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**United Nations
Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment
Programme****United Nations Environment Assembly of the
United Nations Environment Programme
Fifth session**Nairobi (hybrid), 22–26 February 2021
and 28 February–2 March 2022**Draft proceedings of the United Nations Environment Assembly
at its resumed fifth session**

1. The resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme was held at the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi from 28 February to 4 March 2022, with the opportunity for online participation.

I. Opening of the session (agenda item 1)

2. The session was opened at 10.10 a.m. on Monday, 28 February 2022, by Mr. Espen Barth Eide, President of the Environment Assembly. Opening statements were delivered by Mr. Barth Eide; Ms. Inger Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP; Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi; and Mr. Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Kenya.

3. In his opening remarks, Mr. Barth Eide drew attention to the progress achieved in the field of the environment since the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment and the subsequent creation of UNEP, stressing that it was thanks to science, international cooperation and action by Member States that problems such as ozone depletion had been successfully addressed, and that climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution were at the top of the agenda for Governments, the private sector and civil society alike. The crises of biodiversity loss, increased pollution and climate change were incontestable, and it was clear that all were driven by human activity. There was a growing sense of urgency, especially among young people, about the need to act for nature to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic had demonstrated the power of cooperation in finding solutions to common problems, notably through the swift development of vaccines, but the unequal distribution of those vaccines had also revealed the fundamental inequality of the world's citizens. It was therefore essential that Member States strive to recover from the pandemic in ways that were more just, more renewable and more circular. More than ever, Member States needed to demonstrate that multilateral diplomacy could deliver and each needed to use their sovereign power to further the common good.

4. One of the critical issues on the agenda at the current resumed fifth session was the mission to end plastic pollution, which had reached epidemic proportions. Plastic pollution could now be found everywhere, including in human bodies, and it required the adoption of a legally-binding treaty. Recalling visits he had made with the UNEP Executive Director to two recycling facilities in Kenya that made new products out of plastic waste, he said that they had shown that plastic could be a product that was used and reused repeatedly, but this required that societies move to a circular economy for plastic in which all plastics were designed to be recycled and special attention was paid to the use of hazardous additives in those plastics.

5. In her statement, Ms. Andersen, noting that the resumed fifth session was being held at a time of great turmoil that made multilateralism for peace and a healthy environment more important than ever, said that an enormous responsibility rested on the shoulders of Member States to deliver solutions to address the triple planetary crises of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste, including plastic pollution. The triple crises were compromising the planet's capacity to sustain humanity and the ability of countries to achieve sustainable development. Thanks to the tireless work of the Bureau and members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, including the Open-ended Committee, several draft resolutions and draft decisions had been prepared for consideration by the Environment Assembly at the current session to tackle the triple crises in the years to come. The key to success, however, was not the number of resolutions adopted, but the focus, quality and vision of each of those resolutions, and their ability to have a real-world impact in the following months and years.

6. While all the draft resolutions before the Environment Assembly had value, those seeking to tackle the problem of plastic pollution had garnered particular support. In the space of a single lifetime, humanity had created a massive plastic problem by building an entirely new economy based on convenience and single-use plastics. Early plastic industry players had run advertisements teaching people to throw away plastic containers instead of reusing them, and had literally educated people out of practices that were best for the planet and humanity. Decades later, humanity was paying the price of this "new economy" in ocean, soil and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, while industry was throwing away a versatile and durable resource, instead of retaining its value. The time had come to reverse that error by launching negotiations on a new international agreement to ensure that plastics kept circulating in the economy, rather than in ocean gyres. Businesses, a broad coalition of countries, civil society and youth were demanding it, and Member States needed to deliver. The decision to launch negotiations on such an agreement would constitute a truly historic outcome of the current session, but only if Member States decided that the agreement would be legally binding; adopt a full life-cycle approach, stretching from extraction to production to waste; include strong monitoring mechanisms; provide support for national action; be backed by real financing; provide incentives for all stakeholders; and provide for swift implementation of its provisions.

7. Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, said that countries needed to continue working together to achieve a sustainable and inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which was still affecting millions of people around the world. The current resumed session was taking place at a crucial moment for the planet, when it was facing the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and also for UNEP, which was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. The session therefore provided an opportunity to tackle the crises, reflect on the past and envision the future, and strengthen UNEP in Nairobi as the global hub for the environment. The responsibility to tackle the triple planetary crises did not fall to UNEP alone, but to each and every United Nations entity and the entire world. In its capacity as the United Nations headquarters in Africa, the United Nations Office at Nairobi would continue to support UNEP in delivering on its mandate, as well as UN-Habitat, the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, the 18 United Nations entities operating in Kenya, 24 regional offices, and United Nations operations in more than 150 countries that were working to advance the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Africa and around the world.

