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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.

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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. 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;

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

(h) 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;

(i) 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 strengthen coordination at the corporate level;

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(j) 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;

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

(l) 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;

(m) 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;

(n) 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;

(o) 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 and clarified that the implementation of the recommendation fell 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;

(p) 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.

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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 period 2026–2029 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.

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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 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 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 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 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 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 that were below what had been planned for in the programme of work, and were lower than 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 2026–2029 and were monitored, including through the quarterly business reports;

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(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 artificial intelligence 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 much of that was predicated on resources being allocated both at the project and at the corporate level to these efforts, 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 responding 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 a 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

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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 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 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.

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(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 where 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.

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(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.

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(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; Encouraged UNEP to integrate a gender perspective;

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

(f) 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;

(g) 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;

(h) 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;

(i) 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 exposures risks within high-impact sectors, as 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) 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;

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(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) Regarding the strengthening of finances, said 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 – for a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste 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 United Nations 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 artificial intelligence;

[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.

(j) Responding to the comments, representatives of the secretariat:

(k) 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;

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

(m) 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;

(n) 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;

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

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

(q) 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;

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

(s) 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

26. 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 of the environmental rule of law, institutions and legal frameworks and implementation of the 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.

27. 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 right-based approaches.

10. Enabling subprogramme: Finance and economic transformation

28. 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; to that end, suggested 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.

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(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.

29. 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 steps, 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, use of the 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

30. 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 artificial intelligence 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;

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(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.

31. 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

32. 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 is 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;

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(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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. 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.

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36. 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

37. [to be completed]

Agenda item 6

Briefing on the UN80 Initiative

38. [to be completed]

Agenda item 7

Briefing on Work Package 27 of the UN80 Initiative Action Plan

39. [to be completed]

Agenda item 8

Funding base of the United Nations Environment Programme

40. [to be completed]

Agenda item 9

Operationalizing the one impact framework: update on methodology development

41. [to be completed]

Agenda item 10

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

42. [to be completed]

Agenda item 11

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

43. [to be completed]

Agenda item 12

Consideration of relevant evaluation reports and audits

44. [to be completed]

[14] The European Union.

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Agenda item 13

Consideration of a draft Chair's summary of the meeting

45. [to be completed]

Agenda item 14

Other matters

46. [to be completed]

Agenda item 15

Closure of the meeting

47. [to be completed]

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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.

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* The annex is presented without formal editing.