
159th Meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

29 September 2022

10:00 – 13:00 and 15:00 – 18:00

Conference Room 1 and Interactio Platform

Hybrid meeting

Chair's Summary

Note: This Chair's summary complements the detailed meeting report prepared by the UN Office in Nairobi in advance for adoption at the next meeting of the Committee. All pre-meeting and post-meeting documents, including statements provided in writing by Member States, are available [here](#).

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting by the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

1. H.E. Mr. Pirkka Tapiola, Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Finland, opened the meeting on 29 September 2022 at 10:00 (GMT+3). The meeting welcomed newly arrived representatives and bid farewell to departing representatives, with special recognition to the Ambassadors of France and Colombia as they depart.
2. The Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen, provided brief opening remarks and welcomed all delegations to the 159th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

Agenda Item 2: Adoption of the provisional agenda of the 159th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

3. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda for the 159th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, as set out in [UNEP/CPR/159/1](#) and agreed to reorder the consideration of agenda items 4 and 5 and thus consider agenda item 4 "Report of the Executive Director" during the afternoon meeting.

Agenda Item 3: Adoption of the draft minutes of the 158th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

4. The [draft minutes](#) of the 158th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives were adopted.

Agenda Item 4: Report of the Executive Director.

5. The Executive Director of UNEP delivered a statement to introduce her [Quarterly Report to the 159th meeting of the CPR](#), available [here](#).
6. In the ensuing dialogue, delegations that took the floor made the following comments:
 - a. Welcomed the report and statement of the Executive Director.
 - b. Called the Secretariat's attention to the status of implementation of some UNEA-5 resolutions, which appeared to have received less interest and resources than others, proposing the elaboration of an implementation matrix that comprises the statuses and timelines of all resolutions of the last UNEA, as a tool to help Member States and the Secretariat oversee their implementation.

- c. Emphasized the need for a better understanding of the mandates and responsibilities for implementation of UNEA resolutions.
 - d. Reminded the Secretariat about the digital divides and data inequalities that exist within and among countries and regions and between developed and all developing countries.
 - e. Recalled the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as enshrined in Principle 7 of the Rio Declaration, while underlining that all countries, within their respective capabilities, are expected to do their utmost to achieve full implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
 - f. Recalled the UNGA resolution A/76/L.75 noting the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.
 - g. Took note of the financial statements of UNEP and encouraged all Member States in a position to do so to provide financial contributions to the Programme.
 - h. Recognized the progress made in ensuring a geographically diverse Secretariat with a balanced representation of different genders while others expressed their wish for further efforts in ensuring the diversity of the Secretariat.
 - i. Emphasized that addressing the triple planetary crisis will require a massive system-wide transformation of the economy and the way of living.
 - j. Emphasized the need for the meeting documents to be made available well in advance of meetings to allow sufficient time for review and development of national positions.
 - k. Highlighted the importance of effective communication between Member States, the private sector, and civil society.
 - l. Welcomed the opportunity for representatives of Member States without in-person presence in Nairobi the possibility to actively participate in the meetings online.
 - m. Requested additional information on the intended scope of the Green Customs Guidance to Multilateral Environmental Agreements, in particular on what is mentioned in the report as the promotion of "sustainable trade", recalling that trade issues fall within the scope of the World Trade Organization.
 - n. Reiterated a request from the 158th CPR meeting for additional information about the role and responsibilities of the UNEP Regional Offices.
 - o. Requested the Secretariat to regularly inform the Committee on the work of the UNEP Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs), when relevant.
 - p. Encouraged the Executive Director of UNEP to as far as possible, attend future CPR meetings in person.
 - q. Recalled the request to the Secretariat to make available a comprehensive list of UNEP publications.
 - r. Reiterated the need for the Secretariat to address requests from Member States in a fair, consistent and comprehensive manner.
 - s. Two delegations thanked UNEP for its work in assessing the environmental damage of the war in Ukraine while one delegation criticized the statements made.
 - t. One delegation recalled its statement made during the 158th CPR meeting regarding a border wall.
7. The Secretariat clarified that it does not apply any hierarchy with regard to the implementation of UNEA resolutions, noting that a full update on the status of implementation of UNEA 5 resolutions will be made available at the 9th meeting of the annual subcommittee of the CPR. The Secretariat also repeated its commitment to make relevant meeting reports available in a timely manner, that an update on the role of UNEP regional offices will be provided at the 9th annual subcommittee meeting, and that briefings relating to the work of MEAs are regularly organized at the request of MEAs or Member States. Delegations were also reminded that an informal Secretariat briefing will be held on 12th October on financial management, environment management initiatives and conduct and discipline. The Secretariat also informed delegations that the Executive Director's Report includes a link with a comprehensive list of all UNEP

publications, clarified that the Green Customs Guide serves the purpose of enhancing customs capacity on environmentally sensitive commodities, and explained that in some cases the UN Resident Coordinators and Country Teams were well placed to address requests from Member States related to protecting the environment, while providing active support from the UNEP Secretariat.