8. In his remarks, Mr. Tobiko said that humanity had failed to heed the warnings of leaders such as the late Wangari Maathai that humans destroyed nature at their own peril because nature was unforgiving. The triple planetary crises that now confronted humanity were the result of the continued destruction of nature by humans, and their existence was not only proven by science, but was clearly visible to all. World leaders had paid lip service to the principles of environmental stewardship and intergenerational equity, but had failed to recognize their own leadership roles, thereby compromising the future of children and generations to come. It was therefore time to go beyond the adoption of resolutions and examine whether, and to what extent, previous resolutions had translated to real action on the ground and led to positive outcomes. Resolutions were important, as were actions taken at the national level to deal with the plastic pollution crisis, but they were clearly not enough.

9. With regard to the plastic pollution crisis, he concurred with the Executive Director that one of the key outcomes of the current session should be a resolution on a new global treaty on plastic pollution, which should include all the elements she had outlined and should go beyond the issue of marine litter in order to be impactful. Similarly, the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP would provide an opportunity to reflect on the tremendous work and achievements of UNEP, but also to hold a candid discussion on gaps, and on how to make the Programme more fit for purpose and build a UNEP that the younger generation wanted and deserved. In closing, he said that, as part of the anniversary celebrations, ministers and other representatives had planted 193 trees, one for each Member State of

the United Nations, on the grounds of the United Nations Office at Nairobi campus, in an area that was to be known as the “UNEP@50 corner”.

II. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work (agenda item 2)

A. Adoption of the agenda

10. The Chair recalled that, at the online meeting of its fifth session, the Environment Assembly had adopted the agenda for the session on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/EA.5/1/Rev.1), which had subsequently been revised to reflect the dates of the in-person meeting of the fifth session. The following agenda was adopted on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/EA.5/Rev.2):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.
5. International environmental policy and governance issues.
6. Programme of work and budget and other administrative and budgetary issues.
7. Stakeholder engagement.
8. Contributions to the meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
9. Commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972.
10. High-level segment.
11. Provisional agenda and dates of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.
12. Adoption of the resolutions, decisions and outcome document of the session.
13. Election of officers.
14. Other matters.
15. Adoption of the report of the session.
16. Closure of the session.

B. Organization of work

11. In accordance with rule 60 of its rules of procedure, the Environment Assembly agreed to establish a committee of the whole for the consideration of various items of its agenda. The Assembly also agreed, in accordance with the recommendations of the Bureau, that the Committee of the Whole would be chaired by Ms. Andrea Meza Murillo (Costa Rica), that Ms. Selma Haddadi (Algeria) would serve as rapporteur and that it would consider item 5, international environmental policy and governance issues, item 9, commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972, and item 10, provisional agenda and dates of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.

12. The Environment Assembly further agreed that the time limit for statements in explanation of a position before action and after action on a proposal be limited to three minutes. Regarding the right of reply, the Assembly agreed that such right should be exercised at the end of the consideration of an item, with the number of interventions in the exercise of that right limited to two per item for any delegation at a given meeting, the first such intervention being limited to three minutes and the second to two minutes.

C. Attendance

13. The following Member States were represented at the resumed fifth session: [to be completed]
14. The following non-Member States were represented: [to be completed].
15. [To be completed] were represented as observers.
16. The following United Nations bodies, conventions and related secretariats were represented: [to be completed]
17. The following United Nations specialized agencies and related organizations were represented: [to be completed]
18. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: [to be completed]
19. In addition, a number of non-governmental and civil society organizations were represented as observers.

D. General statements

20. Also during the opening of the resumed fifth session, representatives of regional groups of Member States, representatives of Member States and observers made general statements focusing on the theme of the session “Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”.

