UNITED NATIONS

UNEP/CPR/ASC/13/L.1/V.4

United Nations Environment Programme

UNEP

Distr.: General
7 September 2026

English only

ADVANCE

Annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives
Thirteenth meeting
Nairobi, 7–11 September 2026
Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Consideration of a draft Chair's summary of the meeting

Draft Chair's summary of the thirteenth annual subcommittee meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives*

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting, which was held in Nairobi in a hybrid format, was opened at 10.20 a.m. on Monday, 7 September 2026 by Sultan Hajiyev, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.

2. The Executive Director of UNEP, Inger Andersen, delivered a statement.

3. Members of the Committee delivered opening statements on behalf of regional and political groups[1] followed by individual statements.[2]

4. Representatives of the major groups delivered statements, including a joint statement on behalf of the regional facilitators of the major groups.

5. All written statements submitted to the secretariat have been made available on the United Nations Nairobi Journal, as follows:

(a) Monday, 7 September 2026: morning session and afternoon session

(b) Tuesday, 8 September 2026: morning session and afternoon session

(c) Wednesday, 9 September 2026: morning session and afternoon session

(d) Thursday, 10 September 2026: morning session and afternoon session

(e) Friday, 11 September 2026: morning session and afternoon session

* The present summary is the Chair's assessment of the key issues raised and is intended to capture the overall spirit of the discussion. The summary does not imply that delegations explicitly debated or agreed upon individual points under each agenda item and is presented without formal editing.

[1] Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States; Mexico on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; the European Union also on behalf of its member States; Jamaica, on behalf of the Presidency of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its eighth session.

[2] Armenia, Bhutan, Brazil, Chile, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Kazakhstan, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, Ukraine, the United States of America.

6. Secretariat presentations, meeting documents and reference documents have been made available on the meeting webpage.

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

7. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the revised provisional agenda as set out in document UNEP/CPR/ASC/13/1/Rev.1.

Agenda item 3

Management and administration of the United Nations Environment Programme

8. Item 3 was considered jointly with item 12 on consideration of relevant evaluation reports and audits.

9. The Executive Director of UNEP delivered an introductory statement.

10. A representative of the secretariat provided a briefing on the management and administration of UNEP.

11. Representatives of many delegations[3] welcomed the presentation and provided comments or sought clarification on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Encouraged UNEP to maintain the positive momentum in implementing Joint Inspection Unit, Office of Internal Oversight Services and Board of Auditors recommendations, and requested timelines for outstanding recommendations, including information on implementation challenges, reasons for delay and how new recommendations would be addressed alongside those outstanding from 2024;

(b) Emphasized the importance of the Committee of Permanent Representatives' oversight role and its mandate as an intersessional body, requested clarity on the timeline for the review of its mandate and working modalities in relation to recommendation 1 of the Joint Inspection Unit and called for regional group consultations to be held in a timely, transparent and inclusive manner, with sufficient opportunity for Member States to consider any new arrangements or processes, and for changes to current working methods or the frequency of meetings of the Committee to be considered only after a thorough assessment of their implications;

(c) Welcomed the work under way to develop success metrics and strengthen monitoring and quality assurance, and encouraged UNEP to ensure that such measures improved the quality, accessibility and timeliness of support provided to Member States. Delegations also emphasized the importance of adequate resources to support timely subprogramme evaluations within the required length of the 6-year evaluation cycle;

(d) Recommended introducing a standing item on the agenda of meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on the implementation and systematic focus on risks and follow-up to further strengthen oversight and accountability;

(e) Sought clarification on the role of audits and evaluations in informing the UNEP approach to administration and management;

(f) Enquired what changes had been made to the revised delegation of authority framework and the monitoring of its implementation, and how the corporate guidance document would ensure timely and effective support to developing countries;

(g) Expressed concerns regarding significant delays in project closure and deployment of unutilized balances;

(h) Called for the consolidation of the Young Talent Pipeline to achieve a sustainable geographical balance, regular provision of comprehensive and disaggregated information on UNEP

[3] Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, the European Union, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group.

ADVANCE

staff, affiliate and other non-staff personnel, and an update on the implementation of the Young Talent Pipeline programme;

(i) Requested additional information on measures to achieve a more sustainable balance between senior management and working-level professional capacity;

(j) Enquired whether any discussions on organizational reform had taken place at the most recent senior management team retreat, and, if so, requested that relevant information be provided;

(k) Welcomed the updated resource mobilization strategy and requested further information on its implementation, while emphasizing the importance of adequate, predictable and flexible funding, a balanced funding portfolio and ensuring that resource mobilization and allocation remained aligned with UNEP agreed priorities and responsive to regional and country needs;

(l) Sought additional information on Work Package 27, aspects of UN80-related reforms already affecting the UNEP implementation capacity, the nine guidance products of the delivery model working group, the alignment of the knowledge management strategy with the UN80 Initiative, the next steps and timeline for the potential revision of the Environment Management Group's terms of reference with input by Member States, and practical changes to the standard operating procedures for joint programming with other United Nations entities;

(m) Requested information on how recent reforms had improved accountability rather than simply introducing new planning and reporting processes;

(n) Urged the secretariat to address inconsistencies in performance targets and weaknesses identified in the integrated planning, management and reporting solution, including their implications for the reliability of performance reporting, and consolidate progress under the one impact framework;

(o) Requested timely access to other audit and evaluation reports, such as the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network of UNEP, and information on the UNEP response.

12. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Explained that unspent balances were generally tied to specific projects, countries and donor requirements and were not freely available for reallocation, and noted that delays in financial project closure most frequently arose where the final financial report had not been received from executing ministries or other executing entity;

(b) Expressed the hope that changes to the Environment Management Group, to be outlined in a report under Work Package 27 of the UN80 Initiative Action Plan, would elevate the Group's profile within the United Nations system;

(c) Clarified that UNEP did not allocate resources on the basis of profitability or financial returns, and that one of the elements of the resource mobilization strategy was to support Governments in creating a lower risk environment that would encourage private sector investment;

(d) Reported that UNEP had been migrating the totality of its project portfolio on to the integrated planning, management and reporting solution over the previous two years and noted that the construction of the platform had been steered by United Nations Headquarters and that some platform elements were not ideal for project-related reporting. However, continued improvements in the platform would enable enhanced UNEP reporting in accordance with the one impact framework;

(e) Also reported that UNEP was connecting the findings of the Board of Auditors report to targeted management improvements and aiming to prevent recurring weaknesses by addressing root causes;

(f) Explained that the knowledge management strategy was aimed at internal learning from science, programme and projects.

(g) Noted that many Member States were contributing significantly below the indicative scale of contribution and suggested that a subcommittee might review that issue in greater detail;

(h) Reported that the number of recommendations under implementation had been reduced from eight to six through ongoing work;

(i) Said that UNEP aimed to close several of the remaining recommendations by the end of 2026 but that the implementation of several recommendations depended on external factors, requiring multi-stakeholder coordination;

ADVANCE

(j) Reported that the role of Chief Risk Officer had been assigned as part of efforts to embed risk management more directly into programme delivery and decision-making and to strengthen coordination at the corporate level;

(k) Also reported that some members of the first two cohorts of the Young Talent Pipeline had been recruited for UNEP positions while others had entered the institutional or private sector and that the viability of a third cohort was currently being assessed, and observed that the programme had been funded from an Environment Fund set-aside and that under the current conditions, its future viability was therefore uncertain;

(l) Drew attention to the launch of environmental job profiles in the last quarter of 2026, which would enhance workforce planning;

(m) Explained that there was no predetermined optimal workforce ratio and noted that positions at the P-5 level and above currently accounted for approximately 13 per cent of the relevant workforce, while efforts towards a leaner structure continued to take into account geographical diversity and gender parity;

(n) Explained that the delegation of authority framework had been updated to better align with the Secretary-General's bulletin on delegation of authority in the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules (ST/SGB/2019/2), placing greater focus on core administrative functions and processes;

(o) Also explained that the implementation plan for the resource mobilization strategy was an internal management tool that enabled UNEP to manage the multi-year strategy on an annual basis and adapt to the evolving funding and geopolitical landscape;

(p) Emphasized that the implementation of Joint Inspection Unit recommendation 1 on the mandate and role of the Committee of Permanent Representatives was under the purview of Member States, recalled that the Bureau of the Committee of Permanent Representatives had agreed on the guiding questions for the regional consultations in September and October and would reconvene on 10 November to receive updates on those consultations and consider options for the way forward, including discussion in the subcommittee meetings, in advance of the 176th meeting of the Committee, and noted that the process would remain transparent, inclusive and Member State-driven;

(q) Explained that affiliate personnel could not be reported in the same way as staff members, as they included diverse modalities – such as consultants, individual contractors, United Nations Volunteers, interns and gratis personnel – with different contractual arrangements and measurement methods. Following consultation with the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance, it was confirmed that the Secretary-General's report on the composition of the Secretariat was the established reporting mechanism for the entire United Nations Secretariat on affiliate personnel, including UNEP, providing a consistent and comparable United Nations system-wide framework. The next report, covering the biennium 2024–2025, was expected in the coming months.

13. Draft recommendations under agenda item 3 for further consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at a subsequent subcommittee meeting are set out in the annex to the present Chair's summary.

Agenda item 4

Programme performance report of the United Nations Environment Programme for 2024–2025

14. Item 4 was considered jointly with item 12 on consideration of relevant evaluation reports and audits.

15. The Deputy Executive Director of UNEP, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, introduced the UNEP Programme performance report for the biennium 2024–2025.

16. Representatives of the secretariat provided a programme performance overview and a resource and management overview of the implementation of the Programme, which was followed by detailed briefings on the UNEP programme performance report for the biennium 2024–2025 and discussions with members of the Committee and stakeholders.

ADVANCE

17. On the programme performance overview and the resource and management overview, representatives of many delegations[4] welcomed the report, provided comments and sought clarifications. In their comments, the representatives:

1. Programme performance overview

(a) Acknowledged the strong overall programme performance of UNEP, but requested, in the future, a more substantive assessment of the impact of UNEP programme delivery across all seven subprogrammes;

(b) Suggested improvements to future performance reports, such as increased focus on outcomes and longer-term impacts; greater description of areas that had seen less progress and corrective measures that had been employed; more precise use of data and indicators; a scorecard-style presentation of key results; and greater emphasis on lessons learned and how they had been used to improve future strategies and programmes;

(c) Noted the 89 per cent achievement rate across subprogramme indicators and the slower than expected progress with the non-subprogramme/corporate indicators, including the drop in their percentage achievement from 68 per cent to 55 per cent, and sought explanations;

(d) Recognized that the one impact framework in the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027 was a significant improvement in enhancing results tracking and reporting and asked how it would improve reliability and credibility of results reporting and also how prioritization occurred;

(e) Welcomed the further effort to strengthen impact indicators, and asked questions on methodologies, evidence-driven stories and examples of impact and lessons learned and stronger indicators;

(f) Asked how UNEP would strengthen the translation of scientific evidence, including Indigenous and local knowledge, into coherent and measurable action and impacts;

(g) Underscored the need to pursue financing for integrated programme delivery across the three strategic objectives and for stronger cooperation across the United Nations system to address cross-sectoral challenges;

(h) Requested UNEP to pay more attention to desertification, land degradation, drought, sand and dust storms, wildfire management and climate adaptation;

(i) Asked whether the reform of the Green Climate Fund accreditation process had affected the speed of project implementation and what further support UNEP foresaw to help partner countries to move from project approval to implementation;

(j) Sought information on whether information and status of all UNEP projects could be made available to Member States;

(k) Welcomed the work undertaken to increase the role of artificial intelligence (AI) across UNEP work and requested information on how it could be used within UNEP to inform programmatic effectiveness, and asked about the development of related standards, guidance and governance arrangements;

(l) Asked how UNEP was strengthening delivery overall as well as country engagement;

(m) Requested more information on how monitoring of implementation of management responses to evaluations occurred;

(n) Asked how gender equality, capacity-building and gender responsive approaches were integrated into UNEP programmes;

(o) Asked how UNEP was considering changes in organizational delivery given the new delivery model and the wider context of the UN80 Initiative.

[4] Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the European Union, France, Finland, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Norway, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States, Somalia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the children and youth major group, the non-governmental organization major group and the women major group.

