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**Committee of Permanent Representatives to the
United Nations Environment Programme
150th meeting**
Nairobi, 30 April 2020

Draft minutes of the 149th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the United Nations Environment Programme, held on 18 February 2020

Agenda item 1

Opening of the meeting

1. The meeting was opened at 9.15 a.m. on Tuesday, 18 February 2020, by Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP.

2. The meeting was attended by 90 participants representing 68 members and 2 observer missions.

3. The Chair welcomed the following new members to the Committee: Ms. Selma Malika Haddadi (Algeria); Mr. Arnold Seeketso (Botswana); Mr. Jafar Barmaki (Islamic Republic of Iran); and Mr. Yasuhisa Kitagawa (Japan).

4. He then bade farewell to the following departing members: Mr. Salah Francis Elhamdi (Algeria); Ms. Ntesang Molemele (Botswana); Ms. Elizabeth Ines Taylor Jay (Colombia); Mr. Yoshihiro Katayama (Japan); Mr. Abdoul Wahab Haidara (Senegal); Mr. Sunil de Silva (Sri Lanka); Mr. Gariballa Khidir Ali Eldaw (Sudan); and Mr. Cherdkiat Atthakor (Thailand).

Agenda item 2

Adoption of the agenda

5. The agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/CPR/149/1).

Agenda item 3

Adoption of the draft minutes of the 148th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives

6. The Committee adopted the minutes of its 148th meeting, held on 10 December 2019, on the basis of the draft minutes of the meeting (UNEP/CPR/149/2).

Agenda item 4

Report of the Executive Director

7. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the report entitled "Quarterly report to the 149th meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, December 2019–January 2020", noting that it provided an update on key developments relevant to UNEP over that period.

8. In her oral briefing, the Executive Director of UNEP, Ms. Inger Andersen, said that the beginning of 2020 had been catastrophic from an environmental point of view, with devastating bushfires in Australia, the warmest January on record in Antarctica, floods in the Horn of Africa and locust invasions in East Africa. The relentless pace of such extreme events was compelling evidence of the need to take action to reduce planetary instability and the loss of nature. In 2020, which had been dubbed the "super year for nature", there would be many opportunities to begin addressing the problems of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Ambitions should be matched with action, action with momentum, and political will with science.

9. The outcome of the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had been disappointing. A massive step up in ambition on reducing greenhouse gas emissions through accelerated nationally determined contributions was required and it was equally urgent to update the rulebook for article 6 of the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in particular as it pertained to market mechanisms. Nevertheless, on a positive note, the *Emissions Gap Report 2019* had been well received at the session, and represented the best of UNEP, with its authoritative science backed by strong communications and outreach. Many States had announced enhanced plans to achieve carbon neutrality and 73 had committed to submitting enhanced nationally determined contributions at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Glasgow, Scotland in November 2020. Regions, cities, businesses and investors were working to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, including through the Net-Zero Asset Owner Alliance, initiated with UNEP support, which included pension funds that had over $4 trillion under management.

10. At the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, held in Davos, Switzerland, in January 2020, environmental concerns had dominated the global risks described in *The Global Risks Report 2020*. Of the top 10 risks, 5 were environmental and, for the first time, chief executive officers were reporting that biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse were foremost among their concerns. Similarly, the report of the World Economic Forum entitled *Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy* revealed that over half of the world's gross domestic product depended on nature and its services. The safeguarding of nature was at the core of reducing poverty, ending hunger and ensuring gender equality. In that regard, during the annual meeting of the Forum, UNEP had recommended four actions to be taken by business leaders: recognizing, valuing and disclosing the importance of nature for business; transforming investment and operations to ensure the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity; halting deforestation and making progress towards zero habitat conversion for production while remediating land degradation; collaborating on infrastructure and construction to reduce the fragmentation of natural spaces. The Forum had also seen the launch of initiatives that included the Trillion Tree Campaign.

11. Turning to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be considered for adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fifteenth meeting, to be held in Kunming, China, during the fourth quarter of 2020, she emphasized the importance of the engagement and participation of business and other sectors. Stressing that the framework would need clear targets and indicators, greater ambition and a focus on both the quality and quantity of protected areas, she said that comments on the draft framework, which had been released by the Convention secretariat in January 2020, would contribute greatly to its negotiation.