1. General statements by regional and political groups

(a) African States

21. The representative of Senegal, speaking on behalf of the African States and also in his capacity as President of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, reaffirmed Africa’s firm commitment to active participation and involvement in the global environmental agenda, noting that the continent would host meetings of the conferences of the parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2022, as well as assuming the presidency of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly, making 2022 an “African year” for the environment. Urgent, meaningful and impactful action was needed to address the major challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification, pollution and waste, and the African States acknowledged the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the leadership of Algeria as the Africa regional representative in paving the way for a successful outcome of the Assembly’s resumed fifth session. The African States welcomed the UNEP medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 and the programme of work and budget for the period 2022–2023, along with the corresponding allocations for the Environment Fund, but stressed the need for more coordinated and coherent regional delivery of the programme of work, in line with the Group’s previous requests for a strengthened UNEP presence in Africa and the implementation of resolutions submitted by the African States. The special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP would strengthen the Programme’s position as the world’s leading environmental authority.

(b) European Union and its member States

22. The representative of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, noting that Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine also aligned themselves with his statement. He welcomed the resumption of the Assembly’s fifth session but said that it was overshadowed by the act of aggression by the Russian Federation against a neighbouring country, and he reiterated the position of the European Union and its member States on the matter, calling on the Russian Federation to de-escalate the situation, abide by international law and engage constructively in dialogue through the established international mechanisms. He also expressed concern about the war’s harmful impact on the environment, with its ecological consequences likely to have immediate and long-term effects on human lives and health. A year after the first meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, held online owing to the COVID-19 situation, the pandemic and its consequences were still far from overcome and the state of the planet continued to deteriorate. The resumed fifth session should be a springboard for ambitious, coordinated action to tackle the triple crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. Plastic pollution was high on the agenda, and the Assembly was urged to make a breakthrough and formally launch negotiations on a legally binding global agreement on plastics. The proposed resolution on nature-based solutions also represented a concrete step towards bringing together actions for climate and biodiversity; nature-based solutions had huge potential for climate and biodiversity action when properly implemented, and a multilaterally

agreed definition of “nature-based solutions” would be a crucial step in ending their misuse. The European Union and its member States also looked forward to the establishment of a new science-policy panel to address chemicals, waste and pollution, which would fill an important gap and provide the knowledge needed to fully address the pollution agenda and the sound management of chemicals and waste.

(c) Group of 77 and China

23. The representative of Colombia [F], speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Nairobi chapter, cast the fifth session of the Environment Assembly as an opportunity to bridge, build on and catalyse multilateral action on biodiversity, desertification, climate change and pollution, and commended the measures taken to guarantee a transparent, inclusive, participatory and State-driven process that ensured that no-one was left behind. The resumed fifth session was taking place as the world attempted to overcome and recover from a pandemic that had undermined many development gains and highlighted the challenges faced by developing countries. The Group of 77 and China supported the multilateral effort to tackle plastic pollution and welcomed the intent to launch negotiations on an international legally binding instrument on plastic, including in the marine environment, with ambitious goals, equally ambitious means of implementation and wide participation, while fully recognizing the different national circumstances and starting points of Member States and observer States. Members of the Group had put forward resolutions that reflected the need to address the human-animal interlinkages and enhance ecosystems services in order to benefit human health and overcome global health inequalities. The Group also called for financial and technical assistance and technology transfer to enable developing countries to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and for reinvigorated North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation in efforts to achieve sustainable development in harmony with nature. Action to protect, conserve and sustainably manage and use ecosystems was encouraged so that developing countries would be better prepared to face the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss, desertification and pollution. The Group also acknowledged that the sustainable use of natural resources was an effective way to achieve economic growth in harmony with nature.

(d) Asia-Pacific States

24. The representative of Oman made a statement on behalf of the States of the Asia-Pacific region, adding their voices to calls for a global framework to prevent and reduce plastic pollution that was informed by circular economy principles and the waste management hierarchy, and complemented existing instruments and initiatives. Some of the States had requested that the framework be based on the precautionary approach and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

25. The fourth session of the Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific had been held in Suwon, Republic of Korea, from 5 to 7 October 2021. Discussions had centred on issues related to the resumed fifth session of the Environment Assembly, including nature-based solutions for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Member States of the Asia-Pacific region had contributed to preparations for the session by means of draft resolutions, including on single-use plastic products pollution and marine plastic pollution, sustainable lake management, nitrogen management, and sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

26. The COVID-19 pandemic had hampered the capacity of the region to respond to the triple planetary crises. Some countries required support to facilitate the transition to greener, more sustainable development pathways in the post-COVID era. Despite those challenges, the region remained committed to submitting enhanced nationally determined contributions for implementing the Paris Agreement and supported the extension of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns until 2030.