ADVANCE

2. Resource and management overview

(a) Stressed the importance of greater alignment between the programme of work and the budget;

(b) Welcomed UNEP efforts to improve workforce diversity, geographical representation and recruitment of early-career professionals, while calling for continued efforts to improve representation of developing and underrepresented countries and emphasizing that recruitment should remain consistent with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations;

(c) Requested information on measures to attract, develop and retain young and mid-career professionals, including through the Young Talent Pipeline and the Junior Professional Officers programme, and on succession planning in view of projected staff retirements, as well as on measures to achieve a more sustainable balance between senior management and working-level capacity;

(d) Asked about the effect of the reduction in staff following the UNEP functional review in 2025;

(e) Welcomed the continued progress in implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and stressed the need for adequate resources for its implementation and systematic gender-, sex- and age-disaggregated data, particularly in UNEP recruitment processes;

(f) Underscored the need to ensure that countries' sovereignty was respected and that national circumstances were taken into account, including on issues such as gender, and called for greater resources, capacity support and technical assistance for developing countries and for the strengthening of regional offices to enable them to provide the support needed;

(g) Stated that UNEP should not set rules but should follow the decisions taken by intergovernmental bodies, such as the Environment Assembly, and should use, in its reports, the language agreed by such bodies;

(h) Welcomed the new resource mobilization strategy, efforts to expand the donor base and multi-year commitments, and the record number of Member States contributing to the Environment Fund in 2025, but deplored the overall decrease in core income compared with 2024 and the continued reliance on earmarked and global resources;

(i) Sought more information on measures taken to address outstanding advances, including the $70.4 million that had remained outstanding for more than one year;

(j) Sought clarification on how findings and recommendations from audits, evaluations and programme reviews were translated into management actions and operational improvements, including how implementation would be monitored and reported to the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

18. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

3. Programme performance overview

(a) Clarified that UNEP was already endeavouring, as seen in the new medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, to focus more on impacts and outcomes, in programme performance reporting, with stronger indicators in the programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, based on strong methodologies and previously learned lessons;

(b) Confirmed that the integration of the three strategic objectives was fundamental during the preparation of the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and that UNEP work on desertification, drought, sand and dust storms, and wildfires, was being strengthened through, among others, the Global Environment Facility portfolio and implementation of corresponding Environment Assembly resolutions;

(c) Explained that the achievement of subprogramme indicators was made possible by the level of earmarked resources, which had increased in the biennium 2024–2025, and that non-subprogramme indicators were negatively affected by the limited level of non-earmarked, core contributions, which were below what had been planned for in the programme of work and were lower than for the previous biennium;

(d) Acknowledged the need to focus on country-level and regional support and rapid/agile responsiveness to country needs, stating that such efforts were part of the overall focus of the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and were monitored, including through the quarterly business reports;

ADVANCE

(e) Explained that UNEP observed the findings of audits and evaluations carefully through its management responses, whose implementation was centrally monitored and reported through established oversight and management reporting mechanisms, and that lessons learned fed into planning, budgeting, risk management and programme design;

(f) Explained that UNEP was using AI to bring together data from different systems and to create dashboards, some of which were foreseen to be publicly available by 2027, although core resources were still needed for the work;

(g) Stated that, although the shortened Green Climate Fund funding cycle seemed to be having a positive impact on the ground, it was too early to say, while promising to provide more detailed responses to written questions;

(h) Explained that dashboard level programmatic data and country specific data on UNEP programmes and results would be available in 2027 for many variables. Other variables such as geo-tagged results would only be available depending on resources and capacity-building in systems;

(i) Also reiterated that UNEP was committed to impact measurement and gender-sensitive measurement and reporting but that much of that was predicated on resources being allocated to such efforts both at the project and at the corporate level, through additional core resources;

(j) Responded that UNEP internal work on quality assurance processes, including for design and implementation; on uplifting its regional presence, including on co-development; and on regular tracking of budgets, activities and time spent, were all commensurate and responded to the new delivery model policy, which was aimed at strengthening delivery and results.

4. Resource and management overview

(a) Reaffirmed the commitment of UNEP to upholding Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and to recruiting on as wide a geographical basis as possible without lowering standards, noting that efforts to improve geographical representation required sustained action over time. Encouragingly, the two least represented regional groups had recorded the strongest growth during the reporting period;

(b) Clarified that efforts to strengthen geographical diversity were fully compatible with fair and equitable career opportunities for all staff, including those from traditionally well-represented regions, with internal selection trends continuing to reflect merit-based advancement across the organization;

(c) Clarified that the reported decline in the 36–40 age group was an error and would be corrected. While overall staffing had decreased during the reporting period, and all other age groups had recorded reductions, the under-30 group had increased by 25 per cent and the 36–40 group had increased by 2 per cent;

(d) Highlighted UNEP investment in the environmental leaders of tomorrow through succession planning, specialized environmental career paths, the Young Talent Pipeline, mentoring and career-development opportunities, supported by the extensive UNEP outreach programme and Junior Professional Officer programme. The continuation of the Young Talent Pipeline would be subject to the availability of resources;

(e) Clarified that the functional review, which had indeed led to staffing adjustments, had nevertheless focused on ensuring that the available resources were strategically aligned with organizational priorities and evolving programme delivery requirements, and that UNEP continued to monitor the impact of those changes on programme implementation, service delivery and organizational effectiveness and to take corrective measures where necessary;

(f) Agreed with the importance of providing disaggregated data, but stated that additional resources were required for that to happen and that additional reporting burdens should not be placed on countries;

(g) Noted the concerns about earmarked funding and explained that the updated resource mobilization strategy sought to strengthen the Environment Fund, diversify partnerships, promote softly earmarked funding and expand engagement with new and non-traditional partners, while underscoring that all earmarked contributions were used for activities that fell within the approved programme of work and contributed to priorities agreed multilaterally by Member States;

(h) Explained that UNEP was seeking to address the outstanding advances by strengthening its implementing partner risk-flagging framework, introducing risk-based monitoring

ADVANCE

measures and enhancing controls related to payments and new agreements, while noting that the support of those receiving the advances was also needed.

5. Strategic objective 1: Climate stability

19. On strategic objective 1 on climate stability, representatives of many delegations[5] welcomed the presentation and provided comments or sought clarification on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Underscored the value of the technical and normative support provided by UNEP, in particular in helping countries to meet their transparency obligations under the Paris Agreement and through reports such as the "Gap" reports and the recent *Limiting Overshoot* report;

(b) Requested elaboration as to how UNEP would:

(i) Translate its strong climate finance mobilization results into increased support for strengthening national capacities for implementing projects relating to nationally identified priorities, including by developing bankable projects, accessing climate finance and building the required institutional and technical capacity;

(ii) Further strengthen its work on adaptation and resilience, given the growing adaptation gap and importance of access to adaptation finance for developing countries;

(iii) Ensure a balanced approach to adaptation and mitigation;

(iv) Strengthen its support for countries in addressing the severe and growing losses and damages caused by climate change, including through early warning systems and disaster risk reduction;

(v) Strengthen the link between climate science and transparency systems and national planning institutions so that the information could be used for investment and implementation decisions.

(c) Noted that it was important to consider not only the amount of finance mobilized but also the accessibility, predictability, additionality and actual delivery of that finance. Moreover, private finance should complement rather than substitute for public climate finance;

(d) Requested information regarding the UNEP private sector engagement strategy, including how transparency could be preserved without increasing the reporting burden for the sector;

(e) Highlighted the strategic value of the International Methane Emissions Observatory's methane alert and response system and requested information on the expansion of the system into use in the coal and waste sector and engagement with local authorities;

(f) Underscored that the analytical and programmatic work of UNEP should remain consistent with its mandate and should not pre-empt or substitute for intergovernmental negotiation conducted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Paris Agreement.

20. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Noted that the work of UNEP was shifting from planning to implementation and action, in particular through UNEP sector-specific projects and programmes;

(b) Confirmed that 17 countries had already nominated a national focal point in the waste and coal mining operations sector to receive alerts from the methane alert and response system regarding methane leaks;

(c) Noted that, although the current split in the climate project portfolio was around 60 per cent for adaptation and resilience and 40 per cent for mitigation,[6] the significant levels of private sector investment in mitigation projects were not currently seen for adaptation. UNEP was therefore determined to accelerate and expand support for private sector engagement in adaptation;

[5] Argentina; Bhutan; Canada; Kenya; the European Union; Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran); Saudi Arabia; Somalia; the State of Palestine; Switzerland; Uganda; business and industry major group.

[6] Excluding transparency portfolio.

ADVANCE

(d) Underscored that UNEP based its work, including project design, on dialogue with countries themselves and the needs identified and prioritized in national adaptation plans and nationally determined contributions, among other documents;

(e) Noted that the portfolio of UNEP early warning projects was expanding significantly, both as a result of the call from the Secretary-General for an early warning system for all and the immediate value and impact of such systems on the ground when well implemented;

(f) Highlighted the implementation support that UNEP could provide to countries, such as technology needs assessments or support through the Climate Technology Centre and Network, and advice on shaping carbon market pipelines;

(g) Noted that UNEP engaged in collaborative work regarding reporting and data requirements for the various multilateral environmental agreements in order to avoid overburdening countries and ensure cost-effectiveness;

(h) Encouraged the private sector to develop solutions, engage with and inform policymakers as to what was possible, and invest in and implement those solutions;

(i) Clarified that UNEP translated lessons learned into action by collating and processing data and translating them into policies and implementation, ensuring also that its limited resources were focused on areas of the largest impact.

6. Strategic objective 2: Living in harmony with nature

21. On strategic objective 2 on living in harmony with nature, representatives of many delegations[7] welcomed the presentation and provided comments or sought clarification on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Commended the achievement of several results in excess of targets;

(b) Noted the importance of adopting integrated and cross-sectoral approaches across the United Nations system, while emphasizing that such approaches should respect the distinct mandates established under the various multilateral environmental agreements, be tailored to national circumstances and priorities, and avoid creating additional planning, reporting and administrative burdens;

(c) Welcomed UNEP assistance in the implementation and updating of national biodiversity strategies and action plans (NBSAPs);

(d) Expressed appreciation for the publication by UNEP of its second report on the environmental impact of the escalation of conflict in the Gaza Strip;

(e) Encouraged increased efforts to combat land degradation, desertification and drought, particularly in developing countries;

(f) Requested UNEP to:

(i) Elaborate on how it would assess whether more integrated and synergistic approaches were delivering greater impact;

(ii) Provide information on how it ensured the systematic and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, and local communities ;

(iii) Provide information on how UNEP would strengthen engagement with the private sector to support the achievement of nature action outcomes;

(iv) Describe how it would further support countries in aligning their national planning and reporting processes with their commitments under multilateral environmental agreements, including by strengthening its collaboration with relevant secretariats;

(v) Explain the substantial variance between targets and reported outcomes; how it avoided double-counting across programmes; how lessons learned would inform future baselines, indicators and targets; and how results would be translated into long-term nationally owned outcomes and sustained financing;

[7] Belgium, the European Union, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, the State of Palestine, farmers major group, business and industry major group, workers and trade unions major group.

ADVANCE

(vi) Comment on how its recent experience of working on ocean finance was shaping its support for sustainable ocean finance architecture;

(vii) Clarify allocation criteria for technical facilitators under the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership, noting a low presence of such facilitators in West Asia;

(viii) Describe the operational implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 6/7 on combating sand and dust storms, and its alignment to the desertification, land degradation and drought portfolio.

22. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Noted UNEP efforts to promote integrated and cross-sectoral approaches that addressed biodiversity, land degradation, desertification, drought, water, climate and sustainable development objectives in a coherent manner, thereby enhancing impact and delivering multiple co-benefits;

(b) Highlighted that UNEP was working closely with private-sector and other partners to identify critical priorities and win-win solutions, including through the United Nations Decade of Ecosystem Restoration, the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative and the One Ocean Finance Facility;

(c) Explained that UNEP supported the alignment of commitments, indicators and reporting processes across multilateral environmental agreements through tools that enabled countries to use the same data to meet multiple international commitments, thereby reducing reporting burdens and promoting collaboration across biodiversity, climate, desertification, chemicals and pollution-related conventions;

(d) Noted that UNEP applied a landscape approach that enabled integrated delivery across environmental objectives and commitments, including those under multilateral environmental agreements, citing the Congo Basin Landscapes Initiative as an example;

(e) Highlighted that UNEP was developing internal guidance to strengthen the engagement of Indigenous Peoples, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders in its programming;

(f) Clarified that since the reporting period under review, the number of technical facilitators under the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership had increased from 10 to 24, with a more balanced regional distribution, and that updated information could be provided in that regard, and invited all interested countries to join the NBSAP Accelerator Partnership;[8]

(g) Recalled that UNEP was a founding member of the United Nations Coalition on Combating Sand and Dust Storms and highlighted the key priorities identified by Member States in relation to the implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 6/7, including mapping, mitigation, preparedness, risk reduction and early warning systems, policy support, collaboration and resource mobilization;

(h) Noted that UNEP refined its indicators and targets over time and recognized the need to accelerate action on the ground;

(i) Reiterated that UNEP respected the mandates of all multilateral environmental agreements and worked closely with their secretariats to avoid duplication and ensure that its interventions added value;

(j) Recalled that UNEP collaborated closely with the World Economic Forum, including through the Champions for Nature initiative.

7. Strategic objective 3: Towards a pollution-free planet

23. On strategic objective 3 entitled “Towards a pollution-free planet”, representatives of many delegations[9] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

[8] https://nbsapaccelerator.org/.

[9] Australia, Bhutan, Canada, the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, the State of Palestine, Switzerland, non-governmental organization major group, science and technology community major group, women major group, workers and trade unions major group.

ADVANCE

(a) Welcomed the increased focus on systemic and integrated approaches across high impact sectors and the links between pollution, climate change and biodiversity;

(b) Welcomed the use of circular economy as a framework for tackling pollution, and emphasized the importance of the sustainable use of natural resources in climate action and nature conservation, and of multilateral cooperation in addressing pollution-related challenges;

(c) Requested more information on how the chemicals and pollution subprogramme could be strengthened, particularly in terms of predictable and sustainable financing and capacity-building;

(d) Sought clarification on how systemic, sector-wide approaches could contribute to addressing pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss in an integrated manner, and how UNEP coordinated action to address chemicals, waste and pollution across its divisions, resulting in coordinated support at the country level;

(e) Encouraged UNEP to integrate a gender perspective;

(f) Noted that extended producer responsibility schemes were among many options that were available to Member States;

(g) Requested additional information on how evaluations were being used to improve the effectiveness and impact of the chemicals and pollution subprogramme, how UNEP measured real-world outcomes of circular economy policies, and how it supported value addition in mineral-rich developing countries, as part of its work towards circularity and material efficiency for critical minerals;

(h) Asked what the next steps were in the initiative for sustainable debris management in Gaza, whether the project on implementing chemicals and waste multilateral environmental agreements in Asia had been evaluated, and indicated that it would be good to measure the exposure of workers handling harmful chemicals;

(i) Called for the rules of procedure of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution to be finalized, to enable its substantive work to start addressing existing knowledge and policy gaps, and highlighted the importance of robust mechanisms for independent observer scientists to participate in the interdisciplinary expert committee of the Panel;

(j) Enquired how UNEP intended to further strengthen synergies across bodies involved in addressing chemicals, waste and pollution, and how it prioritized support to ensure that it delivered the greatest environmental, health and economic benefits where national resources were limited.

24. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Explained that a scoping study considering the economic costs and benefits of action in addressing exposure to harmful chemicals would be presented at the first International Conference of the Global Framework on Chemicals in November;

(b) Clarified that a sector-wide approach would address the range of chemicals and exposure risks within high-impact sectors, since the chemical-by-chemical approach, while covering important chemical pollution concerns, failed to deal with the broader range of harmful chemicals exposure risks from a sector, which could pose greater chemical exposure risks than those from the single targeted pollutants receiving attention. While UNEP lacked comprehensive data on workers' exposure risks, that aspect was addressed under the Global Framework on Chemicals – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste;

(c) Reported that the results of the subprogramme evaluation had informed a stronger focus on strategic continuity, coherent project portfolios, institutional capacity and the use of legal, fiscal and technical expertise across UNEP, thus harnessing expertise from all the UNEP divisions to support Member States, including in areas such as law and finance;

(d) Explained that UNEP supported Member States only upon their request, and many Member States had requested UNEP support in developing and implementing extended producer responsibility programmes, which was why the matter was receiving attention;

(e) Also explained that results would be assessed through changes in sectoral policies, laws and business practices, as well as higher-level indicators on human health and environmental impacts developed under the measurability structure and indicators of the Global Framework on Chemicals;

ADVANCE

(f) Noted that circularity and sustainable consumption and production were being integrated into nationally determined contributions and biodiversity-related programmes to generate benefits across pollution, climate change, and biodiversity objectives;

(g) Said, regarding the strengthening of finances, that funding for addressing chemical and plastic pollution was available from the Global Environment Facility. The Global Framework on Chemicals Fund and the Special Programme to support institutional strengthening at the national level for implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the Global Framework on Chemicals enabled countries to secure funding for strengthening the enabling policy and legal environment. UNEP was working with partners to support Member States in accessing resources under the ninth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility for integrated programmes addressing chemicals in key sectors and value chains;

(h) Reported that a gender action plan had been developed as part of the Global Framework on Chemicals process;

(i) Explained that the support for implementation would combine policy and legislative assistance with compliance and enforcement support measures, fiscal policy advice and financing mechanisms, adapted to national circumstances;

(j) Reported that UNEP had concluded the pilot phase of the project in question, demonstrating strong recycling potential, and was now focusing on the finalization of the interim debris management strategy and action plan in Gaza;

(k) Reported that the chemicals and waste multilateral environmental agreements project in Asia had concluded and that its outcomes and lessons had been documented, including progress in Sri Lanka on lead paint legislation and chemicals-management frameworks;

(l) Explained that the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution's draft rules of procedure remained under discussion. Observers had been engaged in the process and were important to the Panel's work. Member States would determine the engagement process as part of the issues under discussion;

(m) As part of the Secretary-General's initiative on critical energy transition minerals, UNEP led the engagement on the environment dimension and circularity; the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was responsible for the work on value addition as well as on traceability and transparency, and the United Nations Development Programme was responsible for the work on artisanal mining. The three entities were working together and with partner agencies to ensure coordination.

8. Foundational subprogramme: Science-policy

25. On the science-policy foundational subprogramme, representatives of many delegations[10] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Emphasized the importance of independent, neutral and rigorous science for decision-making, and of being mindful of national circumstances, development priorities, socioeconomic considerations and different levels of capacity among countries;

(b) Encouraged UNEP to build on efforts for cooperation across the United Nations system;

(c) Enquired how the secretariat intended to strengthen the visibility of the International Resource Panel and ensure that its work was better reflected, how UNEP ensured that the work of the Office of Science supported and complemented that of the three science–policy panels, and how UNEP would ensure continuity of scientific knowledge across strategic cycles;

(d) Requested information on the reasons for the low uptake of UNEP scientific work and the measures taken to improve it;

(e) Urged UNEP to boost synergies and improve coordination between the digital transformations subprogramme and the science-policy foundational subprogramme, especially with regard to the use of AI;

[10] Canada, Costa Rica, European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Switzerland, Children and Youth major group, Science and Technology Community major group, Women's major group.

ADVANCE

(f) Sought additional information on any lessons learned and best practices relevant to the implementation of the medium-term strategy;

(g) Encouraged UNEP to consider organizing online policy dialogues following the release of major assessments such as the Global Environment Outlook report and the Emissions Gap Report, including gender-responsive indicators and disaggregated data in environmental monitoring and reporting systems, and providing accessible, actionable and timely assessments to policymakers;

(h) Enquired whether work was under way for the next iteration of the Global Environment Outlook;

(i) Urged UNEP to re-establish the science–policy forum at the eighth session of the Environment Assembly, and increase uptake of citizen science.

26. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Noted that the science function was distributed across UNEP and that the directors of various UNEP offices and divisions were members of the science–policy panels;

(b) Emphasized the importance of the strategic relationship between the Office of Science and the Chief Digital Officer;

(c) Indicated that the Office of Science engaged in outreach with regional directors to ensure that scientific assessments, such as the Global Environment Outlook, were policy relevant, responded to Member States' needs and were provided in a timely manner;

(d) Explained that outreach events relating to the Global Environment Outlook had been held in Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Latin America – with more expected in the Africa region;

(e) Noted that there had been strong uptake of the Global Resources Outlook report, which was produced by the International Resource Panel;

(f) Drew attention to continuing coordination with the United Nations country teams over the previous eight years;

(g) Emphasized the need to develop capacity and raise financing to ensure that the science and assessment function of UNEP had a lasting impact across strategic cycles, and that assessment recommendations were embedded into policy recommendations and national strategies and tailored to national priorities;

(h) Recalled that science–policy dialogues had been held in 2025 to enable transparent exchanges between scientists and decision makers;

(i) Noted that the arrival of the incoming Chief Scientist in October would offer new perspectives on coordination between the different science–policy interfaces.

9. Foundational subprogramme: Environmental governance

27. On the environmental governance foundational subprogramme, representatives of many delegations[11] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Welcomed the continued work and progress on environmental governance, in particular UNEP support for strengthening environmental rule of law, institutions and legal frameworks and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, including through the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme);

(b) Noted the lesson that environmental governance had a greater impact when linked to UNEP thematic priorities and asked for examples of implementation of the integrated approach at the country level and its results for the thematic subprogrammes;

(c) Also noted that the secretariat had identified early, targeted capacity-building as key for sustainable results, and asked how its approach had changed as a result and how it assessed the sustainability of institutional strength and capacity;

[11] The European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Netherlands (Kingdom of the), children and youth major group, women major group, workers and trade unions major group.

ADVANCE

(d) Sought clarification on how technical legal support provided under the Montevideo Programme respected national sovereignty and domestic legal traditions without imposing uniform legislative models with due consideration of the national circumstances, priorities and capabilities;

(e) Asked what legal advice UNEP offered to developing countries facing difficulties under the multilateral environmental agreements owing to unilateral coercive measures and sanction-induced financial blockades;

(f) Recommended that future reporting demonstrate the extent to which gender considerations had been integrated into the policy frameworks developed and the budgeting processes and encouraged systematic integration of gender-responsive approaches within environmental law, policy development and institutional strengthening processes;

(g) Sought information on opportunities identified to further strengthen implementation through digital tools, including the United Nations Information Portal on Multilateral Environmental Agreements (InforMEA) and the UNEP Law and Environment Assistance Platform (UNEP-LEAP), and how such tools could be used to strengthen countries' capacity to understand, implement and monitor their environmental obligations;

(h) Suggested that UNEP further support the implementation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child general comment No. 26 (2023) on children's rights and environment, with a special focus on climate change, particularly by strengthening access to environmental information, participation in environmental decision-making and accountability for environmental impacts affecting children;

(i) Asked how governance tools and capacities could be scaled to address increasingly cross-border environmental challenges, including emerging environmental risks and crimes that affected the environment;

(j) Sought clarification on how improvements would be reflected in the next medium-term strategy, particularly in terms of strengthening UNEP support for environmental ministerial forums and other decision-making processes;

(k) Asked about connections between carbon market governance and labour rights safeguards, equitable benefit-sharing and accountability of project developers, and whether UNEP support included labour ministers, labour inspectors and occupational safety and health institutions.

28. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Confirmed that UNEP had worked hard on building synergies at the national level and among multilateral environmental agreements, including by linking the Montevideo Programme focal points with the multilateral environmental agreements focal points to ensure greater policy coherence and multilateral environmental agreement implementation;

(b) Explained that technical assistance was a key function of the Montevideo Programme, with UNEP working directly with countries, at the countries' request, to support the development of legal frameworks and build the capacities of different actors;

(c) Recalled that the UNEP-LEAP platform had an integrated clearing-house mechanism for the technical assistance provided to Member States through the Montevideo Programme;

(d) Reported a high number of users of InforMEA and UNEP-LEAP, which provided access to more than 220,000 legislative and case law records alongside toolkits, guidance documents, model laws, publication reports and e-learning courses used by many colleges as part of their curriculum;

(e) Highlighted that UNEP had also strengthened its collaboration with other subprogrammes and divisions, providing legal support across sectors and integration of environmental law and governance considerations;

(f) Acknowledged with appreciation the funding by the Kingdom of the Netherlands of a Junior Professional Officer for the Montevideo Programme, which would enhance programme delivery;

(g) Informed representatives that UNEP planned to work closely with parliamentarians through the Inter-Parliamentary Union as well as through regional parliaments;

(h) Recalled that the Law Division, which was the primary vehicle for environmental governance implementation, had undergone a reorganization in late 2025 and was now organized through four thematic teams, including governance, nature and land, climate and pollution;

ADVANCE

(i) Confirmed that UNEP had a strong focus on the advancement of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for all rights holders, and implementation of rights-based approaches.

10. Enabling subprogramme: Finance and economic transformation

29. On the finance and economic transformations enabling subprogramme, representatives of many delegations[12] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Welcomed UNEP efforts to strengthen the integration of circular economy principles into economic and financial decision-making;

(b) Welcomed the progress made under the subprogramme, particularly the significant increase in the number of new business alliances;

(c) Noted that continued engagement of the private sector was important in order to redirect financing flows and catalyse finance and investment for resilient economies, low-carbon and circular economies;

(d) Noted that the performance review of the finance and economic transformation subprogramme was largely based on outputs rather than outcomes achieved and asked how UNEP planned to strengthen outcome-level reporting under the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 given the report's emphasis on clearer indicators and stronger impact tracking as priorities going forward;

(e) Sought additional information on the results of UNEP prioritization of fewer, high-impact sectors, as well as on the structural and systemic barriers that had slowed down transformation and whether they had strengthened in recent years as a result of the retreat seen in sustainable finance;

(f) Expressed the view that the technical and analytical support provided by UNEP in integrating environmental considerations into economic, financial and industrial decision-making should remain consistent with its mandate and fully respect national circumstances, priorities and policies, and that UNEP should limit its role to providing technical guidance and policy options;

(g) Said that efforts to promote a just and sustainable transition should take into account different levels of development, national circumstances and capacities of countries and the fact that developing countries needed to pursue poverty eradication, food and energy security, employment and sustainable industrial development alongside environmental objectives;

(h) Called for adequate means of implementation, including finance and technology transfer, to support a just and sustainable transition and cautioned that the transition should not impose disproportionate economic or financial burdens on developing countries;

(i) Encouraged UNEP to continue broadening the narrative beyond waste management towards positioning circularity as an economic transformation agenda, and suggested, to that end, exploring how sustainable finance, public procurement and broader economic policy settings would help accelerate economy outcomes, improve resource productivity and unlock private investment in high impact sectors;

(j) Asked for examples, if any, of circular economy principles being successfully embedded into broader economic and industrial policy and lessons that Governments could draw from them;

(k) Highlighted the need for the economic transformation to translate into decent green jobs, accessible finance, skills, entrepreneurship and resilient livelihoods, particularly for young people and communities in developing countries, and sought ideas regarding how UNEP could better engage children and young people on green skills and jobs;

(l) Encouraged UNEP to build continuity around strengthening country-level indicators that demonstrated whether sustainable finance was reaching high-impact sectors, local economies and communities and generating measurable environmental and social outcomes, institutionalizing the engagement of ministries of finance and economic institutions and developing successful circular finance models, sustainable finance frameworks and partnerships;

[12] Australia, the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), children and youth major group.

ADVANCE

(m) Also encouraged UNEP to establish mechanisms for systemic replication of successful approaches across regions and provide the predictable and flexible financing needed to maintain institutional continuity and respond strategically to emerging environmental challenges.

30. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Explained that the medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 had two outcome-oriented indicators, designed to measure the development and uptake of policies, partnerships, initiatives and tool. With the move to the new medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, the indicators had raised ambitions and were outcome-oriented, measuring the number of countries taking policy action, meaning the policies implemented, reported, monitored or revised, and the number of Governments and private sector implementing policies for unlocking public and private finance;

(b) Explained that UNEP was focusing on introducing circularity in the five key sectors of building and construction, mobility, plastics, textile and food, which had the potential to reduce the carbon footprint by 60 per cent and the nature footprint by 80 per cent;

(c) Noted that the focus on a small number of sectors made circular economy more tangible and made it easier to engage the private sector;

(d) Reported that UNEP was engaging with multiple government sectors, including ministries of environment, as well as ministries of finance and industry;

(e) Confirmed that one role of UNEP was to support countries in unlocking financing, whether by accessing a financing mechanism, for instance, putting in place policy incentives that unlocked domestic financing or using public procurement as a means of accelerating a market;

(f) Recalled that UNEP and the World Wide Fund for Nature led the plastics programme under the Global Environment Facility, making approximately $90 million available to help Member States with circular economy approaches in the plastics value chain, with similar support available in textiles and certain other sectors;

(g) Provided examples of steps that countries were taking, including putting in place product design standards for metals and plastics, to allow materials to easily be extracted and reused, adopting policies on post-consumer content or establishing extended producer responsibility with differentiated fees for single-use and reusable products;

(h) Confirmed that UNEP did not approach circular economy as sustainable waste management, but rather was looking upstream, with the principles of a circular economy that involved designing out waste and keeping materials in circulation;

(i) Recalled that the Global Framework for Action on Sustainable Public Procurement in the Built Environment, launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Brazil, promoted the integration of sustainable public procurement in climate and sectoral policies, interministerial cooperation, the use of life-cycle analysis and included social aspects of inclusion and gender and skills development;

(j) Confirmed that UNEP engaged with a country at the country's request and limited its role to providing advice, technical support and tools that would enable the Government to decide on its policy and financial options.

11. Enabling subprogramme: Digital transformations

31. On the digital transformations enabling subprogramme, representatives of many delegations[13] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Welcomed the progress made in the digital transformation subprogramme, in particular, the development of the World Environment Situation Room, the launch of the Coalition for Sustainable AI and the adoption by the Environment Assembly of a resolution on environmental sustainability of AI systems;

(b) Urged greater engagement with the scientific and technology major group on the implementation of the Environment Assembly resolution on AI;

[13] Argentina, Brazil, Canada, the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Switzerland, scientific and technological community major group .

ADVANCE

(c) Noted the progress made in deploying digital platforms to increase environmental monitoring, transparency and decision-making and asked how UNEP planned to manage the risks regarding data governance when enabling AI in those processes;

(d) Expressed appreciation for the lessons learned and actions put forward, especially scaling digital and AI solutions for actual broad and long-term usability, and asked whether specific applications had already been identified;

(e) Welcomed the active engagement of UNEP in the broader United Nations system as well as with different stakeholder coalitions on aligning digital and AI governance with environmental sustainability goals;

(f) Noted the lower-than-expected programme expenditure and sought additional information on plans to ensure the most efficient use of funds;

(g) Applauded the launch of the World Environment Situation Room and implementation of the Global Environmental Data Strategy, characterizing them as transformative digital public goods that offered concrete benefits for developing countries, helping bridge the digital divide and overcome severe environmental data constraints that often hindered the fulfilment of environmental commitments;

(h) Recommended that citizen science, a key data stream, be incorporated into the Global Environmental Data Strategy;

(i) Also identified the environmental data capacity toolkit as a means of strengthening national capacities to make evidence-based national decisions;

(j) Sought clarification on how tools such as the World Environment Situation Room, the Global Resource Information Database – Geneva and the Environmental Policy Tracker interacted;

(k) Expressed support for UNEP work on responsible and environmentally sustainable AI and encouraged the continued development of practical governance mechanisms, standards and implementation guidance;

(l) Said that the development of EnvironmentGPT demonstrated the importance of grounding AI applications in trusted, validated data and authoritative environmental information to support evidence-based decision-making;

(m) Sought clarification on governance structures in place to ensure the accountable, transparent, ethical and responsible use of AI, as well as safeguards to prevent analytical bias and ensure validation against sovereign national data; protect national data and comply with data protection requirements;

(n) Also sought additional information on the lessons and testimonials acquired through the deployment of EnvironmentGPT and how the lessons were informing future AI development;

(o) Recognized the value of live and regularly updated data to support timely decision-making and help policymakers remain up to date but cautioned that digital tools should complement and not replace rigorous, government-owned assessment processes, which provided scientific scrutiny, Member State ownership and approval at the specific point in time, all essential elements of a credible science policy interface;

(p) Asked whether there was a goal or objective for the funding level that UNEP would like the subprogramme to reach in the near future;

(q) Asked how UNEP ensured that findings and assessments were presented accurately and with the necessary scientific integrity;

(r) Urged UNEP to consider including citizen science capacity-building in the development of the environmental data capacity toolkit;

(s) Called on UNEP to ensure that the AI and digital initiatives assessed effects on employment, workers' data rights, skills and equality;

(t) Encouraged UNEP to pay attention to inclusive digital governance, data quality and accountability and capacity-building and partnerships, particularly for women's organizations and grassroots stakeholders, to strengthen their ability to contribute to environmental monitoring and innovation and policy implementation;

ADVANCE

(u) Sought information on outreach activities planned to promote the accessibility and uptake of digital tools, including the World Environment Situation Room and the environmental data capacity toolkit, to support evidence-based decision-making and tangible outcomes.

32. Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Confirmed that UNEP had the digital and data governance framework put in place several years earlier, which it updated continuously and which ensured consensus and approval for everything done with regard to digital and data matters;

(b) Explained that UNEP worked with countries to assure the veracity and validity of environmental data and relied on scientific validation through the Office of Science and the thematic divisions, which had their own mechanisms, including the various scientific panels, for verifying the scientific validity of any data used;

(c) Confirmed that all data in the World Environment Situation Room was free and accessible to everyone, and that one principle of the Global Environmental Data Strategy was access and affordability;

(d) Reported that UNEP worked on AI governance in the United Nations Secretariat, which had its own safeguards, and would roll out its own policy in the coming months to provide a specific environmental angle;

(e) Highlighted that feedback on EnvironmentGPT indicated that considerably more functionality was needed, and UNEP was now generalizing the EnvironmentGPT architecture so as to build in different applications and use cases;

(f) Also reported that EnvironmentGPT users wanted to see it embedded in other products, and UNEP was now working to make it the underlying search engine for wedocs and for many of its internal documents;

(g) Suggested that the target for subprogramme growth should initially be in the low hundreds of millions of dollars in terms of the portfolio to be delivered, which could nevertheless be delivered with relatively few people and resources and said that the portfolio was being built through new partnerships and fundraising activities, including concept and proposal submissions;

(h) Confirmed that the environmental policy tracker was located inside the World Environment Situation Room, as one of the ways to make the platform scalable and interoperable was to build all of the applications on top of the same foundation;

(i) Also confirmed that UNEP worked with Global Resource Information Database – Geneva (GRID-Geneva) to integrate the grid database and build the new country profiles functionality in the World Environment Situation Room;

(j) Noted that UNEP was not a standardization agency but reported that it had taken stock of existing standards for AI sustainability and planned to build on them and bring them to Member States' attention for their consideration as part of the report mandated by Environment Assembly resolution 7/9 on the sustainability of AI systems;

(k) Reported that briefing sessions were being planned with regional groups, major groups, stakeholders and partners, and that the environmental data capacity toolkit was designed to be flexible and adapted to countries' needs;

(l) Highlighted that details of the Environmental Data Toolkit, the new offering of UNEP to Member States to help with environmental data gaps assessment capacity-building, would be presented at the side event on digital country offers, to be held on Friday, 11 September, at lunchtime.

12. Concluding remarks

33. A representative of the secretariat provided the following concluding remarks:

(a) Said that seven key messages had emerged from the discussion:

(i) UNEP was moving from reporting activities and outputs to demonstrating impact, a shift that was in progress through measures to strengthen impact and outcome monitoring, indicator metadata, accountability mechanisms and data systems;

(ii) There was a need for enhanced country-level support and responsiveness. The medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 placed greater emphasis on integrated support tailored to national priorities;

ADVANCE

(iii) Climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation and pollution were interconnected challenges that required integrated solutions. At the same time, UNEP was committed to bolstering its work on priority issues such as desertification, drought, sand and dust storms, and wildfires;

(iv) Science, data and innovation should contribute directly to policy decisions and environmental action;

(v) It was important to ensure predictable financing and effective resource mobilization and utilization that matched growing demand for environmental action. Forthcoming efforts in that regard would focus on translating financing into measurable environmental, social and economic outcomes;

(vi) Organizational effectiveness, learning and accountability were crucial. Under its new integrated delivery model, UNEP was taking steps to boost quality assurance processes, regional presence, including co-development, and regular tracking of budgets, activities and time spent;

(vii) Evaluations, audits and recommendations were also vital. UNEP would continue to improve the quality, accessibility and timeliness of information on its performance and management responses, and endeavour to allocate adequate resources to conducting timely subprogramme evaluations.

34. Draft recommendations under agenda item 4 for further consideration by the Committee of Permanent Representatives at a subsequent subcommittee meeting are set out in the annex to the present summary.

35. Additionally, it was proposed that the draft recommendation should be considered either at the current meeting or at an ad hoc meeting of the subcommittee held prior to the quarterly meeting of the subcommittee scheduled for 24 September 2026.

36. Responding to the draft recommendation and accompanying proposal, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Acknowledged the interest among Member States in having clear and transparent information on affiliate personnel;

(b) Noted that such information was already set out in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Composition of the Secretariat: gratis personnel, retired staff, consultants, individual contractors and United Nations Volunteers” (A/79/581), submitted pursuant to General Assembly reporting requests under the human resources management agenda, including resolution 77/278;

(c) Emphasized that UNEP, as an integral part of the United Nations Secretariat, was covered by the Secretariat-wide reporting arrangements requested by the General Assembly. The report applied common definitions, methodology and reporting periods, while its entity-level annexes provided UNEP-specific information on retired staff, consultants, individual contractors and United Nations Volunteers;

(d) Underlined that the existing framework provided UNEP-specific information within a consistent and comparable Secretariat-wide context. A separate UNEP report would use the same underlying data and duplicate the existing reporting and analytical process;

(e) Noted that preparing the biennial Secretary-General’s report required the consolidation, validation and analysis of information from multiple sources. Given the limited UNEP resources, a parallel UNEP-only reporting exercise – particularly on a different timetable – would be extremely difficult. UNEP would in any event need to apply the same methodology as the rest of the Secretariat to preserve consistency and comparability;

(f) Emphasized that the Secretariat considered the most practical and effective approach to be the continued use of the existing Secretary-General’s report, while ensuring that its entity-level information remained responsive to Member States’ needs.

(g) Noted that the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance was preparing the next composition of the Secretariat report on affiliate personnel, covering the biennium 2024–2025, which was expected to be issued by the end of 2026, subject to the finalization of the documentation process and the official issuance schedule.

ADVANCE

37. Said that the proposal for the recommendations to be considered either at the current meeting or at an ad hoc meeting of the subcommittee would be brought to the attention of the Bureau of the Committee. Following up on those responses, the representative of one delegation[14]:

(a) Said that the relevant report of the Secretary-General was not sufficiently comprehensive or granular to provide an adequate understanding of the composition and structure of UNEP personnel;

(b) Also said that an additional, UNEP-specific report would complement, rather than duplicate, the existing reporting process.

Agenda item 5

Contribution of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities to the UNEP medium-term strategy and programme of work

38. A representative of the secretariat presented an update on support provided by UNEP for the implementation of decisions adopted at sessions of the regional forums of ministers of the environment and environment authorities.

39. The presentation was followed by a panel discussion moderated by the Deputy Executive Director during which presentations were made by the Chair of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, Mohamed Sidi Ibrahim, and delivered in English by Mohamed Salem Hamouda, technical adviser, Ministry of Environment of Libya; the Permanent Secretary for Environment and Climate Change of Fiji, Sivendra Michael, representing the Chair of the Forum of Ministers and Environmental Authorities of Asia-Pacific; the High Commissioner of Barbados to Kenya, William Alexander McDonald, representing the Chair of the Forum of Ministers of Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean; and the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy of the Economic Commission for Europe, Elisabete Quintas da Silva.

40. Representatives of many delegations[15] welcomed the presentation and the panel discussion and provided responses to the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Underscored the vital role played by the regional forums in implementing the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029 and programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, achieving tangible outcomes on the ground, and highlighting regional priorities and best practices;

(b) Raised concerns regarding the operational and human resources constraints faced by regional offices, in particular in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and said that the funding of regional offices should be a core institutional obligation;

(c) Emphasized, in line with Environment Assembly resolution 6/3, the need for decisions and other outcomes from regional forums to be more effectively and clearly reflected in the strategic and programmatic work of UNEP, including a stronger link between regional priorities and the provision of tangible support at the national level, with corresponding indicators and budgets;

(d) Noted the need for UNEP to strengthen its engagement with the West Asia region, including through improved coordination with the League of Arab States and the Arab Forum for Environment, and requested that the Forum be represented on future panels under the current agenda item;

(e) Also noted the urgent need for consideration at the regional level of the effects of the El Niño phenomenon;

(f) Encouraged all Member States to seek accreditation to the Committee of Permanent Representatives and to contribute to the Environment Fund, to enable predictable multi-year support at the regional level;

[14] The European Union.

[15] Sierra Leone on behalf of the Group of African States; Mexico on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States; the European Union also on behalf of its member States; Algeria; Argentina; Armenia; Cambodia; Costa Rica; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Iraq; Kenya; Peru; Saudi Arabia; Somalia; State of Palestine; Uganda.