12. With regard to the strengthening of UNEP, work in 2020 would focus on a realignment of the Policy and Programme Division, in keeping with the broader reform of the United Nations system, including in the crafting of the new medium-term strategy and programme of work for the period 2020–2025. As part of the transformation process, discovery dialogues had been held with more than 400 staff members. A retreat for representatives of Member States was planned for March 2020 to define the structure of the next medium-term strategy based on science and input from the Committee. In response to requests from Member States to step up work on disaster and conflict, an external review would be conducted of programmes in fragile States, whose results would feed into the medium-term strategy.

13. Steps were being taken to strengthen resource mobilization, including by working with Member States and exploring innovative sources of funding. The reform process provided an opportunity to examine the work of UNEP through a critical lens, determining how best to build on the talents of staff members, the contributions of supporters and the power of science. Regarding recruitment for senior appointments, she welcomed the appointment of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals and noted that the vacancy for the position of Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity had been advertised.

14. Lastly, efforts were accelerating with regard to the enhancement of partnerships with other United Nations entities, including the partnership with the United Nations Development Programme, which was exploring how to draw on the strengths of both organizations to collaborate on climate, nature and the green economy. A partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations had also been approved, in line with an increased focus on partnerships to step up joint efforts during the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

15. In the ensuing discussion, many representatives thanked the Executive Director for her comprehensive report. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the evidence-based reports published by UNEP were setting the tone for 2020 – an important year which could not be wasted. Several representatives agreed that the "super year" was indeed a critical year for the environment and for international environmental governance. Two representatives said that the enormous challenges highlighted in recent UNEP publications underlined the need for swift, decisive and impactful action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, while one noted that the "super year for nature" must be the year when the tide was turned on global warming and biodiversity loss for a cleaner, greener future for all.

16. One representative highlighted the interlinked nature of all environmental issues. Two representatives said that in order to strengthen coordinated action and provide the means to make real progress in the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, developing countries required assistance in the form of capacity-building, financial support and technology transfer. In that regard, another representative said that, in recognition of the key role of UNEP in the provision of such assistance, her country's parliament had approved a more than three-fold increase in its contributions to the organization, with the bulk of that amount dedicated to core funding.

17. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested updates on the work of the Environment Management Group and on UNEP engagement with the resident coordinator system, a key tool for mainstreaming environmental concerns worldwide into the work of the United Nations system on the ground. He also requested an update on the methodology for the alignment of the programme of work of UNEP with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and on the first regular session of 2020 of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, to be held in Nairobi in May. Several representatives expressed their appreciation for the joint proposal put forward by Sweden and Kenya to host the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP in Nairobi and a related high-level meeting in Stockholm in 2022.

18. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, highlighted the imperative need to accelerate efforts to achieve the already overdue emissions reduction commitments under the Paris Agreement on climate change, with one noting that nationally determined contributions would have to be enhanced fivefold to maintain planetary warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Several representatives said that fragmented efforts to address climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution should be integrated to prevent the effects of environmental degradation from undercutting sustainable development. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that a strong UNEP and Environment Assembly were required to set a truly global environmental agenda and, in that regard, increased cooperation between UNEP and other United Nations entities was welcome.

19. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, noted with appreciation the adoption of the UNEP programme of work and budget for the biennium 2020–2021 by the Environment Assembly in its decision 4/1, but cautioned that funding gaps would need to be addressed if the Environment Assembly were to fulfil its key role in coordinating global environmental action. One representative said that the role of UNEP was threefold, comprising first, advocacy, leadership, and outreach to all stakeholders; second, providing services to the multilateral environmental agreements; and third, providing scientific evidence and policy recommendations to inform political decisions. Another representative said that in order to strengthen the political role and influence of UNEP, the Programme would require enhanced funding.

20. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation for the work undertaken to prepare the road map on the implementation of paragraph 88 of "The future we want" in the lead-up to the fifth session of the Environment Assembly and the efforts made to implement the decisions and resolutions of the Environment Assembly. He voiced concern, however, that such implementation was selective and sought clarification on the status of implementation of other resolutions, in particular Environment Assembly resolution 4/22, on the implementation and follow-up of United Nations Environment Assembly resolutions.

21. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, said that an ambitious, transformative and accountable post-2020 global biodiversity framework should guide national and stakeholder biodiversity conservation efforts. One representative said that concerns related to biodiversity should be mainstreamed across all sectors and levels of government and should involve all stakeholders, including the private sector, to establish effective institutional, policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks that were tailored to national needs and circumstances. Another representative underscored the need to create synergies in biodiversity conservation and avoid stand-alone efforts to tackle environmental issues.

22. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director said that the strong commitment shown by delegations to the "super year for nature" was an incentive to strengthen institutional capacity as part of a broader conversation about both commemorating UNEP and securing its legacy. Regarding reporting on the implementation of resolutions and decisions, the report of the next meeting of the subcommittee would provide an update. She thanked States for their enhanced contributions, noting that many developing countries had made contributions, which, although small, were important to the spirit of solidarity. She undertook to continue to effect leadership changes transparently, based on merit and in keeping with the commitment of the Secretary-General to the promotion of diversity and gender parity. The sound management of chemicals and waste remained an important priority and she thanked Member States for their strong engagement in that regard. She noted that the outcomes of sessions of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination were provided through its summary of deliberations and its annual report, which was presented to the Economic and Social Council for its consideration.

23. Lastly, turning to the format of UNEP reports to the Committee, she noted that despite its title, the quarterly report was not actually quarterly, nor did it coincide with other reports. She asked the Committee for permission to experiment with its format with a view to streamlining the report and making it more data-oriented and efficient, both in terms of the time spent creating it and the time required by Member States to consider it.

Agenda item 5

Implementation of paragraph 8 of United Nations Environment Assembly decision 4/2

24. The Chair recalled that in paragraph 8 of Environment Assembly decision 4/2 on the provisional agenda, date and venue of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, the Executive Director had been requested to prepare, in consultation with Member States, the commemoration of the creation of UNEP by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in June 1972, making use of contributions from relevant stakeholders. At the sixth annual meeting of the subcommittee, the Government of Sweden had offered to host a high-level political meeting in Stockholm in early 2022 and the Government of Kenya had offered its assistance in that regard, as a result of which a joint statement had been issued by the two countries and circulated to Member States by the secretariat. The Executive Director had also conducted informal consultations with regional and political groups on the way forward.

25. The Executive Director said that progress had been achieved in internal and external coordination efforts for the celebration, in particular in developing robust science-policy input and in initiating stakeholder consultations. Regional consultations had been guided by the agreed joint points of Sweden and Kenya as set out in the position paper circulated to Member States on 13 February 2020. The convening of an advisory panel of eminent persons had not begun, as Member States had requested clarification on the added value of such a panel.

26. While many Member States had welcomed the proposal to convene a high-level political meeting in Stockholm in the first quarter of 2022, many had suggested that the meeting should be closely aligned with the implementation of paragraphs 88 and 89 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20), "The future we want". The high-level meeting could strengthen UNEP and the Environment Assembly within the United Nations

system by promoting the science-policy interface and by raising the visibility of global financial commitments to UNEP. In the context of the widely acknowledged need to accelerate the implementation of existing international commitments, many Member States had sought clarification regarding what the high-level meeting was intended to deliver. Member States also recognized that the high-level meeting was distinct from the commemoration of the founding of UNEP as mandated in Environment Assembly decision 4/2 and would therefore require a specific mandate from the General Assembly of the United Nations.

27. A majority of Member States supported hosting the commemoration of the establishment of UNEP at the Programme's headquarters in Nairobi and launching the commemoration during the fifth session of the Environment Assembly in February 2021. Doing so would take advantage of the presence of environment ministers and global leaders in the environmental community. The celebrations should not preclude the holding of stakeholder events, including by young people, the scientific and business communities and civil society groups, at UNEP regional offices and at the headquarters of secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements.

