

## Summary of the Fourth Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly: 11-15 March 2019

The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) took place from 11-15 March 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya, at the UN Offices at Nairobi (UNON), organized on the theme of “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production.” The conference attracted a record number of participants, with five Heads of State and Government, 157 ministers and deputy ministers, and almost 5,000 participants from 179 countries attending the Assembly and related events during the week. The Assembly included plenary sessions, leadership dialogues and a multi-stakeholder dialogue, and took place concurrently with many events at UNON, including the One Planet Summit convened by the presidents of France and Kenya.

Other events that took place in conjunction with UNEA-4 included the:

- Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum (7-8 March);
- Science, Policy and Business Forum (9-10 March);
- Sustainable Innovation Expo (10-15 March); and
- Cities Summit (13 March).

The Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives convened from 4-8 March, with informal consultations on 9-10 March, to negotiate the resolutions and decisions to be adopted by UNEA-4. Negotiations on many of the draft resolutions and decisions continued in the UNEA Committee of the Whole. During the closing plenary on 15 March, delegates adopted a Ministerial Declaration, 23 resolutions and three decisions, addressing shared and emerging global environmental issues. UNEA-4 also adopted the UNEP Programme of Work and budget for the 2020-21 biennium and launched the Sixth Global Environment Outlook report.

### A Brief History of the UN Environment Assembly

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) was formed in the wake of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), in response to the grave challenges stemming from environmental degradation, unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and rising inequality among a global population projected to reach 11 billion by the end of the 21st century.

### Origins of UNEA

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council (GC) was created as a result of the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment,

which established UNEP as the central UN node for global environmental cooperation and treaty making through UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution 2997 (XXVII). The UNGA elected 58 members to the GC, based on the principle of equitable geographic representation. The Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) was constituted by the GC, as envisaged in UNGA resolution 53/242 (1998). Whereas the GC had a programme-focused role in reviewing and approving UNEP’s activities and budget for each biennium, the GMEF reviewed important and emerging policy issues in the field of the environment.

Some of the highlights from GC/GMEF sessions during the 2000-2012 period include:

- adoption of the Malmö Ministerial Declaration in 2000, which agreed that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development should review the requirements for a greatly strengthened institutional structure for international environmental governance (IEG);
- creation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management;

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- the 2005 Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building;
  - establishment of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group to Review and Assess Measures to Address the Global Issue of Mercury; and
  - establishment of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.
- The twelfth GC Special Session (GCSS-12) from 20-22 February 2012, in Nairobi, Kenya, marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of UNEP.

Rio+20 convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 13-22 June 2012. Its outcome document, “The Future We Want,” called on the UNGA to strengthen and upgrade UNEP through several measures, including, *inter alia*:

- introducing universal membership of the UNEP Governing Council;
- ensuring secure, stable, adequate and increased financial resources from the UN regular budget;
- enhancing UNEP’s ability to fulfill its coordination mandate within the UN system; and
- ensuring the active participation of all relevant stakeholders.

Following Rio+20, the UNGA adopted resolution 67/213 on strengthening and upgrading UNEP and establishing universal membership of its GC. On 13 March 2013, the UNGA further adopted resolution 67/251, which changed the designation of the UNEP GC to “the UNEA of the UNEP.” The GC convened for the last time from 19-22 February 2013, in a universal session that laid the groundwork for the first meeting of UNEA to take place in June the following year.

UNEA thus subsumes the functions of both the GC and the GMEF, and provides high-level leadership on the global stage in a role described by previous UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner as “the world’s parliament on the environment.”

The Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) is the Nairobi-based subsidiary body of UNEA, and meets intersessionally. With the advent of universal membership, the Open-Ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR) meets in advance of each UNEA session to negotiate resolutions.

### **Key Turning Points**

**UNEA-1:** Member States and international agencies hailed the first session of UNEA (UNEA-1), from 23-27 June 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, as a “coming of age” for global environmental governance. Ministers adopted a ministerial outcome document, which reaffirmed their commitment to full implementation of the Rio+20 outcome as well as the Rio Principles from the 1992 Earth Summit. Delegates called for continued efforts to strengthen UNEP to support implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, which was then under negotiation.

In a high-level segment, ministers discussed the forthcoming sustainable development goals (SDGs), including sustainable consumption and production (SCP); and illegal trade in wildlife, focusing on the escalation in poaching and the surge in related environmental crime. UNEA-1 also convened two symposia addressing two key aspects of environmental sustainability: the environmental rule of law and financing a green economy. UNEA-1 adopted 17 resolutions, including resolutions on strengthening UNEP’s role in promoting air quality, combating illegal trade in wildlife, and taking action on marine debris and microplastics.

**UNEA-2:** UNEA-2, from 23-27 May 2016, endorsed a draft Global Thematic Report on “Healthy Environment, Healthy People” and adopted 25 resolutions, including one spelling out the roles of UNEP and UNEA in the follow-up and review of the

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by providing policy-relevant information through its assessment processes, supporting the work of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Other resolutions addressed, *inter alia*, food waste, sustainable coral reef management, and protection of the environment in areas affected by armed conflict. Two ministerial roundtables addressed the links between environmental quality and human health and environment, addressing, *inter alia*, air and water quality, heavy metals, climate change, and marine plastic debris.

UNEA-2 also agreed to hold subsequent meetings in odd-numbered years, so as to come into line with the UN budgetary cycle.

**UNEA-3:** UNEA-3 took place from 4-6 December 2017, on the theme “Towards a Pollution-free Planet.” UNEA-3 adopted 11 resolutions, addressing, *inter alia*, water pollution, soil pollution, lead paint, and management of lead-acid batteries. A resolution on the Sixth Global Environmental Outlook (GEO-6) report emphasized this publication as UNEP’s flagship environmental assessment report, and agreed to time its release for UNEA-4. Discussions at UNEA-3 indicated that GEO-6 would focus more on emerging issues and policy effectiveness than previous publications.

UNEA-3 issued a ministerial statement, which underscored that everyone has the right to live in a healthy environment, and flagged concerns regarding the uncontrolled use of chemicals, the impacts of such pollution on the poor, and the environmental damage caused by armed conflict and terrorism.

### **UNEA-4 Report**

Opening the Assembly on Monday, 11 March, UNEA-4 President Siim Valmar Kiisler (Estonia) invited delegates to observe a minute of silence in honor of the 157 people who perished in the Ethiopian Airlines crash on Sunday while en route to Nairobi. Noting that UNEP will be 50 years old in 2022, he invited all participants to focus on scaling up efforts to find innovative solutions to environmental challenges.

Joyce Msuya, Acting Executive Director, UNEP, introduced the UNEA-4 theme, “Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production.” She anticipated the attendance of environment ministers and other high-level delegations from over 170 countries as well as other stakeholders, and invited all to join the #SolveDifferent campaign, which aims at communicating the environmental cost of unsustainable consumption and production models.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director, UN-Habitat and Acting Director-General, UNON, said innovation is essential to leaving no one behind in an urbanizing world, and spoke of UNON’s plans to make the compound more environmentally-friendly.

Keriako Tobiko, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Forestry and the Environment, Kenya, described Kenya’s various initiatives to move towards a more sustainable economy, including efforts to eliminate single-use plastics, and said that Kenya fully endorses the human right to a healthy environment.

Regional groups then made statements to plenary. The videos of all statements can be accessed at <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/statements>.

The Assembly adopted the provisional agenda (UNEP/EA.4/1/Rev.1) without comment. Thereafter, the Assembly established the Committee of the Whole (COW) and elected Fernando Coimbra (Brazil) as its Chair and Putera Parthama (Indonesia) as Rapporteur.

This report presents an account of the UNEA-4 plenaries and a summary of the decisions and resolutions discussed under the COW, organized into the five thematic clusters in which they were originally discussed in the OECPR. The thematic clusters addressed: sustainable consumption and production (SCP); resource efficiency, chemicals and waste; biodiversity and ecosystems; environmental governance; and the UNEP Programme of Work (POW).

### **Report of the Committee of Permanent Representatives**

On Monday, OECPR Chair Francisca Ashietey-Odunton (Ghana) introduced the key outcomes of OECPR-4 to the UNEA-4 plenary, explaining that negotiations on the draft resolutions had been conducted in five working groups, addressing:

- innovative solutions for environmental challenges and SCP, co-facilitated by Koleka Anita Mqulwana (South Africa) and Erik Lundberg (Finland);
- resource efficiency, chemicals and waste, co-facilitated by Elizabeth Taylor (Colombia) and Marcus Davies (Canada);
- ecosystems and biodiversity management and protection, co-facilitated by Julia Pataki (Romania) and Martin Gronda (Argentina);
- environmental governance, co-facilitated by Agus Justianto (Indonesia) and Sunil de Silva (Sri Lanka); and
- the UNEP programme of work and related issues, co-facilitated by Lori Dando (US) and Marta E. Juárez Ruiz (Costa Rica).

