minister of the Environment of Türkiye at a high-level event in New York to mark the fourth International Day of Zero Waste, with a particular focus on food waste. The 2026 global campaign demonstrated growing momentum, including strong support for the UNEP-World Tourism Organization “Recipe of Change” campaign to reduce food waste. She highlighted the announcement of 20 Zero Waste Cities and more than 135 events worldwide in connection with the campaign. She also thanked Member States and Türkiye for an exceptional event on the topic in Nairobi.
14. She had met with European Union partners in Brussels to discuss the fundamental role of science and how a strong, resilient environment was a foundation for sustainability, resilience, security and economies. At the Nordic donor consultations in Helsinki, she had engaged in discussions on the UN80 initiative and the importance of maintaining strong environmental science in a time of misinformation. She had also attended the One Health Summit, held on World Health Day in Lyon, France, where the Quadripartite Alliance on One Health had also held its fourth executive annual meeting.
15. Regarding the UN80 initiative, UNEP had hosted a briefing in Nairobi with the Under-Secretary-General for Policy, Guy Ryder, and the General Assembly had adopted resolution 80/251 on mandate creation, implementation and review for an efficient and effective United Nations. She said that UNEP had already pioneered good practices through its support to Member States in managing the life cycle of Environment Assembly resolutions, and that the General Assembly resolution would help to spread such practices from Nairobi to the wider United Nations system.
16. UNEP continued to play a key role in the UN80 initiative. Together with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNEP was co-leading work package 27, which involved a thorough review and assessment of current arrangements and would result in proposals for possible programmatic realignment and structural changes on environmental issues. A briefing on the work package would be held on 23 April 2026, and she encouraged Member States to

attend and provide guidance on how to make those efforts truly transformational and support the needs of people, planet, peace and prosperity.

17. As for multilateral environmental milestones in 2026, the Executive Director highlighted the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, at which parties had agreed to step up conservation efforts; the Central Asia Regional Ecological Summit 2026, for which UNEP served as a key partner; the conferences of the parties to the three Rio conventions, which would afford an opportunity to accelerate action on all aspects of environmental challenges; the seventeenth 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, which would focus on sustaining livelihoods, strengthening ecosystem resilience and addressing climate change in dry lands; the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would provide a chance to accelerate action towards the 2030 targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and for which UNEP was supporting 70 countries in finalizing their national biodiversity strategies and action plans; the thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which would be informed by new work on overshoot of the 1.5°C threshold; and the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, at which a key topic of discussion would be the follow-up on HFC-23 emissions, regional atmospheric monitoring and life cycle management of refrigerants.

18. On the work of UNEP on chemicals, waste and pollution, she noted that the first International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste would be a key milestone in meeting the five strategic objectives and 28 targets of the Framework. The full operationalization of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution was also a key priority and would depend on progress at the resumed first session of the Plenary of the Panel.

19. As for the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, she noted that progress was being made. Julio Cordano of Chile had been elected as the new Chair in February and had shared a road map outlining work to come, including a series of informal activities in the lead-up to the fourth part of the fifth session. A meeting of heads of delegation would be held in Nairobi from 30 June to 3 July 2026. The Executive Director reiterated that UNEP remained steadfast in its support for the intergovernmental negotiating committee and in delivering on Environment Assembly resolution 5/14. She was particularly pleased that Mr. Cordano had visited Nairobi and met with the regional groups.

20. In closing, the Executive Director emphasized that a very busy period lay ahead, with much work to be done in complex times, and that it was crucial to ensure that the environment remained high on the United Nations and multilateral agenda, as a vibrant and healthy environment, a predictable climate, well-functioning nature, and unpolluted air, soil and water were critical to supporting the United Nations pillars of peace and security, human rights and development.

21. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries and some speaking on behalf of major groups, expressed appreciation to UNEP for its continued efforts and leadership in addressing global environmental challenges, as well as for the progress made in implementing the global environmental agenda. Representatives commended UNEP on its provision of scientific expertise and knowledge for several resolutions of the General Assembly, its impactful environmental reports, its leadership in advancing environmental governance and its support for green economy transitions, climate finance readiness and circular-economy solutions.

22. Many representatives thanked the Chair, the Executive Director and the secretariat for the organization and conduct of the current meeting and for the preparation and timely dissemination of the meeting documents.

23. Many representatives thanked the Executive Director for her presentation and expressed satisfaction at her engagement in environment-related meetings. One representative noted the Executive Director's chairing of the High-level Committee on Programmes, which had contributed to greater collaboration in preventing and combating transnational organized crime in the light of its impact on the environment. In that regard, the representative asked how the preventive pillar of the Montevideo Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law could be better connected with the efforts to combat environmental crimes related to deforestation.

24. Representatives acknowledged the progress made by UNEP in implementing its programme of work and the resolutions of the Environment Assembly across various regions and areas of activity.

