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**Subcommittee of the
Committee of Permanent Representatives
Fourth meeting of 2026**
Nairobi, 19 March 2026
9:10 – 11:15 (GMT+3)
Conference Room 4 (in person) and
Microsoft Teams (online)

Chair's summary of the fourth subcommittee meeting of 2026

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. H. E. Ms. Marie Charlotte Tang, Vice Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR), Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), opened and chaired the meeting.
2. The [agenda](#) was adopted.

Agenda item 2: Briefing on the Office of Science.

3. Pursuant to [CPR decision 171/1](#) of 11 September 2025, the Secretariat [briefed](#) on the newly established Office of Science and [initiatives taken](#) to strengthen UNEP's science function, including the consolidation of the Early Warning and Assessment Division's relevant functions with the Chief Scientist Office as well as the reassignment of project-based operations to other divisions and offices.
4. Delegations¹ welcomed the presentation and provided the following comments in summary:
 - a. Welcomed and expressed strong support for the strengthening of UNEP's science function, emphasizing that science underpins UNEP's mandate and should inform policymaking with credible, independent, transparent and policy-relevant evidence.
 - b. Supported the vision of the Office of Science to enhance UNEP's scientific capacity, credibility and impact, and to strengthen science-policy interfaces.
 - c. Reaffirmed that science should guide UNEP's work and should not be subject to negotiation, while recognizing that policy application of scientific findings remains within intergovernmental processes.
 - d. Stressed the importance of ensuring that UNEP's scientific work informs decision-making, including at the [United Nations Environment Assembly](#) (UNEA), and translates into actionable outputs at national and global levels.

¹ Switzerland, Brazil, Costa Rica, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Germany, Finland, Angola, Colombia, Norway, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom, France, Mexico, Argentina, Australia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Cameroon, Scientific and Technological Community major group, Children and Youth major group, Women major group.

- e. Highlighted the value of foresight, horizon scanning and analysis of emerging issues, while calling for caution and underscoring that such work should remain guided by intergovernmental mandates and Member States' priorities.
 - f. Emphasized the importance of safeguarding scientific integrity, transparency and independence, including robust methodologies and quality assurance processes.
 - g. Requested further information on:
 - i. Governance and institutional arrangements, including the role of the Chief Scientist, changes compared to the previous structure, collaboration with other Divisions and Offices, such as the Chief Digital Officer, and resource mobilization capacity.
 - ii. The future of global environmental assessments beyond the [seventh edition of the Global Environment Outlook](#) (GEO-7), including the status of consultations, lessons learned from the GEO-7 process (including the Summary for Policymakers negotiations), and modalities for Member State engagement in shaping future assessment cycle.
 - iii. The [Environmental Policy Tracker](#) (EPT), including its scope, intended functionality, timeline for launch, and complementarity with existing tools.
 - iv. The relationship between the [Global Environmental Data Strategy](#) (GEDS) and the work of the Office of Science, including modalities for coordination and avoidance of overlap.
 - v. How UNEP will support and develop global science-based indicators and impact metrics, including concrete examples and links to ongoing work under the Medium-Term Strategy and Programme of Work.
 - vi. The development and implementation of key strategies, including the Science Strategy and Knowledge Management Strategy, and opportunities for Member State engagement.
 - vii. Planned capacity-building activities, including science communication training and broader support to Member States, particularly developing countries.
 - viii. How the perspectives and priorities of developing countries are reflected in the identification of emerging issues.
 - ix. The [UN80 Initiative](#) Work Package 27 on science, including its scope and approach to engaging relevant UN entities with environmental science mandates.
 - x. Possible follow-up to the Solar Radiation Modification (SRM) report, entitled '[One Atmosphere: An Independent Expert Review on Solar Radiation Modification Research and Deployment](#)', including clarification on any planned further outputs or related work.
 - xi. Work on Arctic and polar issues, including objectives, partnerships and thematic focus.
 - xii. UNEP's role in strengthening synergies between science and environmental governance, including translation of scientific findings into policy and regulatory responses.
 - xiii. UNEP's approach to integrating Indigenous Knowledge and ensuring inclusive participation of diverse knowledge systems.
 - h. Expressed support for the proposed nomination of experts, including indigenous knowledge experts, and requested further details on scope and modalities to guide nominations.
 - i. Stressed the need for stronger alignment and complementarity with existing science-policy panels, including the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) (IPCC), the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) (IPBES) and the [Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution](#) (ISP-CWP), while avoiding duplication and strengthening cooperation with [Multilateral Environmental Agreements](#) (MEAs).
 - j. Highlighted the importance of capacity-building, data accessibility and support to developing countries, including for data collection, reporting, early warning systems and application of scientific knowledge.
 - k. Called for enhanced inclusivity and representation in UNEP's scientific work, including engagement of experts from developing countries, indigenous knowledge holders, scientific institutions and other stakeholders.
5. In response, the Secretariat thanked delegations for their comments and provided the following clarifications:
- a. Noted that consultations on the future of GEO-7 have not yet commenced and will focus on lessons learned and defining a fit-for-purpose future assessment, with Member States to be consulted in the coming months.
 - b. Encouraged Member States to provide input on expectations regarding future GEO cycles, including scope, format and modalities.