She announced the availability of the Chair's Summary of the OECPR (UNEP/OECPR.4/3), noting that the record number of resolutions and decisions currently being considered was a strong indication that Member States care about the environment.

The European Union (EU) requested that the Chair's Summary and the report of UNEA-4 both reference the roadmap prepared by the Secretariat outlining steps to a decision on the future of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), to accompany the relevant UNEA-4 document (UNEP/EA.4/INF/14).

Delegates agreed to forward the seven draft resolutions and one draft decision approved by the OECPR to UNEA-4 for adoption, and to refer all other draft resolutions and decisions to the COW for further consideration.

### **Programme of Work and Budget, and Other Administrative and Budgetary Issues**

On Monday, 4 March, during the OECPR the Secretariat introduced several reports on programme activities.

- Delegates took note of the reports on implementation of:
- resolution 3/1 on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict or terrorism (UNEP/EA.4/5);
  - resolution 3/4 on environment and health (UNEP/EA.4/7); and
  - resolution 3/6 on managing soil pollution (UNEP/EA.4/9).

The Secretariat promised written responses to EU suggestions for further information in each of these reports.

On implementation of resolution 3/8 on air pollution (UNEP/EA.4/13), the EU acknowledged progress on monitoring and assessment. She encouraged UNEP to continue its close partnership with other UN entities and actors.

On resolution 3/9 on lead paint and lead-acid batteries (UNEP/EA.4/14), the EU noted the mandate provided by several prior UNEA and Governing Council (GC) resolutions, and urged UNEP to "significantly advance" its work on prioritizing efforts toward the 2020 global goal on sound management of chemicals.

On resolution 3/10 on water pollution and water-related ecosystems (UNEP/EA.4/15), the EU noted that no approved conclusions have become available from the Fourth Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the GPA, held in Bali, Indonesia, on 31 October and 1 November 2018. She called for additional work to monitor and implement SDG 6 on water and sanitation, and requested building the Global Wastewater Initiative and the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management into the UNEP POW and budget.

On strengthening the role of UNEP (UNEP/EA.4/16), the EU requested the Secretariat to provide more information and analysis regarding the lack of progress on efforts to improve UN system-wide coordination, Environment Fund contributions, and the science-policy interface.

Delegates took note, without comment, of reports on:

- the implementation of outcomes of UNEA-1 and UNEA-2 (UNEP/EA.4/INF/13);
- the implementation of "Towards a Pollution-Free Planet" plan (UNEP/EA.4/3);
- innovative solutions for environmental challenges and SCP (UNEP/EA.4/17);
- the Programme on the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme IV) (UNEP/EA.4/19);
- the Global Chemicals Outlook II Summary for Policy Makers (SPM) (UNEP/EA.4/21);
- the International Resources Panel's (IRP) Global Resources Outlook 2019 SPM (UNEP/EA.4/22); and
- financing the sound management of chemicals and waste (UNEP/EA.4/INF/16).

On Tuesday, 5 March, the Secretariat reported on results of 36 project evaluations and programme performance in UNEP's seven sub-programmes, noting positive trends, and highlighting the need to increase core funding, which currently represents 21% of overall resources.

The EU expressed concern about the wide gap between the agreed budget and actual contributions, and about the lack of balance between core funds and earmarked funds. He called for increasing the range of contributors to UNEP, and welcomed its efforts to promote transparency around donor contributions.

Switzerland expressed support for the proposed USD 200 million budget of the Environment Fund for the 2020-21 biennium, and for the Secretariat to engage with new funding partners while remaining true to its core mandate. He cautioned against treating the POW and UNEA resolutions as two distinct work streams.

The Secretariat presented the following documents:

- Proposed POW and Budget for the Biennium 2020–2021 (UNEP/EA.4/4);
- Report of the Executive Director on the Management of Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions (UNEP/EA.4/INF/5);
- Funding Implications of the Policy-Making Organs in the Context of the POW and Budget 2020–2021 (UNEP/EA.4/INF/10); and
- Voluntary Indicative Scale of Contributions (VISC) (UNEP/EA.4/INF/11).

She outlined the proposed 2020-2021 POW and budget and the state of the Environment Fund and trust funds, noting, *inter alia*, that UNEP will submit a proposal to the UNGA for better covering the costs of UNEA, and that around half of contributing Member States in 2018 had pledged contributions at or above their VISC level.

The US stressed that UNEP should not engage in new initiatives for the Arctic and Antarctica, and that UNEP's resource efficiency sub-programme strategy should not be influenced by the International Coalition for Green Development on the Belt and Road, since UNEP's participation in the Coalition has been suspended.

In response to further comments, the Secretariat explained that calculation of programme budget implications is a new initiative for discussion purposes, and is not in the draft budget. She welcomed Member States' participation in UNEP's "re-energized" resource mobilization strategy, and promised written responses on other concerns.

**GEO-6:** On Tuesday, 5 March, Elizabeth Mrema, UNEP, introduced the GEO-6 Summary for Policymakers (SPM) (UNEP/EA.4/18) and the GEO-6 Key Messages (UNEP/EA.4/INF/18), noting that the latter had been entrusted to the Bureau of the SPM meeting in January 2019 to complete. The EU stressed its strong support for GEO-6, expressing hope it will influence the upcoming HLPF and the Global Sustainable Development Report due to be presented at the high-level meeting of the HLPF in September 2019. He called for harmonizing global assessments on similar topics, and for a full discussion about what Member States want in GEO-7 before that process is launched. Delegates welcomed the two reports.

### **Contributions to Meetings of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development**

In OECPR-4 on Tuesday, 5 March, Mrema introduced the report on progress in the implementation of resolution 3/3 on contributions of UNEA to the HLPF (UNEP/EA.4/6). She noted the 15 March deadline for contributions to be provided to the 2019 HLPF.

The EU requested aligning the document with the outcome of OECPR-4 discussions. He cautioned against calling for creative approaches on SCP without reflecting on solutions that may already exist. He warned that discussion of the human right to a clean, safe, and healthy environment would preempt discussions taking place elsewhere, and he requested including input on the need to work towards a transformative mode of governance. Finally, he requested amending the language on SCP to indicate this must be addressed without delay.

Montenegro called for fully integrating several SDG targets especially relevant to UNEP into the POW, including target 3.9 on pollution, target 6.3 on wastewater, target 12.4 on the sound management of chemicals and waste, and target 14.1 on reducing marine pollution.

NGOs emphasized the need to tackle unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, and stressed the need for a healthy environment.

Mrema said that comments relating directly to the document would be incorporated in a revision, while the Secretariat would respond separately to other concerns in writing.

On Friday, 15 March, UNEA-4 President Kiisler said the Executive Director had been requested to revise the report on the contribution of UNEA-4 to the 2019 HLPF, and that it would be considered by the CPR on behalf of the Assembly. Delegates took note of this point.

### **Committee of the Whole**

On Monday, 11 March, COW Chair Coimbra convened the COW. Delegates adopted the provisional agenda and organization of work as outlined by Coimbra (UNEP/COW.4/1 and Add.1), which established two working groups (WGs) and three contact

groups (CGs) tasked with completing negotiations on the draft resolutions that remained outstanding following OECPR-4:

- Working Group 1, co-chaired by Koleka Anita Mqulwana (South Africa) and Marcus Davies (Canada);
- Working Group 2, co-chaired by Julia Pataki (Romania) and Agus Justianto (Indonesia);
- Contact Group 1, chaired by Tita Korvenoja (Finland);
- Contact Group 2, chaired by Martin Gronda (Argentina); and
- Contact Group 3, co-chaired by Lori Dando (US) and Lukáš Pokorný (Czech Republic).

The COW convened six plenary meetings between Monday and Wednesday to provide updates on the progress of negotiations. In the final COW plenary on Wednesday evening, Coimbra expressed pride in the achievements of the group in addressing emerging environmental issues, noting that the new programme of work adopted will support UNEP's ongoing efforts.

All resolutions and decisions were adopted on Friday, 15 March, with the exception of three draft resolutions that were withdrawn.