ADVANCE

(g) Noted that the role of regional environmental forums and environmental authorities in the development of the medium-term strategy should remain strictly consultative and not imply any decision-making powers;

(h) Highlighted land degradation and drought as an issue on which regional priorities, international cooperation, and practical implementation could be mutually reinforcing;

(i) Requested the secretariat to report back, at the fourteenth annual subcommittee meeting, on the actions taken in response to the current discussion and on the contribution of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment to the medium-term strategy and programme of work.

(j) Requested the secretariat to elaborate on:

(i) Opportunities to strengthen regional and interregional cooperation;

(ii) How UNEP could further support the implementation of regional priorities and decisions in line with its medium-term strategy and programme of work;

(iii) Ways to strengthen cooperation and synergies as well as specific coordination mechanisms between the United Nations regional commissions and UNEP;

(iv) Practical support for countries to develop and operationalize regional carbon markets, including technical capacity, regulatory frameworks and transparency mechanisms;

(v) Greater visibility directed towards adaptation and adaptation finance for developing countries;

(vi) The possibility of establishing a platform for Member States to monitor UNEP-supported projects in their country;

(vii) Support for aligning and implementing national biodiversity strategies and action plans with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

(viii) How UNEP ensured that its regional support remained demand-driven and consistent with nationally determined priorities and the mandates of relevant intergovernmental processes;

(ix) How UNEP was leveraging regional forums to foster technical cooperation on transboundary water governance, ecosystem restoration, and climate adaptation;

(x) How UNEP would ensure that African countries were not left behind in the transition to data-driven environmental governance and ensure knowledge transfer;

(xi) How feedback between regional forums, the Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives could be optimized and formalized;

(xii) The possibility of developing a more structured region-to-country implementation and feedback framework, including indicators that could allow Member States to assess the practical contribution of the outcomes of regional forums to the implementation of the medium-term strategy and programme of work:

(xiii) The possibility of providing results disaggregated by region in future programme performance reports to enable Member States to assess whether regional priorities were translating into measurable outcomes, and of capturing in future implementation reports not only the activities conducted, but also outcomes, gaps, capacity-building needs and financing requirements, including at the subregional level.

41. In response, the panellists:

(a) Noted that cooperation between UNEP and regional forums needed to be specific rather than general in nature in order to be effective;

(b) [to be completed]

ADVANCE

Agenda item 6

Briefing on the UN80 Initiative

42. Guy Bernard Ryder, Under-Secretary-General for Policy, presented an overview of the implementation of the UN80 Initiative Action Plan and the implementation pathways of the Plan.

43. Representatives of many delegations[16] expressed gratitude for the information provided and made a number of comments. In their comments, they:

(a) Expressed appreciation for the UN80 Initiative, acknowledging that it was an opportunity to make the United Nations more fit for purpose, strengthen the environmental dimension of the United Nations system, further streamline global environmental governance and mainstream effective environmental action;

(b) Posed a number of questions regarding Work Package 27, including regarding the current status of the related report, anticipated issuance, a potential information brief on the environment, plans for its consideration during the General Assembly High-level Week, the decision-making pathway and timelines and linkages with other work packages;

(c) Recommended that in the next steps particular emphasis be placed on concrete and achievable efficiency gains that were underpinned by a solid, long-term business case and sustainable in terms of the impact of multilateral action and long-term financial viability;

(d) Stressed that proposed adjustments should not generate new budgetary implications or administrative structures that could compromise system efficiency, and that Member States should be made aware of the budgetary and administrative implications well in advance to enable them to exercise appropriate oversight;

(e) Emphasized the strategic importance of establishing a regular intergovernmental United Nations process on water and finding the best possible architecture for it in the context of the UN80 process, including through the elevation of UN-Water;

(f) Noted that General Assembly resolution 80/251 provided a framework for improving the creation, implementation and review of United Nations mandates and asked how UNEP could help Member States apply it to the environmental pillar, particularly to identify overlapping or outdated mandates;

(g) Stressed that the review of mandates should not just be aimed at reducing the number of mandates but also at identifying duplication, ensuring implementation by the agency that could deliver the best results and responding to Member States' priorities and pressing challenges;

(h) Emphasized the need for mandates to remain owned and driven by Member States;

(i) Stressed that efficiency should strengthen implementation and not undermine the core objectives of United Nations mandates, particularly those aimed at supporting developing countries in achieving their development goals;

(j) Expressed support for efforts to further develop the United Nations mandate registry and related digital tools to enhance transparency and accessibility of information on mandates;

(k) Declared their willingness to engage constructively in the UN80 process and plan of action, including the review of mandates, while also calling for greater transparency in the process, noting that full transparency and continued dialogue between the secretariats and Member States were necessary for reform implementation and a constructive working environment;

(l) Stressed that the outcomes of the UN80 Initiative should fully respect the mandates entrusted to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and that efforts to improve efficiency should not lead to a reduction in the functional autonomy of existing arrangements or diminish the direct role of Member States in decision-making processes;

(m) Asked how Member States could be sure that rationalization efforts would not inadvertently affect the capacity and mandates of entities delivering specialized support, including in developing countries;

[16] Argentina, Australia, Brazil, the European Union, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Asia-Pacific regional major groups and stakeholders, business and industry major group, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group, local authorities major group, scientific and technological community major group, women major group.

ADVANCE

(n) Expressed appreciation for efforts to reconfigure United Nations country teams and provide expertise on demand, while also cautioning that decisions on the reconfiguration of country teams required careful consideration and adequate consultation;

(o) Highlighted the unique added value of multilateral hubs for the United Nations and multilateralism, and recommended strengthening their potential for synergies and innovation;

(p) Congratulated UNEP for its leadership and involvement in the identified work streams, including the focus on internal efficiencies, and underscored the importance of strengthening UNEP headquarters and the United Nations Office at Nairobi, highlighting that the accreditation of spouses in same-sex families was an issue that remained to be addressed in that regard;

(q) Recalled the importance of further strengthening Nairobi as a United Nations duty station, which as the only United Nations headquarters located in the Global South, made an important contribution to the representativeness and inclusiveness of multilateral decision-making processes;

(r) Recommended that decisions on the use of AI be subject to careful consideration and adequate consultation, and that the environmental impacts of AI be considered when implementing the data commons initiative and other digital solutions;

(s) Requested clarification on how the success of the UN80 Initiative would be measured, including indicators that would demonstrate that reforms were improving delivery and impact for Member States and beneficiaries, as well as timelines and milestones;

(t) Noted that many issues under discussion extended beyond the remit of the Environment Assembly and individual governing bodies and asked how decisions on cross-cutting recommendations would be taken;

(u) Noted the importance of maintaining momentum and ensuring continuity of ownership, including during the transition to the new Secretary-General;

(v) Emphasized that adjustments to staffing arrangements should not result in setbacks in gender parity or geographical representation and that reform efforts should be seized as an opportunity to advance a more balanced geographical distribution across the United Nations system;

(w) Sought clarity on how the current resource constraints and the plan reforms might affect United Nations capacity in each region, in particular in the environmental role, and how proposals emerging from the UN80 Initiative might affect the mandates, programmes, priorities, organizational arrangement or regional delivery agreed by the Environment Assembly;

(x) Sought clarity on the implications of the new human rights compact for the human rights pillar of the United Nations, and on whether sharing of national data with the data commons might become a new conditionality for small countries to access resources;

(y) Expressed concern that the consolidation, restructuring or resource reduction resulting from the UN80 Initiative might ultimately weaken the limited space available for rights holders to participate in environmental governance;

(z) Expressed support for the establishment of a single centre of excellence for women, peace and security;

(aa) Noted that much of the implementation of global commitments took place beyond the United Nations and its Member States and asked what role major groups and stakeholders could anticipate playing in the reform process;

(bb) Called on the Environment Management Group to strengthen horizontal coordination between agencies as well as vertical coordination connecting the global United Nations system with national, regional and local governments, including closer cooperation with the various United Nations entities.

44. In response, the Under-Secretary-General for Policy:

(a) Recalled that UNEP was one of the Work Package 27 leads and suggested that the Executive Director could better address questions in that regard but also expressed the hope that the Secretary-General's information brief on Work Package 27 would be issued very soon;

(b) Explained that answers to questions on such things as decision-making and timelines should flow naturally from the contents of the Secretary-General's information brief, but assured representatives that, in keeping with an undertaking from the outset of the UN80 Initiative, the established processes would be followed and the General Assembly would be the entity to take decisions where it was mandated and had the prerogative to do so;

ADVANCE

(c) Reaffirmed that the UN80 process was driven by Member States, whose decision-making prerogatives needed to be respected, had been respected and would be respected, and that mandates were the property of Member States;

(d) Also reaffirmed that the role of the Secretariat was to provide information and analysis and develop tools, such as the mandate registry, to help Member States be the most effective possible custodians of their mandates;

(e) Agreed that common methods were needed for managing mandates more effectively;

(f) Acknowledged the need for transparency and information, noted the commitment from the outset of UN80 to proceed in conditions of transparency and do everything possible to provide the fullest information to Member States so that they were genuinely informed decision makers, and pledged to continue to operate on the basis of transparency and information;

(g) Noted that, according to the Secretary-General, the success of UN80 would be demonstrated by its impact and the support rendered to Member States, but acknowledged that financial impacts were more easily quantifiable than the less tangible benefits in terms of trust, confidence in the United Nations system and development outcomes;

(h) Agreed that an effort must be made to measure success and confirmed that the United Nations Secretariat was engaged in ongoing work on the financial side while maintaining a clear focus on the country-level impact and the difference made to the everyday lives of those the United Nations served;

(i) Underscored that the aim of the UN80 Initiative was to maintain and increase the effectiveness of multilateralism and its inclusiveness and proximity to those served by the United Nations, by sharpening the manner in which humanitarian assistance was delivered and trying to attract more resources into the system;

(j) Explained that the United Nations country team reconfiguration exercise was aimed at moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach and towards providing the in-country capacity needed to meet the priorities set by Member States and supplementing it with expertise on demand from across the system;

(k) Recalled that the Summit of the Future had resulted in a very strong commitment to strengthen partnerships with civil society stakeholders and major groups, and said that the United Nations Secretariat was attempting to ensure that UN80 avoided damaging such partnerships and provided the foundations for strengthening them;

(l) Confirmed that the incoming Secretary-General would be provided with a series of information briefs and supporting documentation with details on what had been done so far, the processes under way and the views of Member States, to put the incoming team in the best possible position to judge how to take the process forward.

Agenda item 7

Briefing on Work Package 27 of the UN80 Initiative Action Plan

45. The Executive Director of UNEP and Daniele Violetti, Senior Director, Programme Coordination, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, presented an overview of the preliminary recommendations and potential pathways in the framework of Work Package 27 of the UN80 Initiative Action Plan.

46. Representatives of many delegations[17] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Highlighted the importance of reducing duplication and fragmentation, and of promoting a more coherent and integrated support on the environment;

[17] Argentina, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Thailand, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group, major group stakeholders from Asia and the Pacific, non-governmental organization major group, scientific and technological community major group and women major group.

ADVANCE

(b) Were of the view that any proposed reform should be supported by clear evidence, analysis of implementation capacity, the financial and administrative implications and consider existing mandates and governance arrangements;

(c) Highlighted that any proposed reform should not result in reducing support to Member States at the country level, and that adequate, predictable and additional resources and capacity development would be required, responsive to nationally determined priorities;

(d) Were adamant that no reform should lead to any additional burden for Member States, especially developing counties, particularly recommendation 6, which pertained to strengthening programmatic synergies across multilateral environmental agreements and the potential consolidation of reporting;

(e) Viewed delivery at the national and regional levels as a key priority to ensure that global commitments translated into tangible support for Member States;

(f) Suggested that synergies and coherence between the entities dealing with climate and environment should be ensured and that UNEP should be the central hub of that system and play a key role in the science–policy interface, with Member States at the heart of the decision-making process;

(g) Had differing views on the assertion, in recommendation 1, that a healthy environment undergirded all three pillars of the Charter of the United Nations, peace and security, human rights, and development, with many agreeing wholeheartedly, others cautioning, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/242, that UNEP should not be involved in conflict identification, prevention or resolution, recalling that there was no link in the medium-term strategy between the aforementioned pillars and the environment, and stating that the implementation of the recommendation was not within, nor should it be used to expand, the mandates of UNEP or the Environment Assembly;

(h) In view of the above, therefore, some requested referral of the issue of the assertion in recommendation 1 to the General Assembly and, as appropriate, to the Environment Assembly for intergovernmental consideration, stating that pending such consideration and an explicit decision by the competent intergovernmental body, no decision should be taken to implement the recommendation, neither should any irreversible institutional, programmatic or budgetary steps be taken;

(i) Requested referral of the final package, together with the views expressed by Member States, to the attention of the next Secretary-General, once appointed;

(j) Suggested changing the “political guidance” to “policy guidance” in recommendation 2, which pertained to enabling the Environment Assembly to achieve its potential as the United Nations universal body serving as the convening platform for coherent, system-wide environmental action, expressing understanding of the term “universal body” as “having universal membership”;

(k) Had differing views on the global environment leaders’ summit proposed under recommendation 2, with some noting that the Environment Assembly already had a high-level segment and seeking further clarification of the summit’s expected purpose, benefits and costs, and some stating that such an event would allow Member States with the support of the Environment Assembly to translate policy and strategies into concrete actions, but expressing concerns about the cost burden of doing so;