25. One representative recommended that future quarterly reports include greater attention to the contributions of UNEP to the Women's Environment Assembly in order to raise awareness of gender issues and the link between the environment and gender.
26. On cross-cutting aspects of UNEP activities, one representative sought clarification of how those efforts ensured tangible country-level impact, how UNEP continued to maintain its core normative and convening mandate and avoid unintended expansion into operational roles, and how it safeguarded national flexibility and respected different national circumstances, avoiding prescriptive approaches and implicit harmonization. He expressed support for a balanced, country-driven and impact-oriented approach in full alignment with agreed mandates.
27. Many representatives commended the Omani presidency, the Executive Director and the secretariat on the successful organization of the seventh session of the Environment Assembly and its outcomes, which included the adoption of the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, a ministerial declaration, 11 resolutions and three decisions. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, requested regular updates on the implementation of the resolutions. Representatives emphasized the need to focus on implementation to achieve measurable results and tangible impacts. Several representatives said that they looked forward to the eighth session, in 2027, to be held under the presidency of Jamaica.
28. Several representatives expressed regret about issues and draft resolutions on which consensus had not been reached at the seventh session, including those related to the protection of deep-sea ecosystems, crimes that affected the environment and strengthening the role of UNEP. Several representatives noted the need for higher levels of ambition in future mandates. One representative said that it would be important to continue deliberations on draft resolutions that had not been adopted. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, underscored the importance of continuing to promote constructive dialogue to ensure that future mandates based on science embodied the high-level ambition, implementable outcomes and impact required to meet global environmental goals.
29. One representative suggested that the work of the Environment Assembly should continue to evolve towards fewer, more targeted resolutions with impactful and measurable outcomes, while strengthening coherence in environmental governance.
30. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed support for the UN80 initiative and the resulting opportunities, especially in terms of improving coordination, achieving efficiency gains, reinforcing the role of UNEP and its Nairobi headquarters, and strengthening, mainstreaming and integrating environmental work across the United Nations system. Many representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed appreciation for the leading role of UNEP in work package 27 of the initiative. A representative of a major group emphasized that the UN80 initiative presented an opportunity to strengthen inclusive governance approaches, including structured youth engagement within knowledge systems, foresight and policy design.
31. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the need for transparency and information-sharing, as well as regular updates to and substantive consultations with Member States. Many representatives said that they looked forward to the briefing on work package 27. Another representative noted that, although the UN80 initiative was currently Secretariat-driven, Member States also needed to understand the process in order to provide feedback to their Governments and their colleagues in New York, adding that her delegation would welcome clarity on how and at what stages Member States were expected to provide input. Another representative stressed that any proposals for structural change or programme realignment should be subject to consultations with Member States before recommendations were finalized; that reform efforts needed to enhance cooperation, reduce duplication and promote synergies; and that established clusters were essential for effective governance and fostering synergies across mandates. He further emphasized that any proposal for institutional relocation or restructuring should be based on a robust, independent, evidence-based assessment, and that such decisions should not be taken lightly.
32. Many representatives stressed the importance of science as the basis for decision-making and policymaking. Representatives applauded UNEP efforts in strengthening science- and evidence-based action and providing scientific and technical expertise on global environmental challenges, especially in the face of the current challenges to science. Noting the organization's efforts to enhance data analytics, foresight, early warning and evidence synthesis, one representative commended UNEP on its scientific leadership and welcomed the establishment of the Office of Science as an important step in anchoring science even more firmly at the core of its work. Some representatives expressed concern

that the pursuit of consensus was increasingly being used as a means of obstructing important discussions and decisions. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries and some speaking on behalf of major groups, expressed support for UNEP efforts to strengthen science-policy interfaces, including the roll-out of the Global Environmental Data Strategy, the role of UNEP as custodian of key Sustainable Development Goal indicators and its work to strengthen data systems and global environmental monitoring. One representative said that strengthening inclusivity, in particular through greater engagement with institutions from developing countries, and building capacity for data access and use would be essential for translating science into action.

33. Many representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, also commended UNEP on the successful launch of the seventh edition of the *Global Environment Outlook*. Representatives noted that the publication had attracted significant interest worldwide and provided essential science-based input for policymaking, evidence-based decision-making and accountability. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, lauded UNEP efforts to promote the publication. Some representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, voiced concern regarding the failure to adopt the corresponding summary for policymakers, with some expressing regret at the growing challenges related to agreed language and science. One representative enquired about the future of the process underlying the publication and the involvement of Member States in discussions thereon. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries expressed concern regarding the data gaps and technical capacity constraints mentioned in the report. Several representatives commended the *Global Environment Outlook* and other UNEP products, such as the gap reports, as important resources and as signs of continued scientific leadership on the part of UNEP.

34. With regard to biodiversity, representatives expressed appreciation for UNEP activities in that area, in particular those aimed at advancing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, underscored the urgent need to strengthen support by UNEP to Member States in implementing the Framework, including with regard to national biodiversity strategies and action plans and benefit-sharing from genetic resources and digital sequence information. One representative highlighted the high-level workshop held in Bangkok in October 2025 to accelerate the implementation of the Framework and requested that UNEP provide updates on its ongoing collaboration with the African Development Bank in developing an African biodiversity coordination platform to assist countries in revising their national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

35. Another representative called for enhanced synergy between the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and international biodiversity targets, noting the need to refocus global and regional efforts to achieve the goals and targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. The seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Yerevan in October 2026, would see the launch of the global review of individual and collective progress in the implementation of the Framework. He invited Member States to submit their updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans to enable the secretariat, subsidiary bodies and other relevant entities to conduct the global review and assessment. He also expressed appreciation to UNEP for assisting Member States in the preparation of their revised strategies and action plans.

36. One representative highlighted the urgent need to advance the ratification and implementation of the Agreement on Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdictions, which had already entered into force. She noted that UNEP could play a central role in supporting developing countries in order to strengthen ocean governance and protect marine biodiversity, both of which were vitally important elements for the climate resilience of her region. Another representative expressed appreciation for UNEP activities in support of the ratification and implementation of the Agreement. One representative thanked UNEP for its offer to host the secretariat and noted that a decision had not yet been made in that regard. He encouraged UNEP to continue supporting Member States in implementing the provisions of the Agreement.

37. A representative speaking on behalf of a major group welcomed the role of regional platforms in shaping coordinated action for biodiversity and building momentum towards the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, to be held in Nairobi in August 2026. He emphasized the need for sustained delivery, especially in the light of resource constraints and limited follow-up mechanisms.

38. Many representatives recognized UNEP efforts in relation to climate action. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed concern about the gap between climate commitments and actual climate finance disbursements. One representative noted that the *Adaptation Gap Report 2025* presented compelling evidence that the global community would need to combine efforts to ramp up momentum for climate finance and adaptation. Several representatives reaffirmed their commitment to implementing their nationally determined contributions, with some reporting additional progress and more ambitious targets in that regard. Referring to a grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to facilitate the preparation of biennial transparency reports for 25 countries, one representative requested information on the geographical distribution of the 25 beneficiary countries and on the criteria for their selection. Another representative noted that a Pacific preparatory event, known as a “Pre-COP”, for the thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change would provide an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate the regional effects of the climate crisis and to showcase the climate leadership of the Pacific subregion.