### **Innovative Solutions for Environmental Challenges and Sustainable Consumption and Production**

**Sustainable mobility:** Proposed by Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, and Peru, this draft resolution, originally titled, "Clean and Electric Mobility," was allocated to OECPR WG 1 on Monday, 4 March. During the first reading, several delegates expressed concerns about this resolution focusing solely on electric mobility, and called for including other sustainable or low-carbon transport and referring to policies on air travel, biofuels, and active transportation options such as cycling and walking. Delegates also discussed whether to single out SDG 3 (good health and well-being), SDG 11 (sustainable cities), and SDG 13 (climate change), as relevant SDGs to which the transport sector can potentially contribute.

On Friday, 8 March, delegates reviewed the proposed amendments by the proponents, and agreed to refer to "sustainable mobility" in the title, and to preambular text referring to examples of sustainable mobility. On Saturday, they further discussed the meaning of "life-cycle approaches" and "full life-cycle assessment" in promoting sustainable mobility. Delegates reached full agreement on the resolution on Saturday and forwarded the agreed text to the COW. On Monday, 11 March, the COW approved and forwarded it to the UNEA-4 plenary for adoption.

**Final Outcome:** In the final resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.4), UNEA, *inter alia*, encourages Member States to consider formulating domestic public policy instruments on innovation on sustainable mobility, and calls on Member States and relevant stakeholders to promote the exchange of knowledge, good practices, lessons learned, and opportunities on sustainable mobility.

The resolution also encourages Member States, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, to identify innovative policy, financial, and technology solutions to promote sustainable mobility, including through:

- engaging both public and private sector interests, as well as public-private partnerships, to collaborate to align actions for promoting sustainable mobility;
- moving towards SCP by promoting a sustainable cities comprehensive approach on sustainable mobility, involving full life-cycle assessment; and
- considering mainstreaming sustainable mobility strategies, policies, and regulations based on a full life-cycle assessment of each sustainable mobility option.

The resolution requests UNEP to promote sustainable mobility, including through:

- existing partnerships to facilitate capacity building and exchange of knowledge;
- reporting on good practices on sustainable mobility policies and initiatives;
- encouraging pilot projects in cities; and
- preparing a compilation report on the implementation of this resolution to be presented at UNEA-6.

**Sustainable infrastructure:** Proposed by Mongolia, this draft resolution was allocated to OECPR WG 1 on Monday, 4 March. Several countries noted the importance of linking this resolution with the work of international financial institutions and the private sector and with other issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, including resilience to disasters. Others expressed their preference to keep general language rather than singling out reference to climate change. One developed country requested deleting language on supporting sustainable infrastructure in developing countries through enhanced financial and technical support, while a group of developing countries opposed the suggestion. On Friday evening, the group agreed to a “silence procedure” regarding the text on finance, pending further consultation with capitals.

The bracketed text was forwarded to UNEA, where it was taken up in COW WG 1. Delegates agreed to include language on promoting mobilization and realignment, “where applicable,” of investments, including through domestic policies to create sustainable infrastructure projects. On Wednesday, 13 March, the COW approved and forwarded the agreed text to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** In the final resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.6), UNEA encourages Member States to, *inter alia*: take the necessary steps to achieve SDG 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and related SDGs, to move towards sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Member States, with other relevant stakeholders, are encouraged to apply appropriate sustainability criteria to all infrastructure as a means to achieve SCP, and to:

- promote the mobilization, and realignment where applicable, of investments, including through promoting domestic policies to create enabling environment, towards sustainable infrastructure projects;
- continue to support developing countries to strengthen the scientific, technological, and innovative capacity towards the implementation of this resolution;
- develop and strengthen national and regional systems-level strategic approaches to infrastructure planning;
- promote nature-based solutions as key components of systems-level strategic approaches to infrastructure planning and development; and
- develop innovative approaches for, and exchange expertise on sustainable infrastructure.

The resolution also requests UNEP to:

- develop capacity of government policymakers and other relevant stakeholders to use available data, knowledge, tools, approaches, and other mechanisms to incorporate sustainable infrastructure into development and business strategies; and
- prepare a compilation report of best practices drawing on existing initiatives, and identify knowledge gaps to help Member States promote and strengthen the sustainability of infrastructure, and to report back to UNEA.

**Innovative Pathways to Achieve SCP:** Proposed by the EU, Colombia, Japan, Chile, and Indonesia, this draft resolution originally entitled, “SCP in a circular economy,” was allocated to OECPR WG 1, on Monday, 4 March, and discussed on Wednesday and Friday, 6 and 8 March. Many delegates argued

that there is a lack of evidence on the benefits of a circular economy approach, and cautioned against imposing a new concept. Discussions ensued on differences in each country’s approaches and policies to achieve SCP. Member States eventually agreed to consider a “circular economy” approach as an example of sustainable economic models, and to refer also to other models, such as resource efficiency, sound materials management, and 3R approaches (reduce, reuse, and recycle). Delegates also debated over whether to refer to measures to achieve a circular economy, such as “industrial symbiosis” and sustainable public procurement. They eventually agreed to mention “industrial symbiosis” with its definition, and the role of governments at all levels in promoting pathways to SCP through sustainable public procurement. Member States also discussed and agreed to request the IRP and members of the One Planet Network to fill knowledge gaps on SCP, without duplicating their work. Reconvening on Tuesday, 12 March, in COW CG 1, delegates reached agreement and the COW approved and forwarded the agreed text to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** In the final resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.2), UNEA, *inter alia*, invites Member States to consider approaches and policies to achieve SCP, including but not limited to resource efficiency and circular economy, and to take into account the outcomes of the GEO-6 report and the Global Resources Outlook 2019. The resolution also encourages Member States to:

- use incentives and other market-based instruments to support SCP;
- with relevant stakeholders, to promote the development and uptake of innovative sustainable business models; and
- with relevant stakeholders, including manufacturers and retailers, to enhance their collaboration to enable consumers and public authorities to make informed choices.

The resolution also:

- invites the One Planet Network, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, and the Platform for Accelerating the Circular Economy to continue to support exchange of best practices;
- invites Member States to promote the formation of communities of practice such as developing a national SCP resource pool;
- invites all Member States to develop sustainable public procurement policies and update their public procurement legal frameworks in line with SDG target 12.7 (promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities); and
- invites the IRP to continue to produce its Global Resources Outlook reports.

The resolution requests UNEP to:

- consider establishing an SCP-related theme for a future World Environment Day, in consultation with a potential future host country;
- establish a time-limited task group comprising the IRP and the One Planet Network to provide insights on the management of natural resources and raw materials; and
- submit a report providing an overview of best practices on decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation through SCP, and provide recommendations for UNEA-5.

**Promoting sustainable practices and innovative solutions for curbing food loss and waste:** Two separate draft resolutions, proposed by the League of Arab States and Sri Lanka, respectively, were allocated to OECPR WG 1. On Monday, 4 March, the proponents announced the merger of the two draft resolutions, and delegates commenced discussions on the consolidated text, titled: “Promoting innovative solutions for curbing food loss in hot and other climates,” on Wednesday, 6

March. Some countries expressed concern about limiting this resolution to “in hot and other climates,” while proponents stressed the urgency of addressing food loss and waste especially in these areas.

On Sunday, 10 March, delegates debated over whether to use language on “diverse environmental conditions, such as in high ambient temperature countries.” They also debated language inviting Member States and other organizations including international financial institutions to support developing countries, “in particular those in conflict,” in addressing food loss and waste. The proponents referred to the UNEA-3 resolution on pollution mitigation and control in areas affected by armed conflict as precedent. A developed country objected that mentioning finance was already a compromise, noting that finance had not been mentioned in the UNEA-2 resolution on food waste.

This resolution was forwarded to COW WG1 for further consideration, and informal consultations also took place. On Wednesday, 13 March, WG1 delegates agreed to delete text on “in areas affected by armed conflict,” and the COW approved and forwarded the agreed resolution to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** In the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.3), UNEA, *inter alia*:

- invites Member States to support measures on food loss and waste at all stages of supply chain, including through setting national strategies to reduce food loss and waste in line with SDG 12.3 (by 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses);
- urges Member States to establish mechanisms to measure food loss and waste including data management, monitoring, and verification;
- invites Member States to use or repurpose excess production using sustainable practices and innovative technologies;
- encourages Member States in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to prioritize actions on reducing food loss and waste in line with UNEP/Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) food loss and waste prevention guidance; and
- requests UNEP, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP Patterns (10YFP), and FAO and its partners to: provide technical support; foster regional and global cooperation; and participate in ongoing international initiatives to support transfer of innovative solutions and practices that can curb food loss and waste.