(l) Supported the goals of reducing duplication, simplifying reporting, improving coordination and making technical assistance, including tools and guidelines, more accessible to Member States, but stated that that reforms and support needed to be context-sensitive to address the specific crises and challenges facing developing countries;

(m) Underlined the importance of improving synergies across the broader environmental architecture and among multilateral environmental agreements, but stressed, with regard to recommendation 5, which pertained to exploring consolidation options across the landscape of multilateral environmental agreements, that any examination of consolidation options be led by Member States, respect the autonomy of each agreement and the authority of its parties, and be inclusive, transparent and fully respectful of the legal aspects of each agreement;

(n) In relation to the consolidation options, a proposal was made that priority be given to building on existing successful clusters, coordination mechanisms and hubs, such as those in Geneva and Bonn, rather than creating additional governance layers and overarching frameworks, and allowing for a coordinated approach globally and the avoidance of duplication;

(o) Sought more information on the proposed establishment, under recommendation 5, of a time-limited, independent and regionally representative consultative group to evaluate options for the

ADVANCE

consolidation of multilateral environmental agreements, including its rationale, selection process and mandate, stressing that the work of such a group should remain advisory and not prejudge decisions under the agreements concerned;

(p) Asked, given that the work package was system-wide, about the implications for multilateral agreements not administered by UNEP;

(q) Underlined the relevance of the Environment Management Group in supporting system-wide coordination on the environment, and asked, regarding recommendation 4, for further information on the current obstacles to its operation in a more effective way, and more detail about the proposed actions to enhance its impact. Some delegations requested more information on potential new functions, approval, procedures and accountability to the relevant governing bodies and the specific role of UNEP therein, as well as stressing that a United Nations common results framework needed to respect individual mandates and Member States' authority over policy decisions, with any substantive change to the group's mandate, governance or functions requiring approval by the General Assembly;

(r) Agreed on the central role of science for evidence-based environmental decision-making and underscored that comprehensive, objective and impartial assessments were essential for Member States to be able to make prudent decisions. Some were of the view that while science must inform policy, it should not replace intergovernmental decision making;

(s) Welcomed the assertion, under recommendation 3 on repositioning environmental science as a shared United Nations asset, that the main challenge was not a lack of environmental science, but rather the fragmented production and use of scientific knowledge across the United Nations system, and asked what specific actions UNEP planned to take to leverage existing capacities across the United Nations system to produce, use and strengthen scientific knowledge;

(t) Asked how the Secretariat envisioned the institutionalization of a periodic science–policy dialogue as per recommendation 2;

(u) Asked how the support centres proposed under recommendation 9, pertaining to the creation of support centres to provide Member States with a one-stop-shop function to access knowledge and advice from across the United Nations system, would function without duplicating the work of United Nations country teams;

(v) Requested information on the specific criteria and financing models that would be used to ensure that joint delivery funding produced direct, tangible impacts on the ground rather than greater administrative overheads;

(w) Stated that private sector finance should complement and not substitute for public finance nor should new financial mechanisms replace existing ones;

(x) Sought clarification of the use of artificial intelligence and related support structures, including governance, resource implications, environmental footprint and interoperability with existing mechanisms;

(y) Encouraged UNEP to develop and lead a global environmental indicator framework initiative to keep the state of the world's environment under continuous review;

(z) Called for all reforms to be subject to inclusive governance that involved the meaningful participation of all major groups and stakeholders across all decision-making bodies, equitably financing and directing resources to grassroots actors;

(aa) Asked how recommendation 10, which pertained to the institutionalization of direct engagement with real economy actors to accelerate implementation and shift private capital toward sustainable outcomes, would give real economy actors a structured role upstream, in policy development, as well as during its implementation;

(bb) Asked how UNEP intended to connect the outcomes of work package 27 with wider reform efforts already under way, ensuring clear priorities, ownership, milestones and measures of success, and what role the Environment Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives had in providing strategic direction and maintaining oversight of implementation;

(cc) Noted that the timing of receipt of the background documents for the agenda item had limited the opportunity for Member States to engage in detailed consideration of the proposals in advance of the meeting, asked for further opportunities to engage on the recommendations and their implementation and sought clarification of how and when that would happen and how Member States inputs were being considered;

ADVANCE

(dd) Proposed that, when the Secretary-General's Information Brief on work package 27 was published, it include clear decision and implementation pathways for each recommendation and the actions proposed, and that any changes be underpinned by an assessment on the basis of legal feasibility, governance implications, cost efficiency and effectiveness;

(ee) Proposed that interested Member States could facilitate informal brainstorming sessions, drawing on expertise to develop practical and inclusive proposals.

47. In response, the Executive Director of UNEP and Mr. Violetti:

(a) Emphasized that the recommendations under Work Package 27 were intended reforms to address the environmental activities of United Nations entities in support of Member States and were not focused exclusively on UNEP, and that the responsibilities, rights and prerogatives of Member States would be observed at all times;

(b) Said that the Secretary-General, UNEP and the incoming Secretary-General could provide briefs on the way forward, based on feedback from Member States;

(c) Explained that the periodic science–policy dialogue was intended to bring together findings from existing assessments and scientific mechanisms that could inform policy discussions in the Environment Assembly and improve coherence by identifying linkages and cross-cutting opportunities and integrating policies to assist with policymaking in Member States, noting further that a first science-policy dialogue had indeed been arranged at the seventh session of the Environment Assembly with the participation of the elected chairs of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution;

48. Suggested that a continued pilot phase for the proposed science–policy dialogue could enable Member States to test modalities, participation formats and added value before considering permanent institutional arrangements. Such a graduated approach reduced risk and allowed refinement based on practical experience;

(a) Stressed that a global environment leaders' summit would elevate environmental issues to the highest political level and provide strategic direction on the implementation of the global environmental agenda. Such a summit would only be convened if Member States so decided;

(b) Responded that data and science platform standards would be needed to be instituted to enable data exchange across United Nations entities as that would enable Member States to access and overlay different datasets provided by various United Nations entities; s

(c) Emphasized that the purpose of the Environment Management Group proposals was not to change the Group's mandate, but to provide a stronger system-wide coordination mechanism that better integrated environmental considerations into United Nations programmes, to allow environmental analysis and recommendations to inform the broader development planning and deliberations in different United Nations entities, and to coordinate action relating to the environmental dimension of sustainable development;

(d) Emphasized that a common results framework and stronger links with United Nations coordination bodies would not require endorsement from Member States but could make the delivery of policies and programmes more efficient and streamlined;

(e) Drew attention to the successful experience of the merger of the secretariat of the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions as a model for other multilateral environmental agreement bodies to consider. Suggested that there would be opportunities in the biodiversity and mercury spheres to explore such opportunities, all the more in view of the financial constraints faced by various secretariats, but stressing that any decision in that regard would clearly remain in the hands of the parties and the respective conferences of the parties; ;

(f) Suggested that the General Assembly and/or the Environment Assembly could reflect on an independent assessment by a consultative group of ministers or high-level representatives of Member States of the possible consolidation options, and invite the multilateral environmental agreement governing bodies concerned to consider them;

(g) Suggested also that, while monitoring and reporting requirements were set by the conferences of the parties to the various multilateral environmental agreements and were ultimately decided by Member States, options could be considered to reduce the burden on Member States, especially given that small units within ministries were often responsible for reporting similar data to many different bodies;

ADVANCE

(h) Underscored that country team reconfiguration and expertise on demand were an integral part of UNEP efforts under the UN80 reform process, and a response mechanism was being piloted in a number of countries as part of the expertise-on-demand mechanism;

(i) Highlighted that the support centre on climate was intended to be a networking mechanism to connect existing capacities rather than a new institutional structure, and the resource implication of a full-fledged centre could be assessed during a pilot phase;

(j) Explained that the support centre concept was intended to facilitate access to knowledge and thus ensure that country teams were better placed to support Member States;

(k) Explained also that recommendations were aligned with those under other work packages and could therefore be integrated with each other;

(l) Said that structured dialogues for exchanging views and experiences between Member States and real economy actors could lead to more evidence-based policies that responded directly to the needs expressed by the private sector, with Member States remaining ultimately responsible for decision-making.

Agenda item 8

Funding base of the United Nations Environment Programme

49. Following a short video presentation on UNEP and its mission, in line with the vision and strategic objectives of the medium-term strategy for the period 2026–2029, the Executive Director of UNEP moderated a panel discussion. The members of the panel were the Minister of Water, Environment and Climate Change of Jamaica and President of the eighth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly, Matthew Samuda; the High Commissioner of Zambia and Permanent Representative to UNEP, Alfred Musemuna; Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to UNEP, Sultan Hajiyev; Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Japan in Nairobi, Kanako Okano; and Deputy Ambassador of Germany to Kenya, Konrad Lax.

50. Representatives of many delegations[18] expressed gratitude for the panel discussion, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, they:

(a) Welcomed successful efforts by UNEP to broaden the Environment Fund contributor base and promote contributions in line with the voluntary indicative scale of contributions, recognize full share and multi-year contributors, and demonstrate the results enabled by core funding;

(b) Expressed concern at the potential further decline in contributions to the Environment Fund in 2026, and that UNEP funding was disproportionately reliant on the contributions of a small group of Member States;

(c) Underscored that predictable, multi-year and non-earmarked core funding remained essential for UNEP in implementing its medium-term strategy and programme of work, while also retaining the flexibility to respond to emerging environmental challenges;

(d) Noted also that the strengthening and widening of the funding base of UNEP was a shared responsibility and therefore encouraged UNEP, for its part, to provide regular substantive information on resource mobilization, including funding trends, processing and allocation, to enable meaningful engagement;

(e) Noted that the efforts to strengthen the Environment Fund should not result in an expectation that developing countries should bear disproportionate or additional financial burdens. Contributions should remain voluntary;

(f) Cautioned against the introduction of any new approaches that would reclassify countries or determine their expected contributions based on income levels or external economic classifications;

(g) Announced a new multi-year contribution from the Kingdom of the Netherlands of €19.4 million over four years to the Environment Fund in support of the implementation of the medium-term

[18] Australia, Canada, European Union, Finland, France, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Philippines, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, business and industry major group, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group, women major group.

ADVANCE

strategy for the period 2026–2029, and a contribution of €2.5 million from Finland to the Environment Fund for 2026 and 2027;

(h) Underscored the need for fair, equitable and non-discriminatory access to international environmental finance;

(i) Expressed support for the diversification of funding sources for UNEP;

(j) Underscored the need for increased transparency regarding UNEP projects, in particular in keeping the open data portal up to date, to show the real value of UNEP work;

(k) Noted the importance of story-telling and demonstrating the value for money of UNEP work to taxpayers, with an emphasis on the expertise and science-based approach of UNEP;

(l) Noted that the funding success of UNEP depended on the organization's alignment with the normative and operational activities of the United Nations system;

(m) Drew attention to the importance of the coordination of environmental science through the Environment Management Group in the context of Work Package 27 of the UN80 Initiative Action Plan;

(n) Noted that the funding success of UNEP depended on the organization's alignment with the normative and operational activities of the United Nations system;

(o) Expressed concern regarding the adverse impacts of illegal unilateral sanctions imposed on some countries and stressed the need to identify measures to mitigate the impact on UNEP operational activities in affected regions and countries;

(p) Requested the secretariat to elaborate on:

(i) Work planned to find ways of neutralizing the adverse impacts of illegal unilateral sanctions on its operational activities in affected regions and countries, including in order to build trust with donors;

(ii) How, in the light of the current financial constraints, the UNEP Communications Division could increase the visibility of results achieved by the organization globally and regionally in support of the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy;

(iii) The non-traditional partners that had the greatest potential for contributing meaningfully to the UNEP funding base, in terms of financial volume and transformative impact, and the ways in which UNEP planned to engage strategically with those partners;

(iv) In the light of the diversification of funding sources through engagement with non-traditional partners, the safeguards in place, including due diligence and partnership policies, to ensure that UNEP maintained independence when implementing its programme of work;

(v) How UNEP and the Budget Steering Committee would ensure that resources would be allocated to subprogrammes in a balanced and coordinated manner, and be directed towards the highest priority outcomes to deliver measurable impacts;

(vi) The operational framework or criteria that would ensure that proportionality in risk control would work in practice;

(vii) How the long-term viability and relevance of the UNEP Planetary Funds would be ensured;

(viii) How UNEP would better align its overall ambition with the resources available and work towards ensuring that earmarked contributions complemented, rather than substituted, contributions to core funding;

(ix) How progress in implementing the updated resource mobilization strategy would be reported to Member States;

(x) How UNEP would ensure that political considerations, including unilateral measures and sanctions, did not unduly affect the access of countries to financial resources, and that funding decisions were always based on objective, transparent and needs-based criteria;

ADVANCE

(xi) How UNEP was ensuring that resources were being directed towards the highest priority outcomes and were delivering measurable impacts;

(xii) How the comparative advantage of UNEP was evolving as it expanded its role across a growing number of climate and environmental financing mechanisms, and what steps were being taken to ensure that the role translated into stronger delivery outcomes, coordinated country-led programming, and improved implementation performance, in particular for small island developing States and Pacific Island States;

(xiii) How UNEP would ensure that increased core funding would translate into stronger and more systematic participation of Indigenous Peoples across UNEP programmes and environmental decision-making;

(xiv) How UNEP would ensure that any new funding partnerships respected the rights, priorities and voices of Indigenous Peoples.

(q) Requested the secretariat to provide an update on the resource mobilization strategy, including achievements, challenges and lessons learned, at the fourteenth annual meeting of the subcommittee.