28. She made five recommendations: the launch of the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP should take place during the fifth session of the Environment Assembly; a road map on the types of commemorative events that could take place after the session should be shared with Member States; a subcommittee meeting should be held in March 2020 to support Kenya and Sweden in the preparation of a draft resolution for consideration by the General Assembly; the UNEP secretariat should serve as the secretariat for both the fiftieth anniversary commemoration and the high-level political meeting; and the matter should be considered further at the 150th meeting of the Committee.

29. In the ensuing discussion, most of the representatives who spoke thanked the Executive Director for the update on the implementation of Environment Assembly decision 4/2 and for the regional consultations undertaken in that context, which they described as extremely useful.

30. Many representatives, one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, agreed that the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of UNEP was an opportunity to strengthen UNEP and consolidate its leading role as the custodian of environmental issues in the face of the great challenges that lay ahead. Several representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed their support for launching the commemorative activities at the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, although one said that the commemoration should not be overshadowed by other events. Two representatives, one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the proposal to hold a high-level meeting in conjunction with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary deserved further examination.

31. One representative said that the commemorative events would raise the visibility of the Programme's achievements of the previous 50 years and provide an opportunity for an inclusive discussion on how best to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Another noted that UNEP and the world had evolved since 1972; the environment could no longer be tackled as a stand-alone issue. One representative described the celebrations as an opportunity to reach out to civil society, women and young people, noting that strengthening UNEP also required enhancing its impact on the ground. Two representatives expressed support for UNEP serving as the secretariat for both the commemoration and the high-level meeting.

32. Several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, emphasized the need for the preparatory processes for both the commemoration and the high-level meeting to take place in an open, inclusive, participatory and transparent manner with the close involvement of the Committee, but also taking into account inputs from Member States that did not have a presence in Nairobi. Two representatives, one of whom spoke on behalf of a group of countries, requested that the preparations for the two events remain on the agenda of Committee meetings so that Member States were informed before decisions were taken in that regard. One representative said that the objectives of the high-level meeting were not clear.

33. The representative of Sweden said that the objective of the high-level meeting to be held in Stockholm was to foster the deep, transformative action required to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. That effort would entail the involvement of many actors, including other United Nations entities, the science and business communities, and stakeholders such as young people and women. There were three key areas in which the high-level meeting could make an impact: first, in removing the silo mentality and fostering an integrated and systematic approach to taking action to protect the environment; second, in strengthening the central role of UNEP on environmental issues within the United Nations system and promoting greater emphasis on the environmental dimension in all decisions by United Nations bodies; third, in identifying roadblocks to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Given the time constraints, the work to elaborate a draft resolution requesting a mandate

to hold the high-level meeting, for consideration by the General Assembly, would need to be expedited.

34. Many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, expressed support for the need to obtain a mandate from the General Assembly for the high-level meeting. One representative expressed the view that the Environment Assembly had the necessary mandate to convene high-level meetings and to prepare, at its fifth session, a political declaration for a United Nations high-level meeting in the context of the commemoration of the creation of UNEP, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 73/333. With regard to the declaration, he said that the text should be brief, general and of a political nature. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, concurred that the meeting in Stockholm was an opportunity to adopt a high-level declaration.

35. A representative speaking on behalf of children and youth expressed appreciation for the representatives who had highlighted the need for the participation of children and youth in the fifth session of the Environment Assembly and the high-level meeting in Stockholm. Assuring the Committee of the continued support of her group for its work, she nevertheless highlighted the need for celebrations to be restrained given the seriousness of the environmental situation.

36. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director said that regional commemorative events could be included in the proposed road map of commemorative activities to be shared with Member States. In the interest of clarity, the Committee should discuss how the launch of the commemorative activities could be incorporated into the agenda of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly. In that regard, the subcommittee meeting on that topic should be held as soon as possible. She thanked all the representatives for their contributions to the discussion, in particular the representative of children and youth, noting that her presence was truly a reminder of the importance of the work of UNEP.