27. While 2022 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of UNEP and of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, the international community’s collective environmental action had fallen short and planetary health was in crisis. The Asia-Pacific region renewed its commitment to doing its part to scale up and accelerate global environmental action.

(e) Latin American and Caribbean States

28. The representative of Chile [F], speaking on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States, described the fifth session as significant for the international environmental agenda, with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of UNEP and reaffirmation of the Environmental Assembly’s indispensable role as the intergovernmental decision-making body for the environment. The Latin American and Caribbean States expected the resumed fifth session to have an ambitious outcome, measured not in quantity but in ability to trigger the needed change. The negotiations on plastics were

a particular priority, requiring the cooperation of all Member States and willingness to reach consensus on a new international legally binding instrument.

29. The Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean had just marked its fortieth anniversary by holding a special session to strengthen regional cooperation in the face of its environmental challenges. The region was particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, which had the potential to undermine the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The pandemic, while also a source of concern, should be viewed as an opportunity to further integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development into economic and social development planning, foster innovation and create new sustainable jobs. It was important to ensure that developing countries had adequate, sufficient and predictable means of implementation to achieve their environmental obligations. The Group also wished to recall that Member States had common but differentiated responsibilities, but that all were expected to do their utmost to implement the 2030 Agenda. The future role of UNEP in terms of supporting developing countries in complying with their international environmental commitments merited discussion. The major groups also had an important role to play and their input was to be valued.

2. General statements by representatives

30. Ministers and other high-level representatives of countries, and representatives of United Nations entities, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and observers, delivered statements addressing the theme of the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly: “Strengthening actions for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals”. A number of representatives expressed appreciation to all those who had worked hard to prepare for and organize the resumed fifth session, and to the Government and people of Kenya for hosting the session.

31. Many representatives highlighted the timeliness and relevance of the theme of the session, given the pressing need to take affirmative action to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the growing recognition of the role that nature, in all its dimensions, would play in attaining those goals. The significance of nature to the social, economic and environmental aspects of human lives was often forgotten or neglected, and negative anthropogenic influences had greatly diminished the services and resources that nature provided, to the detriment of humanity and the planet. The resumed fifth session had been convened at a key moment for the Earth, when decisive, nature-based actions of real substance were required to overcome the challenges imposed by the triple planetary crises of biodiversity loss, climate change and pollution, and to recover from the global shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. The resolutions adopted by the Environment Assembly at the present session, and, importantly, their implementation, formed a vital component of those actions. Several representatives expressed regret at the current conflict involving the Russian Federation and Ukraine, and expressed support for and solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

32. Several representatives congratulated UNEP on reaching the milestone of its fiftieth anniversary as the leading global environmental authority, and expressed their continued support for and commitment to the work of the Programme. One representative said that only consolidated action at the regional and international levels could bring about positive results, and the role of UNEP in encouraging environmental partnerships had been outstanding. It was important to learn the lessons of those 50 years and approach environmental problems with a new spirit of urgency and cooperation. UNEP would play a crucial part in that regard in rendering active assistance to countries as they shifted from the present wasteful economic system to a circular economy based on the efficient and environmentally aware use of resources. Strengthening environmental awareness and developing a sustainable mindset were vital to achieving those aims. On the positive side, humankind had the knowledge, technology and capacity to make the transition to a nature-positive future that would benefit health, economies and the planet.

33. Many speakers alluded to the daunting and unprecedented challenges faced in achieving global environmental objectives. The negative impacts of climate change and global warming, including sea-level rise and desertification, were being experienced by many countries, as were such undesirable phenomena as biodiversity loss, land degradation and deforestation. Several representatives drew attention to specific habitats and locations that were particularly under threat, including wetlands, forests, lakes, coastal zones, mountain regions, and small island developing States. Vulnerable populations had been subject to increasing poverty and poor quality of life. Mounting consequences were being experienced by humanity, including insecurity and conflict, forced migration, ill-health from the effects of pollution and poor waste management, and unhealthy food production. Despite such impacts, the failure of human governmental structures to coordinate a response had exacerbated

the situation. Lack of regional convergence in addressing challenges had allowed short-term gains to override long-term considerations of sustainability and conservation.