39. Many representatives highlighted the crises of desertification, land degradation and drought and recognized UNEP work in that area, including its assistance to more than 112 countries in advancing towards land degradation neutrality targets, as well as its engagement in the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification and in strengthening national reporting systems. One representative noted that those efforts were important contributions to addressing one of the most pressing environmental development challenges globally, and several representatives encouraged UNEP to increase its efforts in that area. One representative requested updates on activities that contributed to combating desertification, in particular under the GEF portfolio of projects for advancing global efforts to combat desertification, and called for the diversification of funding sources to assist developing countries in implementing projects relevant to the Convention.

40. One representative said that her delegation looked forward to contributing to the dialogue on mineral governance in the lead-up to the eighth session of the Environment Assembly. Another representative, referring to the establishment of the United Nations Task Force on Critical Energy Transition Minerals and the implementation of the principles and recommendations of the Secretary-General’s Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals, asked how UNEP intended to ensure coherent articulation and coordination between the ongoing work of the Task Force and the implementation of resolution 7/3 and previous resolutions of the Environment Assembly on minerals and metals. She noted that UNEP, given its role as Co-Chair of the Task Force and its leading role in efforts in that area, was in a unique position to advance the relevant objectives in a coherent, effective and efficient manner.

41. Representatives expressed appreciation for UNEP activities to address pollution in various regions, including with regard to advancing circular solutions and evidence-based action on plastic pollution.

42. Many representatives expressed support for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. Several representatives said that they were encouraged to see the renewed energy that had emerged in the process. One representative welcomed the efforts to integrate the plastic pollution agenda into the broader multilateral environmental agenda, but also noted that those efforts would require an effective, ambitious treaty on plastic pollution. Another representative noted that the negotiations were both timely and necessary; although his country did not manufacture plastics, it faced disproportionate impacts from their global circulation. He emphasized that the future agreement should recognize countries in special circumstances; be inclusive, transparent, predictable, enforceable and responsive to the most affected; and provide for targeted technical assistance, capacity-building and implementation support in order to ensure compliance.

43. Many representatives welcomed the appointment of the new Chair of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and reaffirmed their commitment to advancing discussions on the text of the instrument. Representatives welcomed the Chair’s efforts to enhance informal consultations across the regions and expressed appreciation for his road map and the briefing that he had provided in Nairobi.

44. With regard to the first session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, one representative expressed disappointment at the limited progress made, noting that there was still much work to be done before the Panel could become operational and begin to develop robust, policy-relevant science advice. She expressed strong support for and confidence in the consultative approach taken by the Chair of the Panel and the Bureau in preparation for the resumed session.

45. One representative expressed appreciation for UNEP technical assistance and capacity-building in her region, in particular initiatives related to sustainable waste management. Noting with concern that food waste accounted for some 14 per cent of global methane emissions, she requested further information on how the UNEP International Methane Emissions Observatory could support mitigation efforts regarding food waste and dump sites, and how the regional cooperation programme on reducing methane emissions from organic waste and closing dumpsites in Latin America and the Caribbean contributed to achieving the Global Methane Pledge.
46. One representative welcomed the continued work of UNEP on sustainable finance and the circular economy, including efforts to align financial flows with sustainability objectives and resource efficiency, and drew attention to the recent UNEP Finance Initiative report entitled “Unlocking circular economy financing: from vision to action”, which provided practical guidance on scaling circular-economy finance across the public and private sectors.
47. A representative speaking on behalf of a major group thanked UNEP for its role in integrating the environmental determinants of health into global policy processes, and underscored the urgency of addressing air pollution as a core public health priority.
48. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed deep concern that the escalating impact of the interconnected global environmental challenges and crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution continued to disproportionately affect the global South. Another representative encouraged further steps to strengthen the global South dialogue series within the framework of the Committee of Permanent Representatives. Another representative emphasized that regional and South-South cooperation should be further strengthened, particularly in areas such as nature- and ecosystem-based solutions, sustainable forestry and marine ecosystem management. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries urged UNEP to ensure that science-based decision-making was accompanied by real technology transfer and strengthening of strategic capacities in the global South, enabling countries to manage their own environmental information. She also stressed that, for megadiverse countries and those committed to conservation, it was imperative that UNEP ensure technical support for updating national biodiversity strategies and action plans, and that such support was timely and backed by predictable financial resources. In that regard, she welcomed the global goal of mobilizing \$1.3 trillion annually for climate action, but also stressed that the shift towards “financial-ready” programming should not impose additional conditionalities or bureaucratic barriers.
49. Many representatives expressed appreciation for UNEP support to developing countries and emphasized the need for adequate, predictable funding as well as knowledge-sharing, technology transfer and capacity-building. While noting the considerable support provided to developing countries through GEF, the Environment Fund and other mechanisms, one representative said that resource mobilization remained inadequate, stressing the need to scale up predictable finance for those countries to meet their obligations under environmental conventions, and to prioritize their needs for resilience and sustainable development. One representative urged the secretariat to ensure that capacity-building and technology transfer were tailored to the specific needs of his region, particularly in the areas of climate adaptation and land restoration, while another representative stressed the need for greater commitment from developed countries in the transfer of technology without conditions.
50. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked UNEP for its efforts in and collaboration with African States. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries, one representative recalled the twentieth session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, which had provided critical direction for the African continent for the period 2025–2027 and had subsequently contributed to the seventh session of the Environment Assembly. One representative, while recognizing the dedicated activities of UNEP in Africa, said that those efforts were still insufficient due to Africa’s high vulnerability to climate impacts. She emphasized that the priority should therefore shift to specific, continent-wide projects addressing environmental and climate vulnerabilities that affected every African nation. Although the focus on core domains was commendable, land degradation and drought should be elevated as cross-cutting priorities in accordance with commitments under the Convention to Combat Desertification.
51. Representatives underscored that Africa remained among the regions most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, land degradation, drought and pollution, despite contributing the least to environmental degradation and global emissions. A representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries said that Africa continued to face disproportionate impacts and required significant capital scale-up through equitable, grant-based and accessible financial resources. He therefore called upon UNEP to enhance targeted support for African countries in accessing climate finance from key mechanisms; to strengthen capacity-building to access

climate financing; to promote innovative financing mechanisms and debt-based solutions tailored to the African context; and to facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships. He also emphasized the importance of integrated approaches that aligned biodiversity conservation with climate action, and the need to strengthen data systems, monitoring frameworks and knowledge-sharing platforms.

