



## **UNEP OECPR-2 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2016**

OECPR-2 discussed the proposed outcome of the ministerial High-Level Segment of the Second UN Environment Assembly of the UN Environment Programme (UNEA-2) in the morning, while Cluster 2 discussed a resolution on sustainable consumption and production (SCP).

In the afternoon, Cluster 3 discussed resolutions on marine plastic debris and microplastics, and on the International Environment Forum for Basin Organizations. Cluster 5 addressed the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy (MTS), Programme of Work (PoW) and budget. In the evening, Cluster 1 discussed promoting the effective implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, and the roles of UNEP and UNEA in delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while Cluster 4 conducted a second reading of resolutions dealing with natural capital and conflict-affected areas. Negotiations continued late into the night.

### **PREPARATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS/OUTCOME**

**UNEA-2 HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OUTCOME:** CPR Chair Julia Pataki (Romania) introduced this item, with most delegates expressing support for a concise and “punchy” outcome document.

On the format, some delegates emphasized the need to provide a strong political signal from UNEA in a Ministerial statement that could be understood by the wider public. Others were opposed to opening up potentially lengthy negotiations on this matter. The US, CHINA, SAUDI ARABIA, PAKISTAN, CUBA and COLOMBIA, amongst others, favored having a Chair’s Summary, whereas the EU, the AFRICAN GROUP, SWITZERLAND, NORWAY, JAPAN and BRAZIL preferred a negotiated outcome document. The G-77/CHINA, said the document’s form should not be prejudged.

On key themes to be addressed, many countries raised the role of UNEP in delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda, and the relationship between UNEA and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Several countries highlighted the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, and means of implementation for sustainable development.

Other themes prioritized by delegates included: biodiversity and chemicals; air quality; climate change; SCP; the environmental dimension of humanitarian crises; oceans and marine litter; and effective partnerships on health and environment.

Chair Pataki invited delegates to contribute proposed text for the Secretariat’s consolidation, pending Friday’s discussion on the way forward.

**CLUSTER 2:** Cluster Chair John Moreti (Botswana) announced that three proposed drafts submitted by Japan and Mongolia, the EU and Burkina Faso, dealing broadly with chemicals and wastes, would be consolidated and considered at a later date.

**SCP:** Delegates began consideration of this draft resolution, submitted by the EU. While many countries supported the general thrust of its 14 preambular paragraphs, one developed country described the text as too broad and overstepping the mandate of UNEP. In text referencing the role of SCP in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, several delegates preferred to delete the phrase “circular economy,” with one proposing instead “sustainable development,” and another suggesting “material-cycle economy.”

On the first operative sub-section, titled “Resource efficiency and sustainable consumption and production,” some developing countries called for deletion of language referring, *inter alia*, to: sustainable supply chains; environmental and social impacts of investments; and extended producer responsibility, from product design to waste management. In response to calls by some developing countries to remove a reference to sustainable procurement, proponents stressed the proposal offers an important economic instrument to leverage governments’ sustainable purchasing power.

Discussions on SCP will resume on Friday, followed by consideration of the last draft resolution in the cluster, submitted by the US, on “Wasted food reduction, rescue and diversion.”

**CLUSTER 3:** Cluster 3, chaired by Corinna Enders (Germany), completed discussion of two resolutions.

**Marine plastic debris and microplastics:** Delegates agreed to acknowledge the work of existing regional action plans on marine litter, and supported mentioning measures against littering of freshwater courses. They disagreed on language regarding terrestrial waste reduction and prevention, and capacity building. On international clean-up actions, delegates disagreed with one country’s proposal to delete mention of the “polluter pays principle.” Delegates discussed text proposals addressing prevention and reduction of waste from ships, such as including waste disposal costs in the harbor fee, but without agreement.

Delegates reserved their position on a paragraph about the possible phasing out of microplastic particles in products, until a UNEA study on its sources and prevention becomes available. On the revision of standards for product content labelling, some countries cautioned that biodegradable plastic is not a solution to marine pollution.

Delegates did agree on harmonizing cost-effective monitoring approaches and also on urging governments at all levels to augment research. They differed on the scope and timing of a proposed UNEP assessment of the effectiveness of other relevant international regulatory frameworks and instruments.

On a paragraph proposing a UN Marine Litter Day, several countries suggested that World Oceans Day and various beach clean-up days around the world adequately highlight the issue.

**The International Environment Forum for Basin Organizations:** Egypt introduced the proposed resolution, explaining that the first forum had been convened by UNEP, and extending his government’s offer to host the second forum.



Several countries expressed concern about duplication, and recommended using existing structures, in particular the UN Economic Commission for Europe Water Convention. They clarified that the Convention is open for global signature and that many countries have participated in its activities. Some countries expressed concern about increasing expectations for UNEP to act as the secretariat for a number of conferences and regional bodies, and queried the financial implications. Countries disagreed over whether to mention the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation.