Agenda item 6

Implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333

37. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to the summary of inputs received from States, regional and political groups and stakeholders on the questionnaire on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 73/333 of 30 August 2019, on follow-up to the report of the ad hoc open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 (UNEP/CPR/149/5); the questionnaire on the implementation of the resolution (UNEP/CPR/149/5/Add.1); and the draft road map for further consultations on the implementation of the resolution (UNEP/CPR/149/5/Add.2), which had been endorsed by the President of the Environment Assembly and the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives as the basis for the discussions of the Committee.

38. In her remarks, the Executive Director said that the open-ended working group established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 72/277 had recommended that the General Assembly forward its recommendations to the Environment Assembly for its consideration, and to prepare, at its fifth session, a political declaration for a United Nations high-level meeting, subject to voluntary funding, in the context of the commemoration of the creation of UNEP. On that basis, the Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the representative of the President of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly had consulted widely with States and regional and political groups. During discussions held in December 2019, it had been agreed that written input would be submitted in the form of responses to a questionnaire. The secretariat had received 27 submissions from Member States and regional and political groups and 9 submissions from stakeholders and major groups, a summary of which was available online and had been made available to Member States.[1]

39. The road map before the Committee for its consideration and possible adoption provided for the continuation of informal consultations in Nairobi under the auspices of the Committee, while maintaining regular coordination with the bureaux of the Committee and the Environment Assembly. The consultation process would be led by two co-facilitators, one from a developed and one from a developing country, to be appointed by the President of the Environment Assembly and the Chair of the Committee based on consultations with the bureaux and with the chairs of the regional groups. Three informal consultation sessions had been proposed, to be held in June and October of 2020 and in January or early February of 2021. To ensure inclusivity, a limited number of representatives from developing countries, in particular those with specific vulnerabilities and those without diplomatic

[1] https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/31581/CPR%20149-5%20summary%20of%20inputs%20to%20questionnaire.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y.

representation in Nairobi, would receive funding for their travel from the secretariat, subject to the availability of resources.

40. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Norway expressed appreciation for the opportunity afforded to her to participate, on behalf of the President of the Environment Assembly, in the broad consultative process leading to the creation of the draft road map, which would provide valuable context in the drafting of the political declaration. She underscored the importance of the full and coordinated participation in the process of all stakeholders, including the Committee, the bureaux, the secretariat, the scientific community and the secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements.

41. Many representatives, including two speaking on behalf of groups of countries, thanked the secretariat and the Chair for the consultations conducted on the draft road map. Several representatives expressed their full support for the institutional arrangements and schedule of the road map, while underscoring the need to adhere to deadlines and ensure that as much preparatory work as possible be undertaken on the political declaration before the Environment Assembly session to avoid detracting from the important proceedings of the session. Two representatives underscored the importance of the high-level meeting and the political declaration in strengthening UNEP, raising its profile as the leading global authority on environmental issues and enhancing the global environmental agenda for the delivery of more robust environmental outcomes.

42. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested that the preparation of the political declaration be included as a stand-alone item on the agenda of the Environment Assembly session to provide ample time for discussion, and asked whether more meetings beyond the three currently set out in the road map would be considered. Another representative, also speaking on behalf of a group of countries, said that the draft text presented at the fifth session of the Assembly should be a complete draft declaration rather than its building blocks. He noted, however, that the political declaration could not be adopted at the fifth session given that no mandate to that effect was included in General Assembly resolution 73/333. He also requested that the road map be amended to include reference to the specialized agencies.

43. One representative sought clarification regarding the need for two high-level events to be held, which would lead to greater expenditure and divert the attention of the Committee away from other important matters, such as the management of heavy metals, plastic waste and hazardous waste. He also noted that there was some confusion over the purpose of the road map and whether it was intended to facilitate preparations for the Environment Assembly session or for the high-level meeting in Stockholm.

44. One representative asked whether the varying positions reflected in the inputs for the outcome document could be analysed to determine the possible impact of differences on the achievement of consensus. There was a lack of clarity regarding the planning process for the high-level meeting in the light of the apparent need to obtain an enabling resolution from the General Assembly. He asked how the meeting preparations might be affected.