52. Several representatives expressed the view that the scale of UNEP interventions in Africa was limited in comparison to other regions. Representatives underscored the need for increased coordination, technical assistance and financial support for developing countries, particularly in Africa, with one representative calling for a balanced and equitable allocation of interventions aligned with regional priorities and vulnerabilities.

53. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted that, in the final years for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Africa remained at a significant disadvantage in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

54. Representatives from the African region provided examples of their countries' exposure to the impacts of climate change, including extreme weather events such as cyclones, intense rainfall, severe flooding and the destruction of critical infrastructure, which brought about long-lasting social, economic and environmental impacts. One representative noted that his country continued to face interconnected challenges, including land degradation, coastal erosion, deforestation, biodiversity loss and increasing pressure on natural resources, which were further exacerbated by limited adaptive capacity and constrained financial and technical resources. Another representative underscored that environmental challenges were deeply intertwined with fragility and conflict, as environmental degradation not only harmed ecosystems, but also exacerbated instability and hindered recovery efforts. That nexus demanded greater attention and more coordinated and sustained action from the international community.

55. Several representatives expressed appreciation to UNEP for its work in the Asia-Pacific region, including regional adaptation and foresight initiatives, support for regional processes, strengthening climate adaptation through regional platforms, and promoting circular-economy solutions and sustainable consumption. One representative noted that such efforts helped to integrate anticipatory science, climate resilience and stronger environmental governance into national and regional planning, and encouraged stronger visibility and follow-through at the country level. Another representative said that he was encouraged to see specific UNEP support at the national level, including capacity-building efforts for women innovators on financial literacy and low-carbon technologies, reflecting the importance of inclusive approaches that empowered local communities.

56. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, commended UNEP on its support for activities in Latin America and the Caribbean. One representative thanked UNEP for supporting an initiative relating to the circular management of plastics and for its leadership in a programme on green employment for young people in Latin America. Representatives also welcomed UNEP country-level activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, including support for the implementation of national climate plans and the development of a sustainable finance taxonomy. One representative noted that the effective implementation of environmental goals and the 2030 Agenda was impeded by the imposition of national measures, noting that her country needed financial and technical assistance to tackle challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

57. Many representatives reported on recent developments and commitments at the national level.

58. Several representatives encouraged UNEP to further strengthen coherence across subprogrammes and reduce fragmentation of delivery, with one requesting that UNEP report on those efforts in its quarterly reports and programme performance reports. One representative noted the continued need to better translate UNEP outputs into measurable outcomes and policy impact, adding that, in line with the relevant recommendation adopted by the Committee at its 171st meeting, in September 2025, he looked forward to the UNEP briefing on the development of its new monitoring framework in the second quarter of 2026.

59. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, thanked Member States for their financial contributions to the Environment Fund, and several reported on their countries' contributions to the Fund. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted the steadily increasing number of contributing countries, while another representative welcomed all efforts to increase the number of Member States contributing their full share. One representative stressed her country's firm commitment to ensuring predictable and adequate resources for UNEP work and called on partners in a position to do so to further strengthen its financial base. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a major group, encouraged Member States to scale up support

and foster greater cooperation in ensuring predictable resources for addressing environmental challenges.

60. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, referred to the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, including in the provision of climate and diversity finance and as a cornerstone of any future mandate. One representative reiterated the importance of adopting a comprehensive and inclusive approach in which all environmental challenges, in particular those affecting developing countries, received equitable attention.

61. Many representatives underlined the importance of adequate means of implementation to ensure effective delivery. Several emphasized the role of developed countries in that regard and encouraged them to step up their support. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, highlighted the importance of robust resources management, accountability and transparency to ensure that financial and human resources were used effectively, and several encouraged UNEP to continue to enhance its internal governance to that end. Several representatives emphasized the importance of flexible and predictable core funding, with some expressing concern about the widening gap between core and earmarked funds. One representative welcomed the progress made by UNEP in strengthening trust fund governance and enhancing regional efficiency, noting that the emphasis on predictable and flexible core funding was particularly important for ensuring balanced programme delivery, including in developing countries. While noting the improvements in audit implementation, data governance and project monitoring, one representative emphasized the need to address “audit fatigue” and to ensure the timely execution of recommendations, and another representative requested that UNEP streamline its reporting requirements.

62. Several representatives recognized UNEP efforts to diversify its funding base, with one emphasizing that any private sector engagement should remain focused on the UNEP mandate and agreed programmes. Many representatives highlighted the UNEP resource mobilization strategy, and one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, recalled the Committee’s recommendation requesting that UNEP present the updated resource mobilization strategy at the current meeting, and expressed the hope that the Committee would receive an update in the nearest future.

63. Regarding human resources, several representatives commended the performance of UNEP in increasing the number of women among its staff, including in management and leadership positions. Several representatives, including some speaking on behalf of groups of countries, voiced concern about the underrepresentation of their regions among UNEP staff, in particular after the recent separation of many staff members, including at the Professional level. They urged the secretariat to adapt its recruitment strategies in order to ensure greater diversity and more balanced regional representation among the leadership and staff of the organization.

64. Representatives noted the growing importance of digitalization in the work of UNEP, with one highlighting the Global Environmental Data Strategy and the World Environment Situation Room as initiatives that demonstrated the need for, and the potential of, digital tools to transform environmental governance by improving data accessibility, enabling real-time monitoring and strengthening evidence-based decision-making. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the critical need to strengthen data systems, monitoring frameworks and knowledge-sharing platforms in order to support evidence-based policymaking and effective progress tracking. Another representative expressed support for ongoing efforts by UNEP to assess the environmental footprint of artificial intelligence, while another encouraged the organization to continue to address the data gaps and issues of data accessibility and standardization mentioned in the quarterly report. Representatives commended the launch of the Global Environmental Data Strategy, with one noting that it underlined the role of UNEP as a provider of authoritative, policy-relevant and actionable knowledge and another noting that it would serve as a guide for strengthening national public environmental data systems. One representative encouraged UNEP to further strengthen country-level capacity for environmental data monitoring and early warning systems, particularly for archipelagic and climate-vulnerable States.