**Addressing environmental challenges through sustainable business practices:** OECPR WG 1 took up this draft resolution proposed by the African Group on Monday, 4 March. Many delegates welcomed this proposal, stressing that the private sector is a critical actor in protecting environment and implementing the 2030 Agenda. Some, however, preferred to refer to “green” rather than “sustainable” business, and one country questioned the definition of “green business.” Over the weekend of 9-10 March, delegates discussed: whether to describe sustainable business as enhancing resource efficiency while addressing climate change; whether “low-carbon” or “cleaner production” is a fundamental driver of sustainable business; and whether to refer to “green bonds.”

The resolution was further discussed in the COW WG 1 on Monday, 11 March. Delegates agreed to refer to “sustainable business, including, but not limited to, green business practices, as appropriate.” The COW approved and forwarded the text to the UNEA-4 plenary for adoption on Wednesday 13 March.

**Final Outcome:** In the final resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.5), UNEA, *inter alia*:

- invites Member States to develop enabling macroeconomic and sectoral policies that contribute to sustainable development, including environmental policies and the use of life-cycle approaches;
- invites Member States, the international community, the private sector, and other stakeholders to promote the development and strengthening of sustainable financing mechanisms, such as green bonds;
- requests UNEP to continue to support the development of skills, especially for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, to promote sustainable production patterns, including cleaner production and industrial symbiosis in order to enhance their profitability, resource efficiency and productivity;
- encourages Member States, partners, private sector, research institutions, academia, and other stakeholders to intensify research and development and knowledge sharing for the uptake, upscale and replication of sustainable business practices;
- requests UNEP to continue supporting countries, especially least developed countries, to collect and disseminate evidence and information on good practices to enable informed decision making, awareness, networking, and knowledge sharing on green business development;
- requests UNEP to develop guidance, tools, and mechanisms to promote capacity building and awareness raising to support Member States in advancing sustainable business practices;
- invites the international community, regional bodies, the private sector, and civil society to develop, adopt and implement effective measures to stimulate demand for sustainable products; and
- requests UNEP to report to UNEA-5 on progress on implementation of this resolution.

#### **Resource Efficiency, Chemicals and Waste**

**Marine plastic litter and microplastics:** This resolution, proposed by Japan, Norway, and Sri Lanka on “Strengthening global governance on marine plastic litter and microplastics,” resulted from a merger of three resolutions proposed separately by each of the co-sponsors. OECPR WG 2 first took up the draft on Tuesday, 5 March, when the cosponsors were asked to clean up the text as much as possible to eliminate overlapping and bracketed text. Formal WG negotiations during the remainder of the week made limited progress.

The draft resolution was forwarded to UNEA and COW CG 2 took up further negotiations, also with limited progress. Delegates conducted an off-the-record stocktaking of national positions on the central issue in the draft resolution, namely whether to create an Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) to prepare governance options for consideration at UNEA-5.

CG 2 Chair Martin Gronda produced a Chair’s compromise text that sought to balance positions of the various factions. Malaysia objected to the compromise text in the COW plenary, and COW Chair Coimbra ordered informal consultations among interested delegations, facilitated by Gronda, which were successful. The COW approved and forwarded the text on Wednesday, 13 March.

**Final Outcome:** In the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.7), UNEA extends the mandate of the *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics created by UNEA-3, tasking it to:

- take stock of existing activities and actions towards long-term elimination of discharges into the oceans, to reduce marine plastic litter and microplastics;

- identify technical and financial resources or mechanisms for supporting countries in addressing marine plastic litter and microplastics;
- encourage partnerships as well as increased cooperation in areas such as development of source inventories, improvement of waste management, awareness raising, and promotion of innovation; and
- analyze the effectiveness of existing and potential response options and activities on marine litter and microplastics at all levels to determine their contribution in solving the global problem.

The resolution invites the UN Environment Management Group to engage in and contribute to the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Expert Group by providing a mapping of all relevant UN agencies, programmes, initiatives, and expertise with relevance to marine litter, including plastic litter and microplastics.

UNEA also decides to establish, within available resources, and building on existing initiatives, a multi-stakeholder platform within UNEP to take immediate action towards the long-term elimination of discharges of litter and microplastics into the oceans through a life-cycle approach. Among other things, the multi-stakeholder platform is mandated to:

- serve as a forum to share experiences and coordinate action;
- serve as a repository for, *inter alia*: assessments on how land and sea-based sources of marine litter, including plastic litter and microplastics, are addressed at the national, regional, and international level; guidance materials; and action plans;
- raise awareness;
- establish and maintain a database of technical and scientific information related to marine litter;
- promote collaboration among relevant existing science mechanisms; and
- promote action in Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes, within available resources, to address marine litter through action plans, protocols, partnerships, and other activities.

The resolution requests UNEP to:

- within available resources and benefiting from the work of relevant existing mechanisms, immediately strengthen scientific and technological knowledge with regard to marine litter including marine plastic litter and microplastics;
- through its 10-Year Framework of Programmes on SCP Patterns, elaborate guidelines on plastic use and production in order to inform consumers, including on standards and labels, to incentivize businesses and retailers to commit to sustainable practices and products, and to support governments to promote the use of information tools and incentives to foster SCP; and
- report to UNEA-5 on progress in implementing the resolution.

**Environmentally sound management of waste:** This draft resolution, initially titled, “Innovative Solutions for Solid Waste Management,” was sponsored by the League of Arab States. It also contained elements taken from other resolutions proposed by Turkey on “Zero Waste Project,” by Chile on “Resource Efficiency and Waste Management,” and by Sri Lanka on “Sustainable Management of Plastic Waste including Micro Plastics through Innovative Solutions.” As a result of the merger, the League of Arab States, Chile, Sri Lanka, and Turkey became co-sponsors of this resolution.

OECPR WG 2 considered the draft resolution on Monday, 4 March and from Wednesday to Sunday, 6-10 March, often supplemented by informal consultations. By the end of the OECPR, all issues were resolved except references to circular economy and SCP, which awaited the outcome of negotiations on the separate resolution on SCP, as well as possible language

on removal of hazardous substances from waste before recycling. As a result, the draft resolution was referred to COW WG 2, which resolved the outstanding issues on Tuesday, 12 March, and forwarded the resolution for adoption.

Among the issues debated were:

- linkages to the SDGs;
- use of the qualifier “considering differing national circumstances”;
- language on phase-out of single-use plastics;
- language on reducing landfilling; and
- a proposed addition on eliminating environmentally harmful subsidies that artificially lower prices of raw materials and disincentivize recycling.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.8) invites Member States, considering differing national circumstances, and in cooperation with relevant national, regional, and international organizations and institutes to, *inter alia*:

- promote integrated approaches for solid waste management;
- prevent and reduce waste at source of origin through, *inter alia*, the minimization of packaging materials and the discouragement of planned obsolescence of products;
- support the development of, or where appropriate the enhancement of, adequate institutional and regulatory frameworks to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined;
- work towards establishing indicators and conducting on regular basis assessments of the environment and health impacts of selecting and implementing technological options to address waste management along the value chain;
- promote the development of economic instruments and other measures to support waste management, green entrepreneurship, and generation of green jobs;
- implement and support innovative economic incentive schemes to promote sound management of waste such as, extended producer/trader responsibility, recycling incentives, deposit refund schemes, and other alternatives;
- promote evidence-based research on the environment and health benefits of environmentally sound waste management;
- set standards for food grade plastics to minimize toxins getting into food;
- strengthen monitoring activities to avoid waste disposal into the marine environment from all sectors;
- reduce microplastics, including in wastewater treatment plants, and encourage producers to use alternatives for microbeads; and
- support the recycling of plastics.

The draft resolution calls on UNEP, subject to the availability of resources, and in cooperation with relevant international partners to:

- strengthen the International Environment Technology Centre and enhance cooperation with the Basel and Stockholm Convention regional centres, as appropriate;
- assist Member States in the use of best available technologies and best environmental practice in solid waste management; and
- assist countries, in particular developing countries and countries with economies in transition, through regional waste management outlooks, improving information on environmentally sound technologies to integrate waste management.

To assist in implementation of the resolution, the resolution calls on Member States in a position to do so, international organizations, and international financial institutions to provide developing countries and countries with economies in transition

with financial assistance, capacity building, and technology transfer on mutually agreed terms.