51. Responding to the comments and requests for clarification, the representative of the secretariat:

(a) Invited the Committee of Permanent Representatives to further engage in a discussion on strengthening the Environment Fund and the role of the voluntary indicative scale of contribution;

(b) Applauded Azerbaijan, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Monaco and the Kingdom of the Netherlands for signing multi-year contribution agreements and thanked Finland and Norway for the progress being made to that effect;

(c) Noted that funding was needed to build the infrastructure for the very spine of UNEP, including governance infrastructure and facilitation, science, data, environmental law and other foundational aspects of UNEP operations;

(d) Recalled that UNEP had to comply with the parameters established in relation to earmarked contributions, which are provided by the vertical fund or the donor to fund particular programme or project activities with set objectives;

(e) Clarified that earmarked funding constrained the ability of UNEP to reallocate resources across priorities and reiterated the importance of core and flexible funding to address areas where funding remained insufficient.

(f) Highlighted that the partial achievement (55 per cent) of non-subprogramme indicators in the previous programme of work for the biennium 2024–2025 illustrated the critical role of core resources because earmarked resources did not support the achievement of such organization-wide targets;

(g) Said that the resource mobilization strategy was being rolled out and would translate into strategic objectives, concrete actions and specific institutional responsibilities;

(h) Noted the importance of engaging with the private sector and philanthropy, while emphasizing that such funding was generally directed to specific interests, priorities, causes or countries and could not substitute for public-sector core funding.

(i) Further noted that private sector funding could not be viewed as a substitute for public funding of the Environment Fund;

(j) Observed that UNEP worked with the private sector in two distinct ways: (i) on the one hand in supporting countries to create enabling conditions for private investment and leverage additional resources; while (ii), on the other, working with the private sector to reduce the environmental footprint of the private sector and to raise overall environmental standards in the sector;

(k) Reiterated that confidence in UNEP funding depended on trust, transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness and demonstrated impact, and noted ongoing efforts to strengthen reporting and results management;

(l) Highlighted that UNEP was engaging strongly and critically with the changing financial instrument landscape, including by encouraging commercial entities to adopt and use standards, such as through a number of UNEP engagements, including the UNEP Finance Initiative, engaging with market-shaping, market-creating policies for blended finance platforms, developing policies that de-risked private sector investments (such as through the Global Fund for Coral Reefs), and through

ADVANCE

funds that helped to ensure investable pipelines (such as seed assistance facilities), as well as by using its expertise to measure and verify value for money and impact, which was critical for results-based financing.

Agenda item 9

Operationalizing the one impact framework

52. In line with the UNEP programme of work and budget for the biennium 2026–2027, including the one impact framework, a representative of the secretariat provided a briefing on the development of the UNEP impact measurement approach, with a focus on strengthening credibility and accountability using scientific and data informed methods to measure the effects of UNEP activities on people and planet, as well as emerging lessons that could inform the UNEP portfolio design and implementation.

53. Representatives of many delegations[19] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarification on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Welcomed the transition towards a results-based model focused on attributable impact as a means of ensuring greater transparency and accountability, strengthening institutional credibility and securing donor confidence;

(b) Highlighted the importance of ensuring that continuous baseline adjustments did not undermine predictability and accountability under the one impact framework;

(c) Stated that the operationalization of the framework, including methodological standardization and the implementation of counterfactual methods, should not place an undue administrative, financial or reporting burden on developing countries or regional offices and project managers;

(d) Also stated that common indicators should be used in ways that helped UNEP to set programme priorities or design projects that were country-driven and responsive to national circumstances;

(e) Called for impact to be assessed in the light of national circumstances, development needs, institutional capacities and external factors;

(f) Commended the strategic shift within UNEP towards stronger collaboration with the multilateral environmental agreements;

(g) Requested UNEP to provide information to the Committee of Permanent Representatives on lessons learned from the impact measurement methodology to be undertaken during the initial phase and to report its findings to the Committee in phases;

(h) Encouraged UNEP to complement the implementation of the impact measurement approach with continued capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and technical support for Member States and development partners;

(i) Said that, to capture differentiated outcomes and ensure that no one was left behind, specific indicators should be developed and data disaggregated, including by Indigenous status, age, sex, disability, migration and employment status, and formal or informal economic participation;

(j) Called on UNEP to ensure the meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples, children and young people, workers and trade unions throughout the impact cycle;

(k) Sought clarification on:

(i) When UNEP would begin to use the framework to connect funding decisions, performance evidence and organizational learning to make difficult prioritization decisions;

(ii) How the framework would support value-for-money assessments;

[19] Argentina, Australia, Cambodia, Canada, China, the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), the Netherlands (Kingdom of), Norway, Peru, the United Kingdom, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group, non-governmental organizations major group, women's major group, workers and trade unions major group.

ADVANCE

(iii) How UNEP intended to address attribution challenges and demonstrate its contribution to longer-term system-level change, where results could be more difficult to measure;

(iv) The timeline for the impact monitoring and measurement cycle under the framework;

(v) How counterfactual and quasi-experimental methods would be used in practice;

(vi) How the assessment approach under the framework would take into account contextual forces and the interplay of actors other than UNEP;

(vii) How the reporting burden and elements such as quality assurance and data sources would be managed;

(viii) The anticipated longer-term resource and capacity-building needs for implementing the framework;

(ix) How impact findings and lessons learned would inform adjustments at the subprogramme and project levels, including with regard to resource allocation, whether they would be shared with other United Nations entities and how they would be reported to the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

(x) How the framework would support UNEP in demonstrating and measuring impact sustainability beyond individual projects;

(xi) The steps taken or planned to harmonize approaches to impact measurement and develop shared standards across the United Nations system;

(xii) The lessons learned with regard to the setting of targets, some of which had been overshot considerably in recent reporting cycles;

(xiii) The current degree of institutional uptake of the framework and readiness to implement it;

(xiv) How the framework would distinguish between the contribution of UNEP and that of other stakeholders, including under multilateral environmental agreements;

(xv) Whether framework indicators took into account data collection and management challenges in developing countries.

54. In response, the representative of the secretariat:

(a) Said that the framework would enable UNEP to assess, compare and, where required, strengthen project and programme design and implementation while controlling for contextual factors;

(b) Highlighted that baselines, targets and indicators in the programme of work for the biennium 2026–2027 had been updated because the programme of work had been developed in 2025 when the previous medium-term strategy was still under implementation;

(c) Explained that country-level and administrative data, and current methodologies that were referred to in scientific papers and included, among other things, quasi experimental methods (like propensity score matching, regression discontinuity and synthetic controls) could all be used to model and compare UNEP action with no-action scenarios to then infer UNEP impact with statistical confidence at the organizational or portfolio level;

(d) Noted that the use of mixed methods research under the framework would ensure both quantitative and qualitative data collection, especially since UNEP policy and normative work required methods like process tracing, positive deviance analyses and “most significant change” for understanding and measuring change that UNEP could take credit for;

(e) Reported that UNEP was collaborating and planning to collaborate on impact measurement initiatives with entities including the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children’s Fund, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Bank, while ensuring that such collaboration was aligned with its overall environmental objectives. Partnerships with universities were also encouraged;

(f) Also reported that UNEP had organized clinics to strengthen the capacity of project and programme staff on the ground to implement the framework;

ADVANCE

(g) Explained that impact could be measured in the short term by analysing intermediate nodes in the theory of change, and that UNEP was piloting projects and programmes that had measurability built into them. Also provided examples of how that could be done using forestry programmes and of greenhouse gas reduction impacts;

(h) Said that additional core resources were needed to build capacity and improve data systems to enable the successful roll-out of the framework as well as to collect baseline and endline data for counterfactual or no-action scenarios and to build measurement capability in the teams and in the projects. Those resources were also required if additional disaggregated data by group was required since projects did not routinely collect such data or accommodate that activity in budgets;

(i) Explained that the initial stage of using pilot projects to build standard operating procedures in order to understand and assess measurability and to calibrate system and personnel capacity would occur for the current year and the subsequent year; and thereafter the lessons learned would inform the measurement of impact for a representative portfolio. Lessons learned would also be shared with the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

(j) Clarified that reporting on impact indicators against targets would occur in 2030, one year after the close of the current medium-term strategy for the period 2026-2029. However, interim indicators, represented by the outcome indicators and targets, would provide an early indication as to whether projects and portfolios were on the right path. Outcome measurement was necessary but not sufficient for impact measurement. Reiterated that outcome measurement reporting in UNEP was planned at the end of every year and to be reported after the end of the year. Finally, reporting would build on the one impact framework and existing Committee of Permanent Representatives and programme performance report processes, rather than creating a separate reporting stream; Highlighted that impact measurement was an important and necessary requirement for informing value for money and results-based financing, which, in turn, was becoming necessary in an increasingly resource-constrained world;

(k) Clarified that impact measurement, despite its name, was a critical tool for intraorganizational learning because it forced teams to understand where they were on their planned implementation pathways, inculcated discipline for measurement and also informed organizations when projects and programmes were not working because of design or implementation or both. That enabled organizations to learn and insert such learning into the next cohort of project design;

(l) Highlighted that impact measurement was also critical to inform not only what solutions were required but how those solutions should be implemented;

(m) Noted that, where feasible, UNEP would use follow-up data, environmental datasets and other secondary sources to track whether impacts were sustained after project closure. Long-term assessment would focus particularly on selected programmes and countries where sufficient data and credible comparison options existed;

(n) Highlighted that the one impact framework and the measurement approach was an important tool to break silos and to measure magnitudes of trade-offs and synergies;

(o) Noted the critical need for robust contributions to UNEP core funds because impact measurement (staff, systems, data, analytical capacity) was funded through such funds. Also indicated that while some capacity existed in UNEP, such capacity would be reskilled.

Agenda item 10

Briefing on the sessions of the conferences of the parties to the three Rio Conventions

55. The Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, Yasmin Fouad; Deputy Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, Jihyun Lee; Senior Director, Programmes Coordination, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Daniele Violetti; the Executive Director, UNEP; Director, Ecosystems Division, UNEP, Susan Gardner; Director, Climate Change Division, UNEP, Martin Krause, delivered presentations on the outcomes or preparations for the 2026 sessions of the respective conferences of the parties, as well as ongoing collaboration initiatives among the convention secretariats in the context of the conferences of the parties.

ADVANCE

56. Representatives of many delegations[20] welcomed the presentations and provided responses to the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Emphasized the importance of achieving greater coherence in addressing the interconnected challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and land degradation, while fully respecting the distinct mandates, legal frameworks and decision-making processes of the three conventions and avoiding duplication of work;

(b) Underscored the need to strengthen implementation, capacity-building, technology transfer and access to adequate, predictable and sustainable means of implementation, particularly for developing countries;

(c) Encouraged UNEP to continue supporting Member States in translating outcomes from the conferences of the parties into coherent and integrated action at the national and regional levels, including through its programme of work;

(d) Called for action to strengthen synergies between the three conventions that also contributed to accelerated implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development; incorporated Indigenous-led climate, biodiversity and land restoration initiatives; and recognized the role of women in environmental governance and implementation;

(e) Also called for the establishment of mechanisms that brought together national, subnational and local governments and enabled youth participation in the implementation of the three conventions; the inclusion of data from the subnational level into national reporting under the conventions; and the establishment of multi-level governance as a priority thematic issue of the Joint Liaison Group;

(f) Sought information on how UNEP encouraged cooperation across the three conventions through its messaging, partnerships and outreach;

(g) Enquired whether there were opportunities to better coordinate national planning, reporting, monitoring and implementation across the three conventions and to reduce the reporting burden on Member States;

(h) Expressed regret at the limited opportunities to advance discussions on practical cooperation in efforts to implement the three conventions at the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification;

(i) Encouraged all parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification to remain open to meaningful dialogue and compromise going forward;

(j) Sought clarification of the UNEP role in identifying and mapping sources of sand and dust storms, and how it would work in consultation with the secretariat of the Convention to Combat Desertification and affected countries to provide practical support on the ground;

(k) Requested an update on the establishment of a data tagging system to track investment related to desertification, land degradation, drought, and sand and dust storms;

(l) Called for the draft global plan of action for education on biodiversity to be strengthened by giving recognition to the views, values and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples and local communities;

(m) Stressed that discussions on financial obligations must remain firmly grounded in the Convention on Biological Diversity and that any further financial contributions must remain voluntary;

(n) Emphasized that national circumstances, priorities, capacities, sovereignty and law should be respected in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and imposing any additional financial reporting or administrative burdens that had not been agreed by the parties should be avoided;

(o) Expressed concern that karst and subterranean ecosystems were underrecognized in major international assessments despite their significance for biodiversity and water supply and sought clarification on how such a gap could be addressed in terms of the global review of the collective progress in the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework;

[20] Armenia, Australia, European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, United Kingdom, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples' major group, local authorities major group, non-governmental organizations major group and women major group.

ADVANCE

(p) Drew attention to the recently launched global climate action agenda, setting out 10 priority areas for discussion at the thirty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;

(q) Called for greater coordinated efforts to address the worst impacts of climate change;

(r) Noted that the Paris Agreement required a balanced approach for developing countries' adaptation and means of implementation, including the fundamental priorities of finance, technology transfer and capacity-building;

(s) Welcomed the decision made to retain UNEP as the host of the Climate Technology Centre and Network;

(t) Highlighting the importance of finance in supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement, and the United Kingdom noted its earlier announcement that it would invest £400 million in the Tropical Forest Forever Facility.