65. Many representatives highlighted the environmental impacts associated with armed conflict and regional military escalations, including damage to civilian and energy infrastructure, contamination of soil and water resources, risks arising from hazardous materials, aerial debris and explosives, and damage to ecosystems, biodiversity and the marine environment. Representatives underscored the implications for human health, food production, shared water systems and long-term environmental stability and emphasized the need for strengthened environmental assessment, monitoring, early warning, debris management and recovery efforts in conflict-affected areas. Several representatives

welcomed the ongoing work of UNEP, including rapid environmental damage and needs assessments, environmental reporting, rubble removal and recycling initiatives, and cooperation with relevant national authorities and institutions. Representatives also called for enhanced technical assistance, capacity-building, environmental remediation and recovery support for affected countries, including through the implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 6/12 and continued international cooperation on environmental recovery in conflict-affected areas.

66. One representative reaffirmed that, from the perspective of a country facing extreme water scarcity and hosting large refugee populations, the three environmental crises could not be resolved in isolation from sustainable finance and regional stability, as instability added yet another challenge to the existing ones and required even greater efforts to strengthen resilience.

67. Some representatives said that they advocated a cooperative, non-politicized approach to transboundary environmental protection and that discussions on issues outside the mandate of UNEP should be addressed in other forums.

68. Representatives expressed support for inclusive approaches, including the meaningful participation of women, young people and local communities in UNEP work. One representative, speaking on behalf of a major group, emphasized that participation should be meaningful, continuous and timely, and that stakeholders should be involved at early stages, as legitimacy would be weakened without structured and inclusive engagement. Noting the need to scale up youth engagement, another representative of a major group commended the support of Member States and UNEP for convening the Global Youth Environment Assembly and strengthening stakeholder engagement, and also encouraged the inclusion of young people in programme implementation. Another representative noted that his Government had supported the Global Youth Environment Assembly 2025 and invited other Member States to support that crucial gathering.

69. The Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments and questions and acknowledged that the very low emissions profile of the African continent was coupled with disproportionate impacts from climate change, a fact that UNEP reports had borne out again and again.

70. Responding to the question on increasing funding from the Global Climate Fund, GEF, the Adaptation Fund and other sources, she said that it was possible, but noted that Member States would have to request UNEP to seek funding from those sources. She was very pleased that UNEP was supporting 40 African countries in their biennial transparency reviews, with a budget of approximately \$34 million. In addition, she noted that some UNEP projects had also mobilized significant parallel investments from the private sector; for example, with a very small investment, the seed capital assistance facility for de-risking renewable energy investments had brought in a total of \$300 million in private finance.

71. On the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, she noted that UNEP was proud to be supporting a total of 70 countries with their updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans; those countries that wished to highlight desertification and drought would do so in the context of the intersection between nature and desertification.

72. In response to a query regarding the tagging of projects, she confirmed that, although it was not an official recommendation, UNEP was planning to identify the parts of each of its 600 projects that were contributing to combating desertification and drought, and that the full number of projects was expected to be available by the annual subcommittee meeting.

73. Regarding the geographical distribution of support, she noted that Africa accounted for 45 of the 70 countries receiving support in their updated national biodiversity strategies and action plans and 52 of the 112 countries receiving assistance in their desertification plans.

74. On geographical representation among UNEP staff, she confirmed that the Latin American and Caribbean States were underrepresented, as were the Eastern European States. However, since 2022, UNEP had conducted more than 70 outreach sessions for underrepresented areas and planned to continue those efforts and encourage applications from underrepresented regions. She asked the relevant Member States for support in encouraging people from Latin America and the Caribbean to apply for positions. With regard to the recent downsizing exercise, which had included approximately 50 voluntary and 50 non-voluntary departures, the proportions had remained more or less the same, with representation of the Asia-Pacific region changing from 18.5 per cent to 19 per cent, Latin America and Caribbean from 10.1 per cent to 10.3 per cent, and Eastern Europe remaining at 5.4 per cent. Western Europe and other States had remained at 30 per cent, and the United States of America, which had requested to be listed separately, had declined from 2.7 per cent to 2.5 per cent.

75. As for involuntarily separated Professional-level staff, three staff members were from the United States, three were from China and three were from Kenya. With regard to the effects of downsizing on specific countries or regions, she explained that certain figures could not be combined, in particular because 98 per cent of all UNEP support staff in Nairobi were Kenyan, as were 18 per cent and 19 per cent of General Service staff in Geneva and Paris, respectively. In response to another comment on candidate selection, she reaffirmed that applicants were selected solely on the basis of merit, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Regarding the representation of African States in senior-level positions, she noted that the region was very well represented, as 5 of the 22 members of the UNEP senior management team were from Africa. East Africa was the most heavily represented overall region, while Northern Africa and francophone West Africa were underrepresented.

76. She thanked the representatives who had mentioned the *Global Environment Outlook* and noted that UNEP saw a range of opportunities for its popularization. Some Member States had asked for briefings in their capitals, and UNEP was glad to provide them. The organization was also planning more training, fellowships, regional presentations and outreach and would begin to engage with Member States on the future of the publication in the coming months, in particular regarding the deployment of technology, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, the need for travel to author meetings, and the potential use of artificial intelligence (overseen by human intelligence).

77. She noted that it was very important to involve Member States in the discussion on the future of the publication, and that it was time for a joint review in order to avoid simply continuing those activities without deeper reflection. The approach would include a review and stocktake of the global environmental assessment landscape, followed by a survey of UNEP staff and Member States on lessons learned, with a view to gathering input on future elements of the publication. UNEP would then conduct focused discussions with Member States in order to develop workable recommendations. She expressed the hope that, with the advent of artificial intelligence, technology and acceleration, the process would be carried out over the next six months, and she looked forward to Member States' engagement.

78. In response to the statement regarding the scale of interventions in Africa, she said that the UNEP portfolio in Africa was the largest by far, both in terms of total funding and the number of projects. Specifically, UNEP currently had 296 projects with a multi-year budget of \$871 million in Africa, 183 projects (\$552 million) in Asia and the Pacific, 104 projects (\$145 million) in Europe and Central Asia, 196 projects (\$516 million) in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 67 projects (\$81 million) in Western Asia. Regarding the 25 countries that had received support for their biennial transparency reviews, she noted that countries had to request support, and UNEP had received 25 such requests. As for the geographical distribution of those countries, she noted that Africa again represented the largest group by far.