**Sound management of chemicals and waste:** OECPR WG 2 took up this draft, proposed by the EU, on Monday, 4 March. Switzerland and the African Group co-sponsored the text, after agreeing to integrate their separate proposals on a possible science-policy interface for chemicals.

OECPR WG 2 negotiations continued through Sunday, 10 March, resulting in agreed text on everything except for references to SCP and circular economy, which awaited the final outcome of separate negotiations in the resolution on SCP. As a result, the draft resolution was referred to COW CG 2, which resolved the SCP and circular economy references on Tuesday, 12 March. Once the SCP resolution was agreed, the chemicals resolution adopted the same language the same day, and approved and forwarded the resolution for adoption.

Among the issues that delegates grappled with during the negotiations were:

- whether to specifically reference SDG target 12.4 (environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste);
- references to a possible post-2020 agenda or enabling platform on chemicals and waste, currently under discussion in the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) process, and about preparations for the fifth session of SAICM's top decision-making body, the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5), scheduled for 2020, which is expected to decide on any post-2020 agenda and/platform;
- what level of support UNEP should offer to the SAICM Secretariat in the run-up to ICCM5;
- whether and how to refer to the Minamata Convention Conference of Parties (COP) request in decision 2/7 for a proposal from UNEP for sharing services between the Minamata and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm (BRS) Conventions Secretariats;
- provisions and references on a possible science-policy interface(s) on chemicals;
- provisions on the integrated approach to financing work on chemicals and waste, which was the subject of past UNEA resolutions;
- whether to welcome or "take note of" the second Global Chemicals Outlook (GCO II) (UNEP/EA.4/21), and whether to link it to future work on a science-policy interface;
- how to address UNEP's role in the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the international coordinating group on chemical issues that includes not only UN agencies, but also the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and World Bank; and
- a proposal by a developing country (later withdrawn) for a new global chemicals fund.

**Final Outcome:** In the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.9), UNEA:

- emphasizes the need for urgent and resolute action at all levels to implement the 2030 Agenda on these matters, including through an improved enabling framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste in the long-term, in line with UNEA resolutions 1/5, 2/7, and 3/4; and welcomes the initiative of the High Ambition Alliance on Chemicals and Waste in this regard;
- welcomes GCO II, and highlights its potential to contribute to the chemicals science-policy interface in the future;
- welcomes UNEP's analysis of best practices in sustainable chemistry (UNEP/EA.4/INF.20);

- welcomes the evaluation of the implementation of the integrated approach to address the financing of the sound management of chemicals and waste (UNEP/EA.4/INF/16);
- encourages Member States in a position to do so, especially developed countries, to scale up financing and encourages countries to promote and further increase mainstreaming in national budgets and sector policies as well as the involvement of industry and the private sector and the allocation of responsibilities to them; and
- welcomes Minamata Convention decision 2/7, and invites the BRS COPs to also consider a proposal from UNEP for the sharing of services between the Secretariats of the BRS and Minamata Conventions.

The UNEA resolution calls on governments and all other relevant stakeholders, including UN agencies as appropriate, industry and the private sector, civil society, and the scientific and academic communities, to:

- follow-up on the conclusions and recommendations of the GCO II, building on GCO I, the Global Waste Management Outlook-1, and the Regional Waste Management Outlooks completed to date;
- address the importance of the product, chemicals, and waste interface in relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks;
- support technical assistance and capacity building for implementation of the integrated approach to financing, for example through contributions to the UNEP Special Programme on Chemicals and Waste, as part of official development aid or through business-to-business cooperation;
- consider at the third session of the SAICM Open-ended Working Group (OEWG3) in April 2019 and at the intersessional process on the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 before ICCM5 planned for 2020, ways of strengthening the science-policy interface, including its relevance for implementation of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) at the national level;
- engage in the discussions on preparing recommendations for the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020;
- develop and implement, as appropriate, national legal instruments to control the export and import of chemicals and waste; and
- join in the pursuit of an improved enabling framework for the sound management of chemicals and waste, including through information of, and consideration by, UN bodies related to the 2030 Agenda, such as the HLPF and the UNGA, as appropriate.

The UNEA resolution invites SAICM OEWG3 to prepare the ground for relevant resolutions of ICCM5 regarding a crosscutting and holistic approach to the sound management of chemicals and waste in the long term, including enhanced involvement of all relevant stakeholders, taking into account UNEA resolutions 1/5, 2/7, and 3/4.

The resolution calls on UNEP, in cooperation with the member organizations of the IOMC, to:

- step up the technical assistance and capacity building to Member States to meet relevant goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda as soon as possible, including for improved access to scientific information strengthening the science-policy interface at the national level;
- enhance support to SAICM in preparation for ICCM5, including with sufficient staff and resources for the SAICM Secretariat;
- synthesize UNEP's analysis of best practices in sustainable chemistry into manuals on green and sustainable chemistry,



and to continue the work on a holistic approach for the sound management of chemicals and waste in the long term;

- prepare a report by 30 April 2020 on relevant issues where emerging evidence indicates a risk to human health and the environment identified by SAICM and the GCO, including an analysis of existing regulatory and policy frameworks and their ability to address these issues toward the achievement of the 2020 goal on sound management of chemicals, in particular regarding lead and cadmium;
- prepare by 30 April 2020 an assessment of options for strengthening the science-policy interface at the international level for the sound management of chemicals and waste, taking into account existing mechanisms, including under UNEP, and relevant examples in other areas, and make it available for consideration by all stakeholders prior to ICCM5;
- provide technical advice, policy support, and capacity building to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, particularly in order to put in place the necessary legislative and regulatory frameworks and to mainstream sound management of chemicals and waste in national development plans, domestic budgets, and relevant sector policies;
- further encourage industry and private sector involvement throughout the value chain, including through designated responsibilities and measures to promote cost recovery and the polluter pays principle; and
- report to UNEA-5 on the implementation of the resolution, as well as on the implementation of the programme of work activities with respect to chemicals and waste, and make a progress report available for ICCM5.

**Addressing single-use plastic products pollution:** OECPR WG 2 took up discussion of the draft resolution, “Phasing Out Single-use Plastics,” sponsored by India, after it was decided that elements of this resolution could not be integrated into the waste resolution or marine litter resolution. The WG took up the draft on Thursday, 7 March, and returned to it on Sunday, 10 March, with informal bilateral consultations in between. Among the issues dividing WG negotiators were whether to:

- “phase out,” “reduce” or “address” single-use plastics;
- apply the action to all, some, “certain” or “most problematic” single-use plastics;
- include a deadline, with India originally proposing 2025 as in the draft Ministerial Declaration;
- include plastic additives;
- how Member States should work with industry;
- target actions that include the design and production phases; and
- address consumers directly, and if so, what actions to recommend.

Delegates also disagreed on what scientific and technological cooperation to request, and what specific requests to make of UNEP.

OECPR forwarded bracketed text to UNEA-4, where it was assigned to COW CG 2. In the CG, the two opposing sides proposed alternative formulations of the key operative paragraph: one alternative invited Member States to address the challenge of plastic debris by promoting solid waste management and innovation; the other urged all Member States to take actions to address single-use plastics by identifying and developing environmentally-friendly alternatives and action including, but not limited to, significantly reducing single-use plastic products by 2030.

CG negotiations were unable to break the impasse, so on Wednesday, 13 March, CG 2 Chair Gronda proposed a Chair’s compromise text to the COW. The EU objected to the Chair’s

compromise text, so COW Chair Coimbra ordered informal consultations facilitated by Gronda between India, the EU, US, and other interested parties. As a result of these consultations, the final text proposed to the COW changed the resolution’s title, encouraged Member States to develop and implement national or regional actions, and requested UNEP to support them in that endeavor upon request. The new compromise formulation was forwarded to the plenary for adoption on Wednesday 13 March.