Agenda Item 5: Secretariat briefings on the implementation of UNEA resolutions:

a) UNEA resolution 5/2: Sustainable Nitrogen Management

8. The Chair informed of the communication that has been received on the nomination of the Co-Chairs for the Working Group on Nitrogen by the extended deadline date:
 - from the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka in Nairobi nominating Mr. Anil Jasinghe of Sri Lanka;
 - from the Minister of Environment, Waters and Forests of Romania nominating Mr. Mihai Constantinescu of Romania;
 - from the Minister of Environment of Rwanda nominating Mr. Karuranga Dismas of Rwanda;
 - from the Permanent Mission of India in Nairobi nominating Mr. Ved Prakash Mishra and Mr. Satyendra Kumar of India; and
 - during the agenda item Any other business it was brought to the attention of the Chair and the CPR that a candidature from the Permanent Mission of Egypt nominating Dr. Ali Saad Hamid Ali Abosena of Egypt had been received by the extended deadline.
9. Ms. Susan Gardner, Director of the Ecosystems Division, and Ms. Tessa Goverse, Coordinator of the Environment under Review Programme, provided an overview of the implementation of UNEA resolution 5/2 entitled “Sustainable nitrogen management”.
10. Delegations that took the floor made the following comments:
 - a. Encouraged the Secretariat to expediate the establishment of the Working Group to ensure effective implementation of the resolution.
 - b. Indicated interest in further information and review of the draft International Nitrogen Assessment.
 - c. Stressed the need for effective coordination with relevant activities under the MEAs.
 - d. Highlighted that the estimated economic cost of wasted nitrogen resources amount to as much as USD 300 billion annually.
11. The Chair thanked delegations for their comments and announced his intention to undertake further consultations with relevant Member States to coordinate the selection of the Co-Chairs for the Working Group on Nitrogen taking into account the proposed [terms of reference](#) for the Co-Chairs which were annexed to the [letter from the Executive Director](#) dated 30 August 2022, in view of the appointment of the Co-Chairs to be announced by the President of UNEA-6.

b) UNEA resolution 5/3: Future of the Global Environment Outlook

12. Ms. Kelly West, Deputy Director of the Science Division, and Mr. Pierre Boileau, Head of the Global Environment Outlook Programme, provided a briefing on UNEA resolution 5/3 entitled “Future of the Global Environmental Outlook” (GEO-7).
13. Delegations that took the floor made the following comments:

- a. Expressed general satisfaction with the initiation of the GEO-7 process, and the active participation of many Member State experts.
 - b. Advised against short deadlines when requesting the Member States' input.
 - c. Highlighted the need to avoid undue complexity of the process, to allow for effective expert involvement.
 - d. Welcomed the plans to organize explanatory webinars.
 - e. Requested more information on the functions of the Multi-disciplinary Expert Scientific Advisory Group (MESAG), the International and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group (IMAG) and the open-ended meeting of experts, including on planned next steps.
 - f. Requested further guidance on the nominations of Member States including with regard to alternates.
 - g. Requested an update on how relevant digital data management is organized and feed in the GEO-7 process.
 - h. Recalled the importance of involving expertise from all regions.
 - i. Underlined the importance of considering indigenous peoples' perspective in the process.
14. The Secretariat referred to the next meeting of the open-ended group of experts in October on the scoping of GEO-7 which will also define the workplan for the next two years, confirmed that the GEO is subject to a digital transformation, welcomed inputs through a recent online questionnaire, confirmed that GEO-7 will apply a socioeconomic and a human rights perspective and analysis, confirmed that it will be possible to appoint alternate members to the expert groups, explained that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure coherent communication between IMAG, MESAG and regional groups, announced that IMAG will hold an in-person meeting back-to-back with the open-ended expert meeting in October, and that the nomination process for the MESAG will be initiated within shortly.

c) UNEA resolution 5/5: Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development.

15. The Chair informed of the communication that has been received on the nomination of the Co-Chairs for the intergovernmental consultations by the extended deadline date:
- from the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica in Nairobi nominating Her Excellency Mrs. Giovanna Valverde Stark of Costa Rica;
 - from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of Bangladesh nominating Mr. Mohammed Solaiman Haider of Bangladesh; and
 - nomination from the Czech Republic of Ms. Karin Zaunberger, a German nationality, supported by 27 Member States.
- Subsequently, it was brought to the attention of the Chair an additional communication received within the deadline date from the Permanent Mission of Nigeria in Nairobi nominating Ms. Sikeade Egbuwalo of Nigeria.
16. Ms. Susan Gardner, Director of Ecosystems Division and Ms. Melissa de Kock, Head of Biodiversity, People and Landscapes Unit, Biodiversity and Land Branch, gave a short overview of UNEA resolution 5/5 entitled "Nature-based solutions for supporting sustainable development".
17. Delegations that took the floor requested further information regarding the selection of the flagship initiatives under the UN Ecosystem Restoration Decade and the relation to the NBS process, also specifically requesting clarification whether the nomination of the Co-Chair from the developed country was a representative of the Czech Republic or nominated by the European Commission. One geographical group and one delegation expressed their support for the Costa Rican candidature.

18. The Secretariat informed that 10 flagship initiatives have been identified under the Ecosystems Restoration Decade, and that these will be formally announced by the end of the year.
19. The Chair clarified that the nomination was from 27 Member States, coordinated by the Czech Republic, hence the nomination was not from the European Commission but by 27 Member States.

Agenda Item 6: Report of the sub-committee.

20. The meeting adopted a draft [report from the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives](#) on the main activities and outcomes of the subcommittee meetings held after its 158th meeting on 26 May 2022.

Agenda Item 7: Other matters.

21. No other matters were raised.

Agenda Item 8: Closing of the meeting.

22. The meeting closed at 17:30 (GMT+3).