45. Responding to the question, the Legal Officer said that the process for convening the high-level meeting had begun with the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 72/277, entitled “Towards a Global Pact for the Environment”, on14 May 2018, in which the Secretary-General had been requested to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session, in 2018, a technical and evidence-based report that identified and assessed possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments with a view to strengthening their implementation. In the same resolution, the General Assembly had decided to establish an ad hoc open-ended working group to consider the report and discuss possible options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, as appropriate, and, if deemed necessary, the scope, parameters and feasibility of an international instrument, with a view to making recommendations. Having considered the report, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 73/333 in August 2019, by which it had endorsed all the recommendations set out in the report.

46. The matter being considered by the Committee was therefore the mandate emanating from General Assembly resolution 73/333 and its implementation. Under the supervision of the Chair of the Committee and the President of the Environment Assembly and in order to implement the resolution, the secretariat had prepared three documents: the questionnaire, the summary of its results and the road map. The three informal consultations set out in the road map would serve to address the substance of the political declaration, which the General Assembly, in its resolution 73/333, had mandated be prepared rather than finalized. That process would be followed by the drafting of a procedural resolution, which would address the manner in which the results of the process would be presented to the General Assembly for the next step in the drafting of the political declaration. The process therefore entailed the consideration of the substantive matters to be included in the declaration

and the process to prepare it. Once it had been prepared, it would be considered by the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, as the preparatory body for the Environment Assembly session.

47. Responding to the comments, the representative of the secretariat said that the road map would be amended to include a reference to the specialized agencies. With regard to the agenda item under which the political declaration would be addressed at the fifth session, he said that while the matter had been addressed in the summary of inputs, any delegation that felt its position had not been fully reflected should submit clarifications to the secretariat in writing. In terms of the mandate for the Committee to conduct the work on the political declaration, he suggested that the wording of the road map could be further aligned with paragraph (b) under the section entitled "Further work" of resolution 73/333.

48. In response to the question regarding the selection criteria for the co-facilitators who would lead the intersessional consultation process, the Chair said that they would be selected on the basis of their readiness to engage in a time-consuming exercise and their neutrality and on the basis of their knowledge of the United Nations, UNEP and the issues at hand.

49. One representative said that the matter of the agenda item under which the political declaration would be discussed during the fifth session would be considered by the Bureau when the agenda for the session was prepared. Another representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, requested that the comments submitted be reflected in the road map. Many representatives noted that the mandate to prepare the political declaration in time for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, rather than finalize or adopt it, was very clear. Several representatives, one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, proposed amendments to the wording of the road map, to remove references to "outline/elements/building blocks", and, in their place, to reflect either the full title of General Assembly resolution 73/333 or the wording under paragraph (b) of the section entitled "Further work".

50. The Committee adopted the road map as amended.

Agenda item 7

Interagency collaboration in the context of the Environment Management Group

51. Introducing the item, the Chair drew attention to a document on interagency collaboration in the context of the Environment Management Group (UNEP/CPR/149/3).

52. The Executive Director recalled that the Environment Management Group had been established in 1999 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999. The Group, which she chaired, was composed of 51 United Nations entities. At its executive meeting, held in 2019 on the margins of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly, the Group had decided that, in keeping with 2020 having been named "super year for nature", the focus of the Group for that year would be biodiversity. Following the consideration for adoption of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity at its fifteenth meeting, the Group would work to ensure that the framework was reflected and incorporated throughout the work of the United Nations.

53. In his presentation, Mr. Satya Tripathi, Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the UNEP office in New York, speaking by remote audio link, said that the Environment Management Group would provide system-wide input for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. He drew attention to the Group's other main areas of work, including marine plastic litter, sand and dust storms, electronic waste, chemical waste management, drylands, and the green economy. The Group aimed to advance the environmental sustainability of the United Nations by supporting the coherent and coordinated implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda across the system.

54. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives, including one speaking on behalf of a group of countries, expressed appreciation for the overview of the Group's work and requested more frequent and comprehensive updates in that regard. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, praised the quality of a 2017 report of the Environment Management Group, entitled *System-wide Collaboration on the Environment: Synthesis Report on UN System-wide Contributions to the Implementation of the Environmental Dimension in the Sustainable Development Goals, 2016-2017*, noting his regret that the report had not received greater attention. Advance knowledge of the timeline for the next report of the Group would enable delegations to make full use of it in the preparations for the next session of the Environment Assembly and for the commemoration of the

establishment of UNEP. He welcomed the contributions made by the Group to the drafting of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework and expressed an interest in the Group's Nexus Dialogue Programme, in particular as it pertained to biodiversity, chemicals and waste.