79. Regarding the environmental effects of armed conflict, she reiterated that pollution from conflict-related damage could last many years, and she again echoed the Secretary-General's call for the immediate cessation of all hostilities. UNEP was working with the United Nations system to keep the environmental situation in the affected region under review and would report on environmental issues of regional significance emerging from the conflict.

80. Regarding the question on the Task Force on Critical Energy Transition Minerals, which UNEP was co-chairing with the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, she confirmed that UNEP was incorporating all its activities under Environment Assembly resolutions into the work of the Task Force and would work with countries and United Nations partners to ensure coherence and cooperate in data- and knowledge-sharing as well as capacity-building.

81. Regarding the participation of UNEP in the High-Level Committee on Programmes and its work on transnational organized crime, she confirmed that it was a major issue not only for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, but also for other United Nations entities. She noted that the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora prohibited trade in listed species, which was linked to deforestation. UNEP would continue to work under its current mandate and welcomed the engagement of Member States in this important area. Through the Montevideo Programme, UNEP was also actively involved in a range of activities, including a number of studies on wildlife trade and chemicals and waste. UNEP was planning to provide training, upon request, to judiciary authorities, prosecutors and police, customs and border control officers, and served as the secretariat for the Green Customs Initiative, a collaborative partnership to strengthen the capacity of customs and other relevant border enforcement authorities to identify illegal goods at border crossings.

82. In response to another question, the Executive Director affirmed that UNEP consistently highlighted gender aspects as a critical element of its programmes and would continue to do so.
83. On the growing importance of digitalization in the work of UNEP, she said that a small but dedicated team was working on the topic, and she looked forward to showcasing new tools that had been rolled out. Accessibility was an issue in many countries, but the tools could be used on handheld devices, enabling decision makers to access information rapidly.
84. On methane emissions, she expressed appreciation for the increased activity on that important issue, which had been discussed by the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean at its twenty-fourth meeting. The Forum had agreed on a regional plan for a network for chemicals and waste, including waste management, and on a regional cooperation framework on methane emissions reduction and dump-site disclosure. She said that the ninth replenishment of GEF, which was currently under negotiation, represented a good opportunity to fund some of the frameworks on which ministers had agreed at the meeting.
85. The International Methane Emissions Observatory was currently working on ways to expand alerts to include waste and landfill anomalies, which would include major events in terms of methane leaks. In addition, the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-lived Climate Pollutants, currently chaired by Brazil, had supported several projects related to waste in Argentina and in Latin America and the Caribbean.
86. Regarding the importance of science, she thanked Member States for their strong statements on the imperative of basing all policies on the best possible science at any given time. At the same time, she noted that science was only as good as it was on the day that it was peer-reviewed and issued, and that UNEP would always observe the current state of science. It was very important to ensure that the organization, under the guidance of Member States, engaged in science-based environmental stewardship.
87. Regarding the UN80 initiative, she expressed great appreciation to Member States for their comments and confirmed that UNEP would seek to brief them as often as possible. The reality was that UN80 was an initiative of the Secretary-General, who had asked for input for his report to the General Assembly, while Member States also wished to contribute their input. She said that UNEP would make efforts to take the views of Member States into account, but decisions on the content of the report would ultimately be left to the Secretary-General.
88. The representative of the United States, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, emphasized that the Committee had convened to address the scientific and technical work of UNEP and stated that discussions should remain focused on the Committee's mandate and core technical issues. She also underscored the importance of responsible and accountable stewardship of resources entrusted to the United Nations by Member States.
89. The representative of Israel, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that discussions within the Committee should remain focused on the UNEP mandate, and expressed concern regarding the introduction of political issues into technical and environmental discussions. He emphasized the importance of evidence-based, neutral and mandate-driven engagement, consistent with resolutions of the Environment Assembly, and noted that environmental impacts in the region affected multiple areas.
90. The representative of the Russian Federation, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the Russian Federation sought to minimize harm to civilians and environmental damage during military operations. He referred to incidents involving attacks on civilian commercial vessels carrying oil and liquefied natural gas in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, which, he said, posed risks to marine ecosystems, international shipping routes and the environment through the possible release of hazardous substances.
91. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the environmental impacts of recent military strikes affecting his country, including reported damage to fuel reservoirs, solar energy facilities and the Bushehr nuclear facility. He stated that the strikes had resulted in pollution, hazardous waste and environmental and public health risks, including concerns relating to potential radioactive contamination.
92. The representative of Ukraine, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the environmental impacts associated with the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, including damage to civilian infrastructure and the resulting long-term effects on ecosystems, natural resources and human well-being. He stated that these impacts had been documented by the United Nations and other

international mechanisms, and also referred to environmental risks affecting the Black Sea region and maritime activities.

93. The representative of Israel, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Israel, as a State Member of the United Nations, should be referred to by its official name.

Agenda item 5

Consideration of relevant evaluation reports and audits

94. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report on the evaluation of the chemicals and pollution action subprogramme covering the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2024, as well as the corresponding management response, which had also been presented and discussed at the subcommittee meeting held on 12 March 2026. The Chair invited representatives to make additional comments.

95. Representatives commended UNEP on its work and its leadership under the subprogramme. Many representatives welcomed the evaluation report, expressed appreciation to the Evaluation Office and thanked the secretariat for the management response. One representative noted that several of the measures set out in the management response were currently still in the early stages of implementation.

96. Several representatives said that the evaluation report confirmed the importance and relevance of the subprogramme, including at the global level. One representative noted that, of all the current planetary crises, chemicals and pollution lagged behind others. Another representative emphasized that pollution should be treated as a major issue not only for the environment, but also for public health and the economy. Another representative welcomed the work of the subprogramme on plastic pollution, which was one of the greatest current environmental challenges and could only be addressed through collective action.

97. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, applauded the secretariat's acceptance of all five recommendations contained in the evaluation report. The representative speaking on behalf of a group of countries emphasized that all the recommendations should be implemented in their entirety, including those which were already being addressed in part.