**Final Outcome:** In the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.10), UNEA:

- encourages Member States to develop and implement national or regional actions, as appropriate, to address the environmental impacts of single-use plastic products;
  - encourages Member States to take actions, as appropriate, to promote the identification and development of environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic products, taking into account the full life-cycle implications of those alternatives;
  - invites Member States to work together with industry to encourage the private sector to innovate and find affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives to single-use plastic products and to promote business models that take into account the full environmental impact of their products;
  - encourages governments and the private sector to promote more resource-efficient design, production, use, and sound management of plastics across their life cycle;
  - encourages Member States to carry out environmental education actions about the impact of plastic pollution, sustainable consumption patterns, and sustainable alternatives to single-use plastic products; and
  - invites Member States, intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community, NGOs, the private sector, and other stakeholders to promote and enhance cooperation in scientific research and the development of environmentally sound alternatives to single-use plastic products, where appropriate, as well as to tackle plastic pollution within local, national, and regional voluntary and regulatory frameworks, as appropriate.
- The resolution requests UNEP, in partnership with other UN agencies, funds, and programmes, to:

- support Member States, upon their request, in the development and implementation of national or regional action plans to address the environmental impacts of single-use plastic products;
- facilitate and/or coordinate technical and policy support to governments, especially of developing countries that so request, the scientific community, NGOs, the private sector, and other stakeholders regarding the environmental impact of single-use plastic products and the promotion of innovative and environmentally-friendly solutions for their replacement, taking into account their full environmental impact; and
- make available existing information on the actions Member States have taken to address plastic pollution, the full life-cycle environmental impacts of plastics, and the full life-cycle environmental impacts of other alternative materials, and share this information in advance of UNEA-5.

**Sustainable nitrogen management:** OECPR WG 2 took up discussion of this resolution, proposed by India, from Tuesday to Thursday, 5-7 March. Points of disagreement included whether to:

- single out the FAO or refer to all “relevant” UN bodies;
- reference MEAs;
- reference the nitrogen budget approach;
- “facilitate” assessments of multiple benefits of improved nitrogen management or “coordinate existing assessments”; and
- ask UNEP to facilitate assessments of the multiple benefits of improved nitrogen management.

The text was finalized by OECPR WG2 on 7 March and the COW approved and forwarded it to UNEA on Tuesday, 11 March.

**Final Outcome:** In the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.16), UNEA calls on UNEP to:

- consider the options to facilitate better coordination of policies across the global nitrogen cycle at the national, regional, and global levels, including consideration of the case to establish an intergovernmental coordination mechanism on nitrogen policies;
- support exploration of the options, in close collaboration with relevant UN bodies, including the FAO and MEAs, as appropriate, for better management of the global nitrogen cycle;
- coordinate existing relevant platforms for assessments of the multiple environmental, food, and health benefits of possible goals for improved nitrogen management;
- facilitate with relevant UN bodies, including FAO and, as appropriate, MEAs, the promotion of appropriate training and capacity for policy makers and practitioners for developing widespread understanding and awareness of the nitrogen cycling and opportunities for action;
- support Member States with sharing and making available existing information and knowledge in the development of an evidence-based and intersectorally-coherent approach to domestic decision-making towards sustainable nitrogen management, where appropriate; and
- report on the progress achieved in the implementation of this resolution to UNEA-6.

#### Biodiversity Management and Protection

##### Protection of the marine environment from land-based activities:

The draft resolution, proposed by Indonesia, was first taken up in OECPR WG 3 on Monday, 4 March, and then again on Wednesday and Thursday, 6-7 March. The resolution contained text merged from a separate draft resolution, also proposed by Indonesia and then merged with this draft, on “The establishment of Regional Capacity Centre for Clean Seas.” Some developed countries expressed concern about the potential budget implications of the proposed center. The Secretariat explained it would be a national center supported by Indonesia as part of UNEP’s Regional Seas Programme in East Asia. Delegates requested more information about potential synergies with similar institutions, and warned against duplication of efforts. Two countries differed over whether the center should be referred to as a “proposal” or an existing “initiative,” and whether it would be an “independent” or a “national” center. One country announced its intention to establish a regional knowledge hub on marine plastics in Southeast Asia. They agreed to refer to “the ongoing initiative by Indonesia to establish an independent regional capacity center.”

Delegates discussed factors contributing to the progress made by various countries in handling the problems of marine and coastal ecosystems, and agreed to note the GPA for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities is currently under review. Several of the agreed changes addressed the implications for financing, including introduction of “voluntary” in relation to technology transfer and “within existing resources” in relation to technical assistance. The resolution was agreed and forwarded directly to UNEA for adoption on Friday, 8 March.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.12) notes that retaining the high quality of the coastal and marine environment provides ecosystem functions and services in support of the 2030 Agenda, recognizes the efforts and actions of Member States and other stakeholders, and acknowledges the progress made by

various countries. It notes the ongoing initiative by Indonesia to establish an independent regional capacity center in Bali, Indonesia, and agrees to, *inter alia*:

- enhance the mainstreaming of the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems in policies, particularly those addressing environmental threats caused by increased nutrients, wastewater, marine litter, and microplastics;
- enhance capacity building, know-how, lessons learned, and knowledge sharing through partnerships;
- improve the coordination, engagement, and support for the work with Member States on land-based pollution;
- invite Member States to take the initiative on protecting marine environment from land-based activities at both national and regional levels, by taking into account collaboration and technical cooperation, voluntary technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, capacity building, and exchange of best practices; and
- request UNEP to provide technical assistance, within existing resources, *inter alia*, through the Regional Seas Programme, the Global Partnerships on Marine Litter, Global Wastewater Initiative, and Global Partnerships on Nutrient Management of the Global Programme of Action.

**Sustainable coral reefs management:** This draft, proposed by Indonesia and Monaco, was taken up on Monday, 4 March, and subsequently on Thursday and Friday, 7-8 March. Delegates first debated what emphasis should be given to the importance of local actions vis-à-vis the impacts of climate change. A group of developed countries proposed further text stressing the importance of fully implementing actions to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 on coral reefs, and proposed developing guidelines and criteria for responsible coral restoration, where appropriate, for coastal defense and for restoration of fish nursery areas, as well as a review of possible funding mechanisms. Delegates also discussed whether negative impacts from reef fisheries should be qualified as “potential,” and whether UNEP should develop guidelines and an overview of funding on coral restoration.

Eventually, they agreed on most paragraphs, including mentioning “potential” negative impacts from reef fisheries, in particular the Live Reef Food Fish Trade. They agreed UNEP should develop guidelines and an overview of funding on coral restoration “where appropriate for maintenance of ecosystem services and functions,” mentioning coastal defense and fish nursery areas as examples. The resolution was agreed and forwarded directly to UNEA for adoption on Friday, 8 March.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.14), *inter alia*:

- requests UNEP, in collaboration with the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and various regional mechanisms to assist with the compilation of best practices for coral restoration, as appropriate for maintenance of ecosystem services, including for coastal defense and/or restoration of fish nursery areas;
- encourages Member States and other entities to engage in ICRI’s Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), including through participation in regional networks and application of indicators and best practices identified through GCRMN, in order to produce the global report on the status of coral reefs in 2020;
- requests UNEP, particularly through the Coral Reef Unit and in collaboration with ICRI, to continue to strengthen the GCRMN, including integrated monitoring and new technologies, and communicate the status and trends of coral reefs globally; and
- encourages Member States in collaboration with UNEP, ICRI, and other partners to build on the success of the

International Year of the Reefs 2018 and continue their efforts in strengthening awareness about the ecological, economic, social, and cultural value of, and critical threats to, coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

**Deforestation and agricultural commodity supply chains:**

This draft resolution, submitted by the EU, was introduced during OECPR-4 on Monday, 4 March, in OECPR WG 2. Two parties bracketed the resolution: one said it was “discriminatory” towards tropical and subtropical regions and towards the agricultural sector, and the other requested that all references to trade, Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development guidelines, and commodity supply chains be deleted. Several delegations called for greater recognition of differing national contexts. The resolution remained with most of its text bracketed. On Sunday, 10 March, delegates considered but did not agree on the alternative title, “Preventing deforestation through SCP.”

Delegates addressed remaining issues in COW WG 2 on Monday and Tuesday, 11-12 March, including a proposal by a developing country to narrow the resolution to refer to “illegal” deforestation. The group reviewed a revised version of the text that drew on the UNGA resolution proclaiming 2021-2030 the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. A developing country bracketed the entire text, suggesting it did not reflect the informal discussions that had taken place, and proposing it should be shorter and “more positive” in tone. Contentious points included:

- a reference to SDG target 15.2 on sustainable forest management, which some considered too specific;
- a paragraph on strengthening international cooperation; and
- references to “the drivers of deforestation” and the Ministerial Katowice Declaration on “Forests for Climate.”

**Final Outcome:** The EU withdrew the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/18) in the final COW plenary on Wednesday, 13 March.