**CLUSTER 5:** In the afternoon, delegates considered all six draft resolutions before the cluster.

**Enhancing the work of UNEP in facilitating cooperation, collaboration and synergies among biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements:** The cluster finalized consideration of this draft, with delegates agreeing to meet informally to continue consultations on, *inter alia*, text addressing the Secretariat's support and contribution to the implementation, follow-up and review of biodiversity-related targets of the SDGs in collaboration with the biodiversity-related multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

**MTS (2018-2021) and PoW and budget for 2018-2019:** On this draft proposed by the Secretariat, delegates differed on the titles of UNEP's sub-programmes; requests to Member States to increase their voluntary contributions "specifically" to the Environment Fund; and the need for these funds to come from all "appropriate" sources. They also debated whether to include references to the voluntary indicative scale of contributions. They agreed to continue consultations in the intersessional period.

**UNEA Cycle:** Chair Raza Bashir Tarar (Pakistan) announced that this issue would be considered when the Secretariat finalizes the draft text.

**Midterm Review of the Montevideo Programme IV on Environmental Law:** On this resolution, proposed by Uruguay, one country expressed concern that many of the recommendations made by the Montevideo meeting of senior government officials and experts in environmental law could not be implemented in the remaining time of the programme. Following another proposal to substantially revise the entire resolution text and incorporate it within the resolution on the 2030 Agenda, Chair Tarar requested the interested parties to consult informally to explore a possible compromise.

**Integration of Biodiversity for Well-being:** On its draft submission, Mexico said informal consultations had progressed with listing the sectors most relevant to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and that the title was still under review.

**Sand and dust storms:** Under this resolution, submitted by Iran, delegates agreed to include a request to integrate a strategic plan on this issue into the PoW.

Closing the session, Chair Tarar urged delegates to engage in intersessional consultations to try to reach consensus on outstanding language before UNEA-2.

**CLUSTER 4:** Cluster 4 conducted a second reading of resolutions dealing with natural capital and conflict-affected areas.

**Sustainable and optimal management of natural capital for sustainable development and poverty eradication:** In the evening, delegates began a second reading of the draft text. Despite clarification from the UNEP Secretariat on the definitions of "natural capital" and "natural resources," delegates could not agree on which term to adopt and both remained bracketed. They agreed to take note of the UN Statistical Commission's System of Environmental Economic Accounts as a statistical standard. They disagreed on language on providing assistance to countries to integrate natural capital valuation and accounting into their development planning processes; and on stemming illicit financial flows to and from developing countries, including the restitution of "the current monetary value of illegally acquired resources." They also contested language on the optimal management of natural resources, including value-

addition in key sectors such as agroforestry and sustainable industrialization, good governance, and mutually agreed terms for technology transfer.

**Illegal trade in wildlife and wildlife products:** Chair John Moreti (Botswana) invited delegates to continue with informal discussions on this text, on the basis of additional text submitted by Norway.

**Protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict:** Chair Moreti invited delegates to examine the remaining bracketed text and additional proposals submitted by Jordan. Discussions continued into the evening.

**CLUSTER 1:** Chaired by Pedro Escosteguy Cardoso (Brazil), the cluster addressed two draft resolutions.

**Promoting the effective implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement:** Responding to this EU-proposed resolution, a number of developing countries said it would be inappropriate for UNEA to undertake such a resolution at this time, noting that: the Paris Agreement has not yet been ratified and implementation modalities continue to be discussed; selectively addressing particular topics from the Agreement would disturb the delicate balance already achieved; and UNEP's appropriate engagement with climate change should be guided by the MTS and PoW.

Others highlighted UNEP's role as a key partner in the Paris Agreement. A developing country stressed its strong desire to see human rights language from the Paris Agreement's preamble. The Chair invited the EU to engage informally with interested delegations to identify an appropriate way forward.

**Roles of UNEP and UNEA in delivering on the environmental dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** Delegates resumed consideration of this resolution from Tuesday. On a paragraph recognizing UNEP's role in the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the UN system, a middle-income country proposed an addition that UNEP's role is "under the political guidance and in conformity with the recommendations of the HLPF." Many opposed this proposal, stating that it could set an undesirable precedent.

Delegates could not agree on language regarding the links between UNEP's work programme and the human rights-based approach underpinning the 2030 Agenda. Several delegates called for recrafting of language related to UN-system partnerships. They also discussed reporting arrangements for the Environmental Management Group's effectiveness report and the development of the System-Wide Framework of Strategies on the Environment for the UN system.

Discussions on the operative section of the resolution continued into the evening.

### IN THE BREEZEWAYS

On the last full day scheduled for the discussion of draft resolutions, energy levels dwindled as four of the five clusters struggled to complete a first reading of all their resolutions. While delegates had already anticipated further intersessional consultations to clean up the text before UNEA-2 in May, the full scope of that task became clear as brackets continued to proliferate.

Comparing the meeting dynamics to those of the first OECPR, one veteran commented, "This time, everyone wants to get a word in!"

Not all were satisfied, however. As two of the five clusters negotiated late into the night, stakeholders deplored the removal of language, earlier in the week, on precedents for stakeholder inclusion.

**ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS:** The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of UNEP OECPR-2 will be available on Monday, 22 February 2016, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/unep/oecpr2016/>