34. In recent years, the wide-ranging impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic had compounded the environmental challenges facing humanity. Economic, environmental and social vulnerability had worsened, and the pandemic had exposed the fragility of the links between humanity and nature and the perils of consumerism. In addition, the effects had been felt most deeply by the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. Despite those overwhelming challenges, the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique opportunity to apply the lessons learned in building back better and fashioning a more sustainable and inclusive future. Old structures and a business-as-usual approach had been revealed as ineffective, and there was a need to pursue a more coordinated and environmentally aware approach that was firmly based on the interconnectedness enshrined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and recognized the fact that the health of humanity was intrinsically linked with the health of the planet. The effectiveness of a systematic, science-based and integrated approach to disease management had been demonstrated, and offered hope that future outbreaks of zoonotic and other diseases could be better contained.

35. Given the broad context of increasingly complex challenges facing the planet, it was important to focus on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as a framework that offered the potential to ensure lasting sustainability for the planet and its resources, while enhancing the wealth and health of the population. The 2030 Agenda was the basis upon which humanity could tackle environmental challenges and remodel its relationship with nature to build a resilient and inclusive world. There was growing recognition of humanity's collective obligation to live within the limits of the planet and to move to an innovative, inclusive, sustainable and low-carbon global economy. Collective, proactive, strategic and actionable interventions were needed to overcome the planetary crises and live in harmony with nature.

36. In keeping with the philosophy underpinning the Sustainable Development Goals, a holistic and integrated approach, with the involvement of all stakeholders, was required to achieve authentic, sustainable development outcomes. Diverse human experiences and capabilities should feed into the mix, including scientific evidence, nature-based solutions, traditional ecological knowledge, and the capacities of indigenous communities to rehabilitate ecosystems. Partnerships should embrace inputs from public authorities, the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations, intergovernmental organizations, academia, communities and individuals, cognizant of the values and skills that each could contribute in devising creative and innovative solutions. Strong science was an essential prerequisite for addressing pressing environmental challenges, and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services was of crucial importance in that regard. Capacity-building and technology transfer were vital in supporting and assisting low-resource partners, taking into account the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

37. Many representatives gave particular focus to the issue of plastic and microplastic wastes, which had in recent years become a major area of global concern. Marine plastic pollution was abundant and ubiquitous and was threatening the biodiversity of the world's oceans. The impact was keenly felt by coastal communities, particularly small island developing States, whose economies were dependent on tourism and fishing. Microplastics were finding their way into organisms and constituted a burgeoning threat to the health of humans and other species.

38. There was clearly a need for strong measures to deal with the matter. The transboundary nature of plastic value chains required a global response to tackle plastic pollution effectively. One representative said that addressing the crisis required strong international cooperation and robust stakeholder engagement within a highly ambitious approach that encouraged all countries and stakeholders to identify innovative solutions across the full life cycle of plastics. Efficient waste collection and the application of eco-design principles in the production of goods and packaging could significantly reduce the amount of waste generated. Several representatives supported the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee as a mechanism for discussing the development of a legally binding global agreement on marine litter and plastic pollution. One representative said that such a treaty could reduce global plastic waste by curbing the manufacture and use of single-use plastics and fostering a viable circular economy by means of which plastics could be recycled. The representative of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development drew attention to the recent launch of the first Global Plastics Outlook, which would inform and support policy efforts to combat plastic leakage.

39. Several representatives highlighted the value of regional approaches to combating litter pollution. One representative drew attention to the Regional Marine Litter Action Plan of the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission as an inspirational model of regional action. Another

representative outlined the work of the Pacific Ocean Litter Project in helping Pacific island countries to tackle single-use plastics that harmed marine and coastal ecosystems, and described an ambitious project to protect the Great Barrier Reef along the east coast of Australia.

40. Protection of biodiversity and ecological systems was viewed by many representatives as an essential component of the process of environmental recovery. Many human activities were resulting in a concerning imbalance with nature, including accelerated deforestation, air and water pollution, illegal wildlife trade, degradation of wetlands, habitat destruction and unsustainable agricultural practices. There was a strong need to support multilateral agreements that were engaged in this area, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa. The post-2020 global biodiversity framework promised to set effective targets for the protection of the planet's biodiversity and galvanize action towards ecosystem preservation. On the matter of nature-based solutions, which were a major theme of the present session, one representative cautioned that only activities and good practices that genuinely supported ecosystem resilience and benefited biodiversity should be adopted. To support that aim, it was important to develop a generally agreed definition of nature-based solutions. Another representative underscored the value of nature-based solutions that contributed to both ecosystem restoration and climate change mitigation, such as afforestation, revegetation and wetland restoration. Such efforts could be made in the context of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030.