**Innovations in sustainable rangelands and pastoralism:**

This resolution, proposed by the African Group, was taken up on Monday, 4 March, in OECPR WG 3, and then further discussed on Thursday, 7 March, and over the weekend of 9-10 March. Delegates discussed, *inter alia*, whether and how to qualify references to indigenous people as stakeholders, with some arguing that there is no universal definition of this term. Several delegations also questioned whether UNEP should undertake a proposed global assessment on trends in rangelands and pastoralism, expressing concern about the costs involved, taking into account the recent gap analysis report. A group of developing countries explained that a regional rather than national approach is appropriate on this issue because of the absence of boundaries across rangelands. A developed country requested deleting text referring to promoting “conflict-sensitive development interventions,” and a group of developing countries explained its relevance, pointing to issues of resource scarcity and cultural differences between farmers and pastoralists. The resolution was forwarded to UNEA for adoption on Monday, 11 March.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.17) recognizes the critical role that sustainable rangelands and pastoralism play in addressing environmental challenges, particularly for indigenous peoples, and local communities, where appropriate.

The resolution, *inter alia*:

- urges Member States and invites all relevant stakeholders to raise awareness and promote innovative solutions for sustainable management of rangelands and pastoralism, taking into account traditional knowledge;
- urges Member States to strengthen global efforts to conserve and sustainably use rangelands in particular in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration;

- invites Member States and relevant stakeholders to support rangeland restoration through increased promotion of investments, attractive incentives, market access and linkages, value addition, soil and water conservation, conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, ecological rehabilitation, resilience mechanisms, planned grazing, and herding mechanisms;
- requests UNEP to support, upon request and subject to available resources, those countries undertaking regional assessments of the status, conditions, and trends in rangeland, pastoral land, and pastoralism, taking into account their information and knowledge gathered through the UNEP gap analysis and the work by other stakeholders and relevant UN organizations;
- encourages UNEP and Member States, in close collaboration with the FAO, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and other relevant UN bodies, multinational development banks, and intergovernmental organizations, to continue to explore collaborative efforts on financing to promote sustainable rangelands and pastoralism;
- requests UNEP to support Member States, upon request, in their quest to promote innovative solutions to sustainably manage rangelands and, where appropriate, to promote sensitive development interventions specific to resolving disputes and supporting traditional governance with particular attention to recognizing the role of traditional institutions and community participation; and
- requests UNEP to report on progress at UNEA-5.

**Innovations on biodiversity and land degradation:** This draft resolution, submitted by the African Group and Iran, was introduced in OECPR-4 WG 3 on Tuesday, 5 March. Disagreements emerged on whether to mention land degradation neutrality as a potential accelerator for achieving the SDGs, and text referring to the impact of climate change as a contributor to land degradation.

Other points of contention related to the sensitive nature of text suggesting biodiversity data should be open, especially in developing countries, and to language that indicated particular levels of ambition: for example, whether Member States should be “called upon” or “encouraged” to renew their commitments to preventing the loss of biological diversity.

Delegates discussed paragraphs relating to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework in depth, with two developed countries requesting to delete a reference to focusing on innovation, and another suggesting it should rather be focused on transformative change. Several delegations urged avoiding any language prejudging what this framework will do.

Further discussion took place in the COW WG 2, where some progress was achieved by working through language indicating level of ambition. Remaining points of contention included, among others, two operative paragraphs referring to the UNCCD, which were resolved by softening the language to merely “taking note” of its assessments. Delegates found consensus late on Tuesday, 12 March. On Wednesday, 13 March, the COW approved and forwarded the compromise text to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** This resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.11) encourages Member States to strengthen commitments and step up their efforts to prevent the loss of biological diversity and the degradation of land and soil, including through their conservation and sustainable use, and appropriate policies and innovative measures such as partnership arrangements, mutually agreed transfer of technology, and financing mechanisms.

UNEA calls on Member States, and invites the private sector, academia, and relevant stakeholders to support innovative measures for strengthening and developing nationally and regionally based centers of excellence on sustainable biodiversity management and monitoring of land degradation. UNEA also requests UNEP, upon request and subject to availability of resources, to support Members States party to the UNCCD:

- to apply and align with the 2018-2030 Strategic Framework in their national policies, programmes, plans, and processes relating to desertification, land degradation, and drought; and
- to develop and implement voluntary targets on land degradation neutrality, including the definition of national baselines, targets, and associated measures to achieve land degradation neutrality by 2030, as appropriate.

**Sustainable management for global health of mangroves:**

OECPR WG3 took up this draft resolution, proposed by Indonesia and Sri Lanka on Wednesday, 6 March, and Friday, 8 March. Several delegates reserved on proposals to implement measures such as co-management plans for at least 50% of privately-owned mangroves, restoration of degraded mangroves, and establishment of an *ad hoc* open-ended working group that would develop payment for ecosystem services and make recommendations for strengthening the legal framework for mangrove conservation.

The resolution was further discussed over the weekend of 9-10 March, and in informal consultations. Delegates agreed to refer to “ecosystem-based approaches,” and to delete reference to the precautionary principle. They debated whether it would be appropriate to refer to the importance of mangrove ecosystems for reaching the nationally determined contribution (NDC) targets under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), with one developing country arguing that it would be important for each country to make an additional effort toward mitigation targets, beyond what the ecosystem would naturally provide, while a developed country encouraged acknowledgement that some countries have included mangroves in their NDCs.

On Monday, 11 March, the COW approved and forwarded the resolution to UNEA-4.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.13) notes several international frameworks and targets, including the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, SDG 2 (ending hunger), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG targets 14.2 (sustainably manage marine and coastal ecosystems) and 15.5 (reduce degradation of natural habitats). The resolution, *inter alia*:

- recognizes the significant role of mangroves in addressing the impact of climate change, development, and pollution and also providing protection from natural disasters;
- recognizes the role mangrove ecosystems can play in reaching NDCs, where appropriate;
- encourages Member States, together with other relevant stakeholders, to use ecosystem-based approaches for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable management of mangroves;
- encourages Member States and relevant stakeholders to strengthen and formulate policies to prevent waste disposal in mangrove ecosystems and minimize human-induced thermal, chemical, nutrient, and oil pollution;
- invites Member States to take actions to prevent mangrove conversion and strengthen measures to maintain their integrity and to give priority to conserving the remaining areas of natural mangrove forests; and
- requests UNEP, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders, to facilitate collaboration among Member

States through collaboration and co-production of research, mapping, and valuation of ecosystem services and related best management practices, within available resources.

**Sustainable blue economy:** This resolution, proposed by the African Group, was first taken up in OECPR WG 3. On Thursday, 7 March, discussions stalled over conflicting definitions of the concept: some delegates included inland and freshwater bodies, whereas others specified oceans and seas. Delegates agreed to suspend the discussions, pending informal talks that took place over the weekend of 9-10 March. The resolution was then addressed on Monday, 11 March, under COW WG 1, but there was no agreement.

**Final Outcome:** On Tuesday, 12 March, Kenya, for the African Group, announced withdrawal of the resolution (UNEP/EA.4/18), due to a lack of consensus.

**Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands:**

This resolution, proposed by Indonesia, was introduced in the OECPR on Monday, 4 March and referred to WG 3. On Tuesday, 5 March, a developed country bracketed the entire text and suggested it could be merged with another resolution. Delegates agreed to defer discussion until a revised draft was available.

On Wednesday, 6 March, one country opposed language linking peatland conservation and restoration with climate mitigation and adaptation, and with implementation of the SDGs, also arguing that a proposal for UNEP to undertake a global peatland inventory and other actions duplicated work done under the Ramsar Convention. A developing country proposed a reference to irresponsible clearing and burning of peatland as a driver for biodiversity loss, land degradation, and greenhouse gas emissions, while another objected to mentioning air quality deterioration in this context.

On Thursday, 7 March, they debated whether to cite a UNEP report stating that peatlands occur in more than 180 countries, with one developing country arguing there is a lack of awareness that peatlands occur not only in tropical and sub-tropical regions, while a developed country argued against “cherry-picking” statistics.

On Friday, 8 March, a developed country opposed references to various MEAs, including the Paris Agreement, saying that these processes do not necessarily reference peatlands, and that valuable work takes place at all levels, not only the global level. A coalition of developed countries highlighted their commitment to regional approaches, and stressed that there are co-benefits and synergies with other processes and conventions. Delegates agreed to change the title of the draft resolution from “Sustainable peatlands management to tackle climate change” to “Conservation and sustainable management of peatlands.” They agreed to refer only to “degraded peatlands, caused by multiple activities, instead of “the draining, clearing and burning of peatlands,” and also deleted mention of air quality deterioration.

The resolution was agreed and forwarded to UNEA-4 on Friday, 8 March.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.19) urges Member States and other stakeholders to give greater emphasis to the conservation, sustainable management, and restoration of peatlands worldwide in support of sustainable peatland management including through existing efforts implemented by institutions such as UNEP and FAO.