55. Many representatives said that the Group could play a significant part in strengthening the role of UNEP across the United Nations system, including in the system-wide implementation of Environment Assembly resolutions and by enhancing coordination and partnership efforts in line with paragraph 88 of "The future we want". One representative asked what plans were in place to make effective use of the work of the Group and how UNEP, through the Group, would ensure the implementation of system-wide environmental strategies.

56. Another representative said that the fact that the Executive Director of UNEP served as the Chair of the Environment Management Group provided an excellent opportunity to bring environmental matters to the fore across the United Nations, cement the key role of UNEP in environmental management and leverage inter-agency partnerships for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, whose achievement should be the focus of the Environment Assembly session. One representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, asked how cross-cutting issues, such as gender, were incorporated in the work of the Group and how synergies with regard to climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution could be exploited to support the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Another representative noted that other entities conducting work that was related to the work of UNEP were actively engaged at the national level. He asked how UNEP could deepen its engagement, emphasize the "super year for nature", connect its work to poverty reduction and create environmentally friendly guidelines to support other organizations.

57. Responding to the comments, the Executive Director said that each of the 51 entities that made up the membership of the Environment Management Group had its own governing body. The entities were not under any obligation to implement Environment Assembly resolutions, which instead were brought to their attention by UNEP to enable them to explore their relevance in terms of their particular mandates. Regarding engagement at the national level, given the broad range of actors, the role of the Group was to make the current science available to each entity for implementation by a subgroup of interested actors. She invited Mr. Hossein Fadaei, Head of the Secretariat of the Environment Management Group in Geneva, to comment further.

58. In his remarks, Mr. Fadaei, speaking via remote audio link, said that the briefing note before representatives provided ample information about the work of the Group, which was consistently guided by certain principles, including the implementation of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of Rio +20 and of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda; the implementation of Environment Assembly resolutions within the United Nations system; responding to the calls of the Secretary-General to enhance the sustainability of United Nations operations and to the initiatives of the Executive Director to follow up on Environment Assembly resolutions. A report had been prepared by the Group on the effectiveness of its own work as part of the follow-up to the Rio +20 outcome document. The report set out recommendations for strengthening its procedural and substantive aspects.

59. He noted that the report entitled *System-wide Collaboration on the Environment: Synthesis Report on UN System-wide Contributions to the Implementation of the Environmental Dimension in the Sustainable Development Goals, 2016-2017* had been published in 2017. The next report in the series would be published in 2020 and would focus on the contribution of the United Nations system to the biodiversity agenda in preparation for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

60. With regard to the Nexus dialogues, four dialogues had been planned to explore the interlinkages between a number of environmental issues in the context of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Group would continue to provide updates on its work.

Agenda item 8

Report of the subcommittee

61. The Committee took note of the document entitled "Chair's report of the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives" (UNEP/CPR/149/4).

62. Responding to a request by one representative, speaking on behalf of a group of countries, seeking clarification regarding an update to be provided on the implementation of Environment Assembly resolution 4/22, the Chair noted that the matter would be discussed at the next subcommittee meeting, to be held on 27 February.

Agenda item 9

Other matters

63. The representative of Turkey provided a brief overview of the proceedings of the twenty-first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (the Barcelona Convention), held in Naples, Italy, in December 2019, at which many decisions had been adopted, including on biodiversity, specially protected areas, strategies and action plans for monk seals and marine turtles and guidelines for the elimination of single-use plastic bags in the Mediterranean region. Turkey was participating in the drafting of the medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2027 of the Action Plan for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Sustainable Development of the Coastal Areas of the Mediterranean, which would be launched at the twenty-second meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention, to be held in Turkey in December 2021.

Agenda item 10

Closure of the meeting

64. The meeting was declared closed at 4.10 p.m. on Tuesday, 18 February 2020.