

Committee of the Permanent Representatives
Subcommittee meeting
Nairobi, 18 March 2025
09:00 – 13:00 (GMT+3)
Hybrid meeting
Conference Room 4 (in person)
and Microsoft Teams (online)

Agenda item 3: Briefing on the work of the International Resource Panel.

This background note has been developed by the Secretariat to inform the Committee of Permanent Representatives about the work of the International Resource Panel (IRP) in supporting UNEP's programme of work. As UNEP advances key environmental priorities - including sustainable consumption and production and sustainable transitions of high impact sectors (agri-food, mining including critical energy transitions minerals, transport, plastics, textiles, electronics, energy and construction) - the IRP provides the scientific evidence to inform policy and action. The Panel's research is relevant in the lead-up to UNEA-7, where discussions will focus on accelerating sustainable solutions for a resilient planet.

The IRP's assessments underscore a stark reality: the way natural resources are extracted, processed, and consumed is neither sustainable nor equitable. The IRP's work highlights how improved resource management – through improved resources management, material efficiency circular economy strategies, and sustainable finance and trade systems among others - can transform economies and strengthen resilience while reducing emissions, protecting ecosystems, and ensuring a just transition. Recent and upcoming IRP research will be highlighted, including financing sustainable extractive industries, the role of critical minerals in the energy transition, the Global Material Flows Database and trade in secondary materials. Members are invited to express interest in learning more about the IRP and how to join its government Steering Committee by contacting the IRP Secretariat.

The IRP is a science-policy interface established under the United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council in 2007. The IRP's mandate is to provide independent and authoritative scientific assessments on the use of natural resources and their environmental impacts. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of how to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation while enhancing well-being. The IRP Secretariat is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme.

Following the presentation, the Committee is invited to take note of the briefing and engage in an exchange of views with Committee members and the Secretariat.



Date 3 March 2025
Reference UNEP-IRP

Briefing on the International Resource Panel

a. Relationship to UNEP's Programme of Work

UNEP MTS and the IRP

UNEP's Medium-Term Strategy (2022-2025) and Programme of Work and Budget are designed to deliver on climate, biodiversity, and pollution by driving transformative shifts toward sustainable consumption and production in alignment with the SDGs. A key commitment of UNEP is to inform policy and action through science.

The International Resource Panel (IRP) contributes directly to this mission under two key UNEP subprogrammes: The Science-Policy Foundational Subprogramme and the Finance and Economic Transformations Enabling Subprogramme.

Supporting UNEA Resolutions

The IRP's work aligns with multiple UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolutions, reinforcing its relevance within UNEP's Programme of Work:

- UNEA Resolution 4/1 on Innovative Pathways to Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP): Invites the IRP to continue informing the Environment Assembly via its Global Resources Outlook reports, covering trends, emerging issues, and science-backed policy options.
- UNEA Resolution 5/11 on Circular Economy and SCP: welcomes IRP contributions toward developing science-based options for achieving SDG 12 and invites collaboration and further sharing of research on best practices for the promotion of innovative pathways for sustainable consumption and production.
- UNEA Resolution 5/9 on Sustainable and Resilient Infrastructure: Calls on the IRP to enhance the science-policy connection, offering expert, science-based options for sustainable infrastructure.

b. Next steps

The IRP is currently developing its 2026-2029 Work Programme, a process that will define the Panel's research priorities for the coming years. This is led by the IRP's Steering Committee, ensuring that the IRP's scientific outputs directly respond to the most pressing policy needs. It is an opportunity for governments to shape the research agenda in ways that support national and international priorities.

IRP Steering Committee members and Observers actively engage in this process by identifying key resource-related challenges, providing input on priority research areas, and ensuring that IRP analyses are policy-relevant and actionable.

The next IRP meeting, co-hosted by the Government of Brazil in São Paulo in May 2025, will provide an important platform for discussion of IRP's future strategic priorities. By contributing to this strategic planning exercise, governments can help ensure that the IRP delivers the science needed to inform policies that foster sustainable resource management, economic resilience, and environmental integrity.

c. Recommendations/relevance for the CPR

The Committee is invited to take note of the presentation on the International Resource Panel, especially on its upcoming Strategic Planning Exercise which will identify priority research assessments for development by the Panel in 2026 – 2029.

Delegates are invited to express interest in participating in the Strategic Planning Exercise of the IRP as Observers to the Steering Committee or as Members of the Steering Committee. To learn more about joining the Steering Committee of the International Resource Panel members are invited to contact the Secretariat at unep-irpsecretariat@un.org

About the International Resource Panel:

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Benefiting from the broad support of governments and scientific communities, the Panel is constituted of eminent scientists and experts from all parts of the world, bringing their multidisciplinary expertise to address resource management issues.

Since the IRP's launch in 2007, more than 50 assessments have been published, which outline the opportunities for governments, businesses and wider society to work together to create and implement policies that ultimately lead to sustainable resource management. More information about the IRP and its reports can be found at: www.resourcepanel.org