UNEA requests UNEP, within existing resources and in consultation with the Ramsar Secretariat, to coordinate efforts to create a comprehensive and accurate global peatlands inventory.

UNEA also encourages Member States and other stakeholders to enhance regional and international collaboration for the

conservation and sustainable management of peatlands, including but not limited to:

- sharing information and knowledge, and best practices in conservation and sustainable management of peatlands;
- continuing inter-disciplinary research to advance the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands;
- capacity building for the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands; and
- promotion of a multi-stakeholder approach for the conservation and sustainable management of peatlands, involving private landowners, business sectors, concession holders, and other relevant stakeholders.

### Environmental Governance

**Geoengineering and its governance:** This draft resolution, submitted by Switzerland, was introduced during OECPR-4 on Monday, 4 March. In WG 4, several delegates raised concerns about the objective of the resolution, which proposed a global assessment of potential risks and benefits of geoengineering technologies. They warned against, among others, potential duplication of work as the topic is already under consideration in other fora, including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the lack of consensus on what technologies are captured by the term. Other delegations supported the resolution, suggesting the need to gather information is urgent and that UNEP is well placed to oversee this process.

On Tuesday, 5 March, some delegates cautioned that the negotiations were veering into the political domain of climate change, and two countries reserved on the entire text. Informal discussions during the week and over the weekend resulted in proponents presenting a revised resolution to the group on Sunday, 10 March, which was shorter and proposed a global report rather than an assessment.

On Monday, 11 March, COW WG 2 worked through a heavily bracketed paragraph on this report, which requested UNEP to work in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as relevant UN and intergovernmental bodies, in its preparation. No agreement was found.

**Final Outcome:** Switzerland withdrew this resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.20) during the final COW plenary on Wednesday, 13 March.

**Promote gender equality, and the human rights and empowerment of women and girls in environmental governance:** This draft resolution, submitted by Costa Rica, was introduced on Monday, 4 March. Delegates initially expressed broad support, with one delegation noting that the right to a healthy environment has not been recognized under international law globally thus far. Several countries objected, *inter alia*, to language referring to the IPCC Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees and to references to “human rights defenders,” with one party objecting that there is no global consensus on the term.

On Friday, 8 March, a developing country, followed by a regional group on Saturday, reserved on the entire resolution, claiming it had been “hijacked” by a group of countries pushing to introduce a human rights agenda at UNEP. After further informal consultations over the weekend, the reference to human rights defenders was replaced by a reference to UNGA resolution 72/247 and the paragraph that stressed the “importance of gender equality, the empowerment of women, and the role women play as managers of natural resources and agents of change in safeguarding the environment.”

The outcome of the informal consultations was noted in COW WG 2 on Tuesday, 12 March, and the COW approved and forwarded the resolution to UNEA-4 later that day.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.21) acknowledges that women’s knowledge, and collective action have a huge potential to improve resource productivity, enhance ecosystem conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, and create more sustainable, low-carbon food, energy, water, and health systems. The resolution notes that the role of women as agents of change could receive more emphasis as advocated in UNEP’s Global Gender Environment Outlook.

UNEA invites Member States to:

- provide UNEA, in accordance with their capabilities, with information on the progress at the national and local levels in gender mainstreaming in environmental policies and programmes;
- prioritize the implementation of gender policies and action plans, developed under other MEAs, to which they are a party;
- establish social and gender criteria in national level project implementation and financing mechanisms for environment-related projects and programmes; and
- support training and capacity-building efforts for women and men on gender mainstreaming and enhancing all women’s active and meaningful participation in global processes, as a contribution to realizing the goal of gender balance.

UNEA requests UNEP to:

- report at UNEA 5 on the implementation of UNEP’s Policy and Strategy on Gender Equality and the Environment 2014-2017;
- enhance collaboration with UN-Women, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, and civil society organizations to mainstream gender equality and empowerment of women and girls; and
- continue to support initiatives to encourage and support the participation of women delegates and their leadership in UNEA and in related intergovernmental meetings.

**Poverty-Environment nexus:** This resolution, proposed by the African Group, was introduced on Monday, 4 March, in OECPR WG 4. Several Member States supported the resolution while warning about potential duplication with other work such as that of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) country offices and the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative. One Member State also questioned the establishment of a direct link between poverty and environment in the resolution. Delegates disagreed on:

- the appropriate role of UNEP in addressing the nexus;
- what goals are pursued by developing “sustainable financing mechanisms”;
- whether the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and climate change were appropriate to mention in several paragraphs; and
- the correct wording for “Environmentally-Induced Migration and Displacement.”

After informal consultations, delegates agreed to remove some of the language referring to climate change, and accept a developed country’s assertion that the transfer of environmentally sound technologies should be referred to as “voluntary.” The resolution was agreed on Sunday evening. On Monday, 11 March, the COW approved and forwarded the text to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.22) affirms the strong and complex linkages between poverty, socio-economic development, environment, and natural resources management. In the resolution, UNEA considers that soils, forests, fisheries, water, biomass, among others, are principal sources of income,

livelihood, food security, social protection, and employment. UNEA acknowledges that climate change, environmental degradation, desertification, natural disasters, loss of biodiversity, pollution, and other environmental changes can contribute to increased levels of poverty, which could contribute to human migration, displacement, and additional pressures on the recipient natural resource base.

UNEA also:

- urges Member States to apply integrated, innovative, and coherent approaches in developing and implementing policies, laws, plans, and budgets on poverty eradication through sustainable environment and natural resources management; and
- encourages Member States to strengthen institutional capacities, such as national statistical offices, to monitor and collect data on poverty-environment-economic linked indicators to enable tracking progress towards poverty eradication as well as environment and natural resources management; and
- encourages Member States and other stakeholders to continue facilitating pro-poor environmental sustainability by ensuring, where relevant, the inclusion of such objectives in national, regional and local policies, budgets and investment frameworks.

**Mineral resource governance:** Discussion of this resolution, proposed by Mexico, began on Monday, 4 March in the OECPR. Several delegations supported the resolution on the grounds that dependency on mineral resources is expected to continue. They noted that, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda, sustainability concerns should not come at the expense of economic and social dimensions and that this should be reflected in the text.

Points of contention included:

- whether to mention the impact of resource extraction and processing on biodiversity and climate change;
- the degree to which the resolution should take into account UNEP reports on mine tailings storage and the environmental challenges associated with the sand industry; and
- whether the resolution should establish an expert group and what this group would be tasked to do.

After informal consultations on Friday, 8 March, references to the expert group were eventually removed and the resolution was agreed on Saturday, 9 March.

On Monday, 11 March, the COW approved and forwarded the text to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** This resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.23) underlines the need for the sharing of knowledge and experiences on regulatory approaches, implementation practices, technologies, and strategies for the sustainable management of metal and mineral resources, including over the entire life of the mine and the post mining stage. UNEA further:

- requests UNEP to collect information on sustainable practices, identify knowledge gaps and options for implementation strategies, and undertake an overview of existing assessments of different governance initiatives and approaches on sustainable management of metal and mineral resources, and report to UNEA-5;
- encourages governments, businesses, non-governmental organizations, academia, and international institutions, within their different competencies, to promote awareness of how the extractive industries can contribute to the sustainable development of countries and the wellbeing of their populations, as well as of the possible negative impacts on human health and the environment when these activities are improperly managed; and

- calls for due diligence with regard to best practices along the supply chain addressing broader environmental, human rights, labor, and conflict-related risks in mining, including the continuous increase of transparency and the fight against corruption.

**Fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo V): Delivering for People and the Planet:** OECPR WG 4 took up discussion of this resolution proposed by the United States and Uruguay on Monday, 4 March. Several countries noted its potential in assisting Member States in the development and implementation of environmental law. Delegates discussed a paragraph related to the funding and place of the Montevideo V Programme within UNEP, and new language requesting a review report from the Executive Director by UNEA-7.

The resolution was agreed on Friday, 8 March. On Monday, 11 March, the COW approved and forwarded the text to the UNEA-4 plenary.

**Final Outcome:** This resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.24) adopts the fifth Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law for the decade beginning in 2020 (Montevideo Programme V).

In this resolution, UNEA:

- invites Member States that have not yet done so, to designate national focal points for the Montevideo Programme pursuant to UNEA resolution 2/19;
- requests UNEP to implement the Montevideo Programme V, through the programmes of work for the decade beginning in 2020;
- decides to review the Programme no later than