98. Representatives noted the challenges identified in the subprogramme, including technical, programmatic and geographical fragmentation, unclear accountability structures, limited monitoring of long-term impact, high dependence on GEF funding and a tension between expanding mandates and limited financial and human resources. One representative welcomed the secretariat's acknowledgement of those challenges and its commitment to addressing them through the One Impact framework and a dedicated theory of change.

99. With regard to the lessons learned set out in the evaluation report, representatives acknowledged in particular the need to balance the strong normative role of UNEP with operational reach, the need for more integrated programming and the need to strengthen coherence across the subprogramme, in particular owing to fragmentation in the portfolio and at the regional and national levels. In that regard, representatives highlighted the importance of strengthening integration, cooperation, coherence and coordination.

100. One representative highlighted the emphasis in the evaluation report on partnerships and cooperation with multilateral environmental agreements, and noted that the existing chemicals, waste and pollution cluster in Geneva would offer a unique platform to enhance coherence, facilitate partnerships and strengthen knowledge-sharing. Another representative identified strong potential in further promoting the replication and scaling up of successful initiatives.

101. While some representatives noted that the subprogramme had received satisfactory ratings, in particular for overall project-level performance, others stressed the importance of strengthening outcome-level monitoring and impact tracking and of using improved indicators to measure the tangible impacts of implementation more effectively. One representative, while welcoming the ongoing transition to a sectoral, systems-based and life cycle-oriented approach, encouraged UNEP to ensure that the approach generated measurable outcomes and contributed to improved coherence and effectiveness across the subprogramme. Another representative cautioned against introducing additional reporting and monitoring requirements and emphasized the need to ensure that such requirements were streamlined and outcome-oriented and did not create unnecessary burdens.

102. Several representatives noted the need for diversification and better coordination of funding sources, in particular to enhance the efficiency and impact of the subprogramme. One representative highlighted the need to scale up means of implementation, in particular through access to financing. Noting the important role of GEF and other funding mechanisms in supporting developing countries, he encouraged UNEP to further facilitate access in line with national priorities. Another representative called for more stable and predictable core funding and said that relying on unpredictable project-based funding created risks of inefficiency.

103. Many representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, underscored the importance of strengthening country-level implementation, with one representative recommending integrated project portfolios co-developed with regional offices in order to ensure contextual relevance and country ownership. Several representatives emphasized the need to involve UNEP regional offices in the delivery of the subprogramme, which would be essential for ensuring the relevance and reach of its work at the national level, in particular for developing countries.

104. With regard to specific recommendations set out in the report, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a major group, expressed support for the recommendation of consolidating or streamlining the portfolio and introducing a stronger focus on fewer but more strategic initiatives. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, welcomed the recommendation to catalyse green and circular markets, including efforts to eliminate waste generation at the source. With regard to enhancing visibility and political salience, one representative expressed support for emphasizing the links between the pollution agenda and public health and development, and for promoting emerging scientific knowledge on the links to climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation. One representative noted that several Environment Assembly resolutions on chemicals and pollution had been put forward to keep pollution visible and high on the agenda, but that many of them reaffirmed what UNEP was already doing and did not necessarily raise the level of ambition, attract more funding or trigger major shifts. He stressed that future resolutions should drive implementation forward. Another representative asked how UNEP intended to raise awareness and mobilize local communities and stakeholders to implement pollution prevention measures and chemicals management for lasting environmental improvements and tangible impacts on the ground.

105. Regarding developing countries, one representative encouraged UNEP to further support them in building enabling environments for green industries and to promote technology transfer and innovation. Another representative sought further clarity on means of implementation, including whether developing countries would be expected to deliver outcomes without adequate finance, technology transfer and capacity-building. Noting the resource constraints highlighted in the management response, another representative asked what specific support and capacity-building mechanisms UNEP would implement to ensure that developing countries could align national policies and projects with the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, in particular regarding chemical pollution and pollution-related health issues.

106. One representative emphasized the importance of strengthening links with science-policy interfaces, including the newly established Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution. Recognizing the Science-Policy Panel as a key tool for strengthening and improving science-based collective action on chemicals and waste, another representative expressed regret at the limited progress achieved at the first session of the Plenary of the Panel. One representative noted the importance of maintaining a clear science-policy boundary and ensuring that scientific input informed but did not direct policy decisions, which remained the prerogative of Member States.

107. One representative asked whether the recommendations might expand the role of UNEP beyond its mandate and how Member State authority would be safeguarded, including ensuring full respect for intergovernmental oversight and avoiding an inadvertent shift of decision-making away from established Member State-led mechanisms. He also asked about the safeguarding of national sovereignty, including whether any provisions might limit the policy space and introduce prescriptive approaches or harmonized solutions that might not be aligned with national circumstances.

108. A representative speaking on behalf of a major group noted that the evaluation provided a critical opportunity to strengthen accountability, coherence and inclusiveness in the pollution agenda. The gaps identified directly affected communities that continued to face disproportionate exposure to hazards and chemicals, in particular women, including through reproductive health impacts, caregiving roles and unsafe labour conditions. She called upon UNEP to integrate gender-responsive indicators and intersectional data into its monitoring framework, to ensure that the evaluation findings

translated into concrete local-level improvements, and to implement integrated, gender-responsive budgeting and dedicated financing streams for gender commitments.

109. With regard to follow-up, representatives said that they looked forward to continued engagement and regular updates on the implementation of the recommendations, as well as their effects on practice in the subprogramme. One representative requested additional information on how UNEP was already addressing the duplication of efforts, overlaps in themes and regions and unclear governance of fund allocation.

110. In her general remarks, the Executive Director thanked representatives for their comments and reaffirmed the importance of evaluations. She acknowledged that the pollution subprogramme had been the “poor cousin” to biodiversity and climate change, which represented a major shift from the initial UNEP mandate. As other priorities had emerged, pollution had not received as much global attention. In its recent reorganization, UNEP had ensured that the Industry and Economy Division could focus entirely on the issue, which did not receive funding commensurate to that of biodiversity or climate programmes and was dependent on one primary source of funding. Navigating that space had led to a certain degree of fragmentation and gaps, as the subprogramme relied heavily on individual projects funded by GEF.