- c. Outlined that UNEP supports 17 MEAs through relevant divisions and serves as the secretariat for some science-policy panels, including the IPCC through the Climate Change Division, IPBES through the Ecosystems Division, and ISP-CWP through the Industry and Economy Division, while highlighting that the Office of Science is strengthening coherence through the revitalization of the [Ad-hoc Global Assessment Dialogue](#) (AGAD), with a focus on identifying gaps and avoiding duplication across assessments.
- d. Indicated that foresight and horizon scanning are internal UNEP functions under the UN 2.0 framework and do not constitute an intergovernmental process, aimed to identify and monitor emerging signals of change (currently over 280) based on scientific evidence, to inform UNEP's analytical work and provide early awareness of potential environmental issues, without being policy prescriptive, and outputs include issue notes on SRM and the environmental impacts of outer space activities, present emerging trends and the state of knowledge. Adding that an update on the issue note on deep-sea mining is also underway.
- e. Further noted that foresight work is supported by a multidisciplinary and geographically diverse [Foresight Expert Panel](#), applying a structured methodology to prioritize issues, with potential future mechanisms for Member States to contribute country-specific and regional inputs.
- f. Informed that emerging issues for [Frontiers Report](#) 2026-2027 are currently being identified through the foresight process, including consultations with stakeholders by the [Foresight Expert Panel](#), with potential to incorporate country-specific priorities.
- g. Explained that [GEDS](#) is led by the Chief Digital Officer, with close collaboration with the Office of Science to ensure scientific integrity and effective use of data and digital tools, including in the development of [EnvironmentGPT](#) and related digital applications.
- h. Explained that [EPT](#) is a non-prescriptive tool linking environmental data, policies and outcomes, designed to support decision-making at global and national levels, and currently under development as a prototype and expected to be launched in mid-April 2026.
- i. Clarified that the Science and Knowledge Management strategies are internal frameworks designed to strengthen UNEP's capacity to generate, manage, integrate and communicate scientific knowledge, while improving accessibility and uptake by Member States and stakeholders.
- j. Clarified that the nomination of experts aims to support the selection of authors and peer reviewers for UNEP publications and assessments, while enhancing geographic, gender and disciplinary diversity, particularly from developing countries, and encouraged Member States to nominate qualified experts across relevant fields to facilitate timely and balanced representation.
- k. Acknowledged the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge, youth perspectives and other stakeholders, noting ongoing efforts to strengthen such integration in UNEP outputs.
- l. Emphasized efforts to improve the communication and accessibility of scientific outputs to ensure they are policy-relevant and usable by decision-makers.
- m. Explained that UNEP provides capacity-building and training on environmental data, indicators and analysis, and encouraged Member States to engage with the Secretariat to access technical support.
- n. Highlighted the importance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and statistics in supporting monitoring, reporting and evidence-based decision-making at the country level.
- o. Highlighted ongoing work on global environmental monitoring, building on existing frameworks such as the Global Environmental Monitoring System (GEMS), including integrated approaches combining earth observation, national data systems and citizen science, with an emphasis on data quality and information integrity.
- p. Confirmed that flagship reports, such as the [Emissions Gap Report](#) and the [Adaptation Gap Report](#), have been reassigned to relevant divisions, while the Chief Scientist retains an oversight and quality assurance role across UNEP scientific publications.
- q. Noted that resource mobilization is being pursued through partnerships and external funding to support data, analytics and science-based service delivery.
- r. Explained that work under [UN80 Work Package 27](#) on science is in the discovery phase, involving 19 UN entities, mapping scientific functions, identifying gaps and overlaps, and developing recommendations to enhance system-wide coherence while noting that UNEP remains the only entity with a comprehensive focus on environmental issues, with outputs expected by mid-April 2026.
- s. Informed that UNEP's engagement on [Arctic and polar issues](#) is coordinated across the organization, with the Regional Office for Europe serving as head of delegation to the [Arctic Council](#) while the Office of Science provides scientific oversight, including on emerging issues such as geoengineering.
- t. Confirmed that no follow-up report to the SRM report is planned, but that a related working paper will be issued.