41. The topic of climate change also featured prominently in representatives' statements. Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures recognized the overarching impact of climate change on many aspects of global life, including water resources, agriculture, forestry, energy, transport, infrastructure, biodiversity and human health. In response, human and natural environments should be seen as interconnected systems, requiring joint planning and project development. Cities and settlements presented a particularly complex challenge, requiring innovative solutions in such areas as climate resilience, energy efficiency, integrated green transport systems, and waste disposal. Ensuring sustainable agricultural systems that produced healthy food and provided secure income and livelihoods for farmers and their communities, while avoiding landscape transformations that inevitably resulted in biodiversity loss, was another challenge of global proportions. Sustainable food systems required coordinated policy measures as well as individual and community responsibility. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic had shown the value of locally produced food that reduced environmental impacts and created green jobs.

42. Various models for sustainable consumption and production were gaining prominence. A circular or green economy based on a life-cycle approach, efficient use of energy, water and other resources, cleaner production methods and waste recycling could reduce the negative impacts of wasteful resource use without compromising the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, many representatives described actions being taken at the national level to promote environmentally sensitive development and sustainable consumption and production. Examples included the articulation of long-term economic visions based on the principles of sustainable development; integrated urban transport systems; strategies to improve air quality and reduce pollution; the promotion of plastics-free, low-waste consumer behaviour, and improved management of waste streams; reforestation projects with ambitious tree-planting targets; the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency; fiscal measures to incentivize environmentally friendly production; green public procurement; the prioritization of clean production and climate-friendly technologies; the development of environmentally friendly public transport systems; integration of environmental considerations into decision-making, policymaking and legislation; "blue" initiatives for water environments; and increased funding for parks and heritage areas and the rehabilitation of wetlands.

43. Finally, many representatives highlighted the necessity of global cooperation and action to achieve planetary goals and ensure a sustainable future for coming generations. It was essential to continue to work collectively to ensure that nature remained at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. The COVID-19 pandemic had demonstrated how the health of humans, animals and the planet were closely intertwined, and while the impacts of human activities might seem localized, they could have devastating long-term consequences at the global level. In the face of increasingly complex environmental challenges, sustainable consumption and production could only be achieved through international cooperation, multilateralism and solidarity. Within that scenario, the role of UNEP, and of the United Nations Environment Assembly, was more crucial than ever in guiding all actors towards an environmentally sustainable future.

44. [to be completed]

3. Other statements

45. The representative of Serbia, raising a point of order, said that the statement delivered by the European Union was not, in fact, the statement that Serbia had aligned itself with.
46. The representative of the Russian Federation, exercising his right of reply to the statement by the European Union, said that the Russian Federation was not engaged in a war of aggression against Ukraine. In fact, the Russian Federation was engaged in a special military operation that had been prompted by the refusal of the Government of Ukraine to implement the Minsk agreements and by the military operations against the people and infrastructure of Ukraine's Donbass region undertaken by the Ukrainian regime and its neo-Nazi partners, whose activities had been ignored by those concerned with the environmental impacts of conflict. The Russian Federation had been left with no option but to intervene.
47. Statements were also made by representatives of the following major groups: non-governmental organizations; farmers; indigenous peoples and their communities; women; the scientific and technological community; workers and trade unions; children and youth; and business and industry. The statements are available from: [www. to be completed]

III. Credentials of representatives (agenda item 3)

48. [to be completed]

IV. Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (agenda item 4)