111. In response to the comments on Member State authority and sovereignty and on the mandate of UNEP, she noted that UNEP could not work in a country without a request from a Government and could not impose obligations, approaches, solutions or policies on countries. UNEP conducted its work for Member States at their request, with their allocations under GEF, and those resources belonged to the countries receiving them. In addition, she emphasized that the activities under the subprogramme had been approved by Member States in the medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 and were thus within the UNEP mandate and mission.

112. In her detailed responses, the Director of the Industry and Economy Division noted that, at the time of the evaluation, UNEP had already been working to address the issue of portfolio fragmentation and the need for more coherence and greater impact, and consolidating its work on circular-economy approaches and chemicals. UNEP was doing so by examining the opportunities presented by such approaches, not only in waste management and recycling, but also in upstream activities such as product design, including opportunities for job creation and investment. Many countries had already sought support in that regard, in particular for extended producer responsibility with regard to plastics. Those activities had evolved into a programme that addressed the entire life cycle of plastics and additives, meaning that the work on circular-economy approaches and chemicals had become far more coherent. Similar efforts were under way for other value chains, including those for textiles and electronics.

113. Although GEF was the only financial mechanism that existed at that scale, UNEP was also exploring ways to add value to projects funded under the Global Framework on Chemicals Fund and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals. One example was the work currently under way to review laws and regulations that could help countries advance their capacities in relation to chemicals, and UNEP planned to roll out that work in 2026 with funding from the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening.

114. Regarding cooperation and coherence, she noted that most UNEP activities involved partnerships. UNEP had established a staff position in the secretariat of the Global Framework on Chemicals in order to work closely with the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the other partners in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals with a view to enhancing coordination and coherence in chemicals work across sectors. UNEP was also collaborating closely with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization on the textile and electronics sectors and examining ways to encourage additional countries and entities to collaborate in those sectors. In addition, UNEP was collaborating with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in work on pesticides and agriculture and with the World Bank and the World Wildlife Fund for Nature on plastics.

115. With regard to science-policy interlinkages, she noted that with the new Chair of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution, the views of Member States were being sought on steps to be taken before convening the resumed first session of the Plenary of the Panel. There had been some convergence of opinion on parts of the rules of procedure,

which would have to be finalized before the Panel could begin its work on the work programme and the conflict of interest policy, after which substantive work could begin.

116. Member States had exhibited increasing interest in exploring the new opportunities offered by green chemicals and sustainable chemistry. Commercial enterprises had also shown interest in where chemicals were being innovated and identified and how it could impact their activities.

117. UNEP was also working closely with the International Resource Panel on different value chains, in particular on the minerals value chain, to examine the potential added value of circularity. Within the Industry and Economy Division, scientific work such as that of the International Resource Panel had been merged with supporting networks in order to examine how the science, data and knowledge hubs and networks could be connected more effectively, not only for internal purposes, but also in response to the needs of Member States.

118. With regard to GEF, she noted that the relatively small scale of the other funding sources made funding more challenging. However, the subprogramme was evaluating parts of their work on sectors and value chains that could be supported by smaller funds in order to unleash the potential of work that might not otherwise receive funding. The planetary funds had not yet been evaluated, but some non-earmarked funding was being used for such work.

119. With the ninth replenishment of GEF, work under the subprogramme was aimed at identifying countries that would require UNEP support with regard to the plastics, textiles, buildings and construction, highly hazardous pesticides in agriculture, electronics and mining and minerals value chains. Some countries had tentative plans to connect those activities to their allocations under the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR), which would leverage further financing.

120. As for awareness-raising, one of the key issues faced by the subprogramme lay in identifying the types of analyses that could inform decision-making by Member States. For example, a cost of inaction study on air pollution, carried out in cooperation with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition, was currently in progress and would be completed shortly. A more in-depth and longer-term scoping study on the benefits of action on chemicals in sectors was also in progress and would be available for the first International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals. Those studies would provide analysis and data on pollution and health aspects as well as opportunities for investment and for economies to flourish.

121. With regard to experience-sharing and capacity-building, she noted that the subprogramme was using the global Green Growth Knowledge Platform to bring together knowledge from the UNEP chemicals and sectors portfolio and that the knowledge was already available online, as was the digital knowledge hub on the environmental aspects of minerals and metals.

122. She also emphasized her division's strong partnerships with multilateral environmental agreements, noting that UNEP had a large portfolio on mercury that supported as many as 50 countries that had requested support regarding artisanal and small-scale gold mining and other sources of mercury pollution. The subprogramme was also supporting the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, including on the more recently listed pollutants, such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, and their role in different sectors.

123. The subprogramme was also broadening its scope from banning one problematic chemical at a time to examining the sector as a whole and the opportunities for green or sustainable chemical innovators to ensure safe food and safe textiles.

124. Regarding outcome monitoring, she noted that the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, which included the outcomes set out for the chemicals and pollution subprogramme, had been approved by the Environment Assembly, and work under the subprogramme was currently examining how those outcomes related to each sector. Member States would receive regular updates on results and progress in relation to the value chains, and aggregate results would also be visible in reports on the implementation of the medium-term strategy. Updates would include information on engagement with regional offices in order to scale those activities, and the secretariat was discussing the UNEP approach with the regional offices not just at the individual project level, but also in terms of broader implications.

125. She also noted that gender was deeply integrated into all of the Division's activities, in line with the relevant UNEP policy. The chemicals, waste and pollution programme also included gender and youth considerations across sectors.

126. The Director of the Office of Evaluation thanked the representatives for their attention to the report and noted that the next step was to track compliance with the management response over a period of 18 months.

127. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, speaking in exercise of the right of reply, rejected accusations made against his country and said that it had exercised its right to self-defence.

Agenda item 6

Report of the subcommittee

128. The Committee endorsed the draft report of the subcommittee meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives as set out in document UNEP/CPR/173/5.

Agenda item 7

Any other business

129. No other matters were raised.

Agenda item 8

Closure of the meeting

130. In closing, the Chair, speaking on behalf of the Committee, and the Executive Director expressed solidarity with Japan following an earthquake in that country earlier in the day.

131. The meeting was declared closed at 5.10 p.m. on Monday, 20 April 2026.