Agenda item 3: Assessment of the seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly.

6. The Chair recalled that at the [Subcommittee meeting held on 12 March 2026](#), the Secretariat, one of the co-facilitators, and the major groups presented the outcomes and assessment of the [seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly](#) (UNEA-7), followed by a discussion among delegations ([Summary of the discussions on 12 March 2026](#)).
7. Delegations² provided the following additional comments in summary:
 - a. Welcomed UNEA-7 as a platform for reflection, collaboration and inclusive engagement, including contributions from youth, women, scientific community, local and indigenous knowledge.
 - b. Highlighted the role of the [Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum](#) (GMGSF) as a key coordination platform, welcomed the first “Women’s Environment Assembly” and encouraged its continuation at future sessions.
 - c. Noted that, despite progress, gaps remain, including the need to move towards more institutionalized participation of major groups and other stakeholders in decision-making and follow-up processes.
 - d. Emphasized the importance of accountability and effective implementation of UNEA outcomes through clear monitoring, transparent reporting, participatory evaluation, adequate resources and science-based approaches.
 - e. Echoed concerns regarding the need for more ambitious outcomes and stronger implementation of UNEA resolutions and decisions, emphasizing the importance of adequate resources, inclusive processes and early engagement of all stakeholders across the intersessional period.
 - f. Emphasized the need for enhanced financing and capacity-building support, particularly for developing countries, to enable effective participation and implementation of environmental commitments.

Agenda item 4: Other matters.

8. The representative of Türkiye invited members of the Committee to a [special event on 31 March 2026](#) to be held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi to commemorate the [International Day of Zero Waste](#), organized by Türkiye, in collaboration with UNEP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).
9. One representative³, on behalf of several delegations, requested an update on the implementation of [CPR decision 171/1](#), in particular on disaggregated data on affiliate personnel and the status of the updated resource mobilization strategy ahead of their deadlines.
10. One representative⁴ raised concerns regarding the environmental and public health impacts of recent military actions on its territory. Another representative⁵ considered the issue outside the Committee’s mandate.
11. The Secretariat indicated that information on disaggregated data on affiliate personnel would be included in the Executive Director’s quarterly reports to the CPR and that work on the updated resource mobilization strategy is ongoing, with Secretariat briefings planned to provide updates.
12. The Secretariat reminded delegates and stakeholders to respond to an online survey on the performance of UNEP in its implementation of the Programme of Work for 2024-2025.

Agenda item 5: Closing of the meeting.

13. The meeting closed at 11:15 (GMT+3).

² NGO major group, Indigenous Peoples and their communities’ major group, Women major group.

³ Netherlands (Kingdom of the).

⁴ Iran (Islamic Republic of).

⁵ United States of America.