49. Ms. Luísa Fragoso, Permanent Representative of Portugal and Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, presented the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, including the outcomes of the resumed fifth meeting of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives, held from 21 to 25 February 2022 (UNEP/EA.5/INF/2/REV.1).
50. Since the online meeting of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, the Committee had held four regular meetings and one extraordinary meeting to elect its Bureau, in addition to many subcommittee meetings to exercise its review and oversight role and advance preparations for the in-person meeting of the fifth session and the special session to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of UNEP.
51. In October 2021, the Committee had held its eighth annual subcommittee meeting, during which it had agreed that, as a result of the decision adopted at its extraordinary meeting on 23 June 2021, no further action was required in response to paragraph 7 of Environment Assembly decision 5/3, whereby the Committee was invited to consider, in view of systemic problems and in a comprehensive manner, the cycle of the term of office of the Bureau of the Committee in relation to that of the Bureau of the Environment Assembly. The Committee had also endorsed the outcome document of the consensual process for review by the Committee, as mandated by Environment Assembly decision 4/2.
52. At its 156th meeting, the Committee had endorsed the action plan for the implementation of subparagraphs (a)–(h) of paragraph 88 of the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and had agreed that Member States should continue to consider the action plan in the context of the draft decision on the provisional agenda, date and venue of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly.
53. The Committee had endorsed the draft ministerial declaration for the fifth session of the Environment Assembly, without prejudice to the right of Member States to put forward further adjustments and improvements before its adoption.
54. Under item 4 of the agenda of its resumed fifth meeting, the Open-ended Committee had considered and taken note of the remaining official working documents submitted by the Executive Director to the Environment Assembly at its fifth session, in addition to several information documents. Under item 6, it had recommended that the Environment Assembly should defer consideration of its contribution to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and mandate the subcommittee of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to consider and finalize that contribution. Under item 8, it had considered 17 draft resolutions and one decision submitted by Member States and the secretariat. In that regard, she thanked the secretariat and the United Nations Office at Nairobi for their efforts to organize online, in-person and hybrid meetings. The Open-ended Committee had endorsed three draft resolutions at the closing meeting of its session, and significant

further progress had subsequently been made informally under the leadership of the co-facilitators. Agreement had been reached on the text of the draft resolution on the sound management of chemicals and waste, and on the text of the draft resolution on the creation of an intergovernmental negotiating committee towards an international legally binding agreement on plastic pollution.

55. Following informal consultations, the draft political declaration of the special session of the United Nations Environment Assembly to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme had also been agreed, subject to final confirmation by one delegation regarding a preambular paragraph.

56. In closing, she thanked her fellow members of the Committee for their hard work, commitment and guidance, the secretariat for its support, and the former Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives, Mr. Fernando Coimbra, Permanent Representative of Brazil to UNEP, who had led the Committee until June 2021.

57. The Environment Assembly took note of the report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

58. The Assembly agreed to defer the adoption of draft resolutions on the animal welfare–environment– sustainable development nexus; on sustainable nitrogen management and on the future of the Global Environment Outlook to the closing plenary on 2 March 2022.

59. The Assembly also agreed to allocate to the Committee of the Whole the task of finalizing and endorsing the remaining draft decision and resolutions.

V. International environmental policy and governance issues (agenda item 5)

60. [to be completed]

VI. Programme of work and budget and other administrative and budgetary issues (agenda item 6)

61. The President recalled that the Environment Assembly had considered agenda item 6 at the first plenary session of the online meeting of the fifth session and had adopted by consensus the following decisions, which are set out in annex I to the proceedings of the United Nations Environment Assembly at its fifth session (UNEP/EA.5/25), covering the online meeting of the fifth session:

<i>Decision</i>	<i>Title</i>
5/1	Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions
5/2	Medium-term strategy for the period 2022–2025 and programme of work and budget for the biennium 2022–2023

62. There being no other matters under agenda item 6, the Assembly had concluded its consideration of the item.

VII. Stakeholder engagement (agenda item 7)

63. [to be completed]

VIII. Contributions to the meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and implementation of the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (agenda item 8)

64. In resuming its consideration of the item, the Assembly agreed to defer consideration of the item to a future meeting of the subcommittee of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives.

IX. Commemoration of the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972 (agenda item 9)

65. [to be completed]

X. High-level segment (agenda item 10)

66. [to be completed]

XI. Provisional agenda and dates of the sixth session of the Environment Assembly (agenda item 11)

67. [to be completed]

XII. Adoption of the resolutions, decisions and outcome document of the session (agenda item 12)

68. [to be completed]

XIII. Election of officers (agenda item 13)

69. In accordance with rule 19 of the rules of procedure of the Assembly, the Environment Assembly elected, by acclamation, Mr. Silvano Tjong-Ahin (Suriname) as a Vice-President for the fifth session of the Assembly, to replace Mr. Reggy Nelson (Suriname), for the remainder of his term.

XIV. Other matters (agenda item 14)

70. [to be completed]

XV. Adoption of the report of the session (agenda item 15)

71. [to be completed]

XVI. Closure of the session (agenda item 16)

72. [to be completed]