57. In response, the Executive Director:

(a) Noted that the hosts of conferences of the parties often placed particular focus on issues that were relevant to all three conventions;

(b) Explained that UNEP held many workshops on reporting and, while reporting requirements were set by decisions of the conferences of the parties to each convention, there was significant scope for synergies in that regard;

(c) Emphasized that there were significant opportunities for better connecting national planning and implementation, and that UNEP provided data, evidence and facts to support countries in that regard;

(d) Stated that UNEP was working on ways to lighten the reporting burden, and said that should a Member State wish to work with UNEP on seeking to prepare an integrated report over a number of conventions, UNEP would be ready to provide support, recalling that the financial support for multilateral environmental agreement reporting was a critical source to sustain environmental action and such funding should therefore not be reduced; Encouraged that parties should give consideration to the alignment of reporting schedules under the three conventions;

(e) Welcomed the £400 million contribution by the United Kingdom to the Tropical Forest Forever Facility;

(f) Noted that the Deputy Secretary-General had held discussions on the identification and mapping of sand and dust storms on the sidelines of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification, which had emphasized the system-wide commitment to the issue. UNEP had expertise in that field but would need to mobilize the necessary resources;

(g) Said that work on mapping past and current investment portfolios related to desertification, land degradation, drought, and sand and dust storms was ongoing, and the beta version of the data tagging system should be operational before the end of 2026;

(h) Emphasized that any support from Member States to fund the Climate Technology Centre and Network would be very welcome;

(i) Expressed appreciation for the significant financial support provided to address land degradation, drought and desertification through the Middle East Green Initiative;

(j) Stressed that resolutions covering specific ecosystems were not required as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework covered all types of ecosystem, including karst.

Agenda item 11

Coordination within the United Nations system on the environment, including through the Environment Management Group

58. The Deputy Executive Director of UNEP and the head of the secretariat of the Environment Management Group provided an update on the Group's work, including planned next steps associated with the UN80 Initiative, and on the common approaches and integration of environmental considerations across the work of 51 United Nations entities through system-wide collaboration.

ADVANCE

59. Representatives of many delegations[21] welcomed the presentation, provided comments and sought clarifications on the issues raised. In their comments, the representatives:

(a) Acknowledged the value of elevated coordination on the environment within the United Nations system to enhance coherence, maximize synergies, address fragmentation and reduce administrative burdens, including through a strengthened Environment Management Group to improve information exchange, policy coherence and system-wide collaboration;

(b) Suggested that the Group be strengthened through, among other things, stronger ownership and engagement by its member organizations, closer links to key United Nations coordination bodies, notably the United Nations Sustainable Development Group, and a practical, non-duplicative focus on delivery and impact; and sought clarification on possible duplications with the work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group and planned actions to avoid them;

(c) Recommended that the Group enhancements focus on evidence-based priorities and include mechanisms for clear accountability to United Nations leadership;

(d) Expressed a preference for strengthening environmental coordination through existing mechanisms provided that such mechanisms had clear added value, operational benefits and complementarity, with a clear orientation to support Member States, in particular developing countries, with an emphasis on least developed countries and small island developing States;

(e) Noted that the UN80 Initiative Work Package 27 finding on environmental coordination across the United Nations remained highly fragmented and the Environment Management Group mechanism was underutilized relative to its mandate, and asked about barriers to its effective use and potential operational adjustments to address under-utilization;

(f) Urged UNEP to strengthen the Environment Management Group's contribution to the Environment Assembly;

(g) Stressed the importance of regular reporting by the Environment Management Group to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to enable the Committee to fulfil its oversight of UNEP engagement in system-wide environmental coordination, and ensure stronger links with the Environment Assembly and the Committee to enable better interaction with Member States;

(h) Recommended that the Group also report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on system-wide environmental coordination and coherence on outcomes, including via the quadrennial comprehensive policy review;

(i) Suggested that the Group use evidence from scientific and assessment bodies to help identify priorities, guide coordination efforts and ensure that collective United Nations action was focused on areas where it could deliver the greatest impact; and sought clarification on whether the Group would incorporate the findings of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services;

(j) Stated that, as the General Assembly resolution on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment did not currently confer on UNEP a mandate to protect or implement that right, there was no basis for the Environment Management Group's work within the issue management group on human rights and environment or on the development of a United Nations common approach on that right;

(k) Also stated that the work of the Environment Management Group should be guided by the principles of strict adherence to mandates and non-politicization, common but differentiated responsibilities and means of implementation, and data governance and State sovereignty;

(l) Emphasized the need for stronger, more structured engagement with stakeholders, improved connectivity between global frameworks, local implementation and enhanced transparency and accessibility of data;

(m) Suggested that, in relation to UN80 Initiative Work Package 27, a new operating model for the Environment Management Group might include support structures for the delivery of system-wide early warning on emerging environmental problems to support action 2.1, strengthened United Nations system-wide science-policy interfaces to support action 3.1, an environmental knowledge

[21] Argentina, Canada, the European Union, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Netherlands (Kingdom of the), the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, business and industry major group, children and youth major group, Indigenous Peoples major group, non-governmental organizations major group, scientific and technological community major group, women major group.

ADVANCE

network to underpin action 3.2 and a global environmental indicator framework to underpin the production of indicator-based assessment reports under action 3.2;

(n) Recommended that a renewed and streamlined Environment Management Group act as a stronger system integrator in identifying gaps and overlaps, connecting the appropriate institutions and ensuring that global coordination translated into more coherent work at all levels;

(o) Requested, as part of United Nations system-wide environmental coordination efforts, the establishment of a consistent baseline for implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including meaningful participation through Indigenous Peoples representative institutions, free prior and informed consent and protection of lands and territories, Indigenous knowledge, governance and science and environmental defenders;

(p) Called for stronger coordination between UNEP and the United Nations human rights system, including Indigenous Peoples' mechanisms and expertise;

(q) Encouraged the Environment Management Group to strengthen the United Nations common approaches, including by systemically covering climate action alongside biodiversity, pollution and land degradation, and to strengthen support for Member States in implementing multilateral environmental agreements, including through meaningful youth participation;

(r) Advocated continued attention to common methodologies, monitoring frameworks and reporting approaches that would enable entities to better assess collective environmental outcomes, and continued efforts to document and share lessons learned, good practices and technical knowledge generated through inter-agency collaboration;

(s) Noted that the Environment Management Group was funded from the Environment Fund and the regular budget, and sought clarification on options to explore more diverse sources of funding;

(t) Enquired how the Environment Management Group planned to create closer links with the conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental agreements;

(u) Asked how the Group might increase engagement with member organizations and improve connectivity with the United Nations regional and country teams; and sought examples of its work and impact in the Latin American region;

(v) Also asked how UNEP planned to operationalize a more inclusive and regionally responsive coordination mechanism under the Environment Management Group, and how success in reducing fragmentation and strengthening the connection between global decisions and country-level delivery would be measured;

(w) Requested additional information on a number of other aspects, including the two-layer ecosystem, planned actions to achieve the five renewal goals, the proposed structure for collaboration with UN-Water, UN-Oceans and UN-Energy, plans for new issue management groups, the new dashboard and the findings of the mid-term review of the common approach to biodiversity;

(x) Sought clarification on why the targets related to UNEP operational efficiency and effectiveness in the programme performance report were only partially achieved, with a reduced achievement level compared to the biennium 2022–2023, noting that the lower rate of target achievement was the United Nations system's engagement in environmental policy uptake;

(y) Requested information on the role of the Group in setting up the *Greening the Blue* report and process.

60. In response, representatives of the secretariat:

(a) Welcomed the general acceptance of the role of the Environment Management Group;

(b) Recalled that 51 United Nations entities were members of the Group, each operating under mandates established by their own governing body, and emphasizing that the Environment Management Group's role was to foster alignment among those diverse mandates and that the Group also contributed to environmental initiatives arising from General Assembly resolutions and from the mandates and activities of United Nations entities beyond UNEP;

(c) Emphasized that the Environment Management Group was an inter-agency coordination mechanism, the purpose of which was collaboration, that its work was not brought before Member States for negotiation or agreement, and that the priorities and workplan of the Environment Management Group, including the formation of new issue management groups and common approaches was established by the Senior Officials Meeting;

ADVANCE

(d) Underscored that the topics dealt with by the United Nations in a given country were the priorities identified by the country itself and that the United Nations provided support;

(e) Noted that the Environment Management Group common approaches aimed to provide guidance and tools to support the United Nations resident coordinators and United Nations country teams on themes, topics, priorities identified by the countries in question, which could include the human right to a healthy, clean and safe environment;

(f) Undertook to transmit to the Environment Management Group the points raised by representatives about the human right to a healthy, clean and safe environment;

(g) Highlighted the progress demonstrated by the findings of the midterm report of the common approach to biodiversity, published in 2024, which showed that 92 per cent of United Nations entities had reported aligning their strategies, policies and programmes with the common approach, and that biodiversity had become much more mainstream across the United Nations system and was increasingly integrated not only by environmental entities but also through mandates relating to human rights, disaster risk reduction, migration, gender, urbanization, crime and industry transport;

(h) Assured representatives that there would be no mandate duplication between the United National Sustainable Development Group and the Environment Management Group;

(i) Recalled that the challenge of ensuring engagement on global issues at the country level was being examined not only under the UN80 Initiative Action Plan Work Package 27 but it was also considered under other the work packages, such as Work Package 5, on country configuration, and Work Package 6, on regional reset, among others;

(j) Explained that the implementation of the elements of Work Package 27 relating to the group would likely begin with the drafting in November 2026 of a new strategy and terms of reference for the Environment Management Group, followed by their adoption during the first half of 2027 and implementation over the ensuing 18 to 24 months;

(k) Welcomed the proposal that Environment Management Group issues be included in the agenda of the meetings of the Committee of Permanent Representatives;

(l) Said that it was expected that, when the related reports on work packages had been approved by the Secretary-General and by Member States, that the resident coordinators and country teams would continue to operate and that UNEP would work through those mechanisms to ensure that the environmental issues were integrated in the common country analyses and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks developed by each country;

(m) Explained that the Environment Management Group had provided and would continue to provide guidance and tools to facilitate inter-agency coordination and to support the integration of global environmental commitments into the common country analysis, United Nations cooperation frameworks and joint programming, citing examples such as guidance on pollution action, the environment and climate change guidance in Europe and in Central Asia and webinars in Latin America on the common approach to biodiversity for the replication, scaling up and sharing of best practices;

(n) Said that the resourcing of the Environment Management Group secretariat by the Environment Fund and the regular budget, and the administration of the secretariat by UNEP, had been decided at its inception, and UNEP would examine what could be done under the new resource mobilization strategy;

(o) Acknowledged that the Environment Management Group could make better use of data, evidence and related knowledge from science-policy bodies, such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, and noted that the linkages with the science-policy panels in general needed to be strengthened;

(p) Explained that to date, there had been a total of 17 workstreams under the Environment Management Group and that, in the future, one of the objectives would be to ensure that each issue management group had a clear purpose, clear objectives, was time bound, with strong ownership from its members and focused on enabling impact at the country level;

(q) Stated that the knowledge exchange platform was intended as a tool for members of the Environment Management Group, but the dashboard shown in the presentation would be made available to the public;

(r) Said that Environment Management Group had been at the origin of the greening the blue community and that it continued to engage and coordinate on the matter.

ADVANCE

Agenda item 12

Consideration of relevant evaluation reports and audits

61. The item was considered jointly with items 3 and 4.

Agenda item 13

Consideration of a draft Chair's summary of the meeting

62. [to be completed]

Agenda item 14

Other matters

63. [to be completed]

Agenda item 15

Closure of the meeting

64. [to be completed]

ADVANCE

Annex*

Draft recommendations proposed by members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

The Committee of Permanent Representatives,

Recalling also paragraph 2 of its decision 167/2 on improving the identification, formulation and recording of decisions and conclusions of the Committee,

Noting the discussions of the subcommittee of the Committee at its meeting on 7 September 2026,

Management and administration of the United Nations Environment Programme and Programme Performance Report of the United Nations Environment Programme for 2024–2025

1. Takes note of informal JIU-recommendation 2 regarding the Programme's organization structure, and requests the Executive Director, within existing resources, to provide an overview of current staff levels per division, and per unit in that division, and present it during CPR176;

2. Takes note of informal JIU-recommendation 17 regarding the plethora of reporting mechanisms, and requests the Executive Director, within existing resources, to provide an overview that details what substantive programmatic reports UNEP delivers on an (bi-)annual basis to both the Nairobi-based governing bodies of the Programme, as well as to the relevant oversight bodies based in New York, and requests this topic to be considered by the Committee's subcommittee, before the end of the fourth quarter of 2026;

3. Takes note of Board of Auditors recommendation c regarding ineffective project performance and fund underutilization, and recalling recommendation 1 and 2 as adopted via UNEP/CPR/171/3, requests the Executive Director to, within existing resources, include in her quarterly report to this Committee which is to be presented during CPR176, an analysis of the underlying causes of lagging project performance and fund underutilization, based on data provided by project managers, together with targeted measures to address identified project challenges and measured project results, as well as the intended measures to address these issues and reallocate the relevant funds;

4. Takes note of informal JIU-recommendation 22 regarding affiliate staff, and – recalling recommendation 2(d) as adopted via UNEP/CPR/171/1 – reaffirms its request to the Executive Director, within existing resources, to report to the Committee of Permanent Representatives, before the end of the fourth quarter of 2026, disaggregated data of the affiliate personnel, with a view to provide Member States with a more comprehensive understanding of the composition and structure of the UNEP workforce, and encourages the Executive Director to ensure its swift implementation.

ADVANCE

* The annex is presented without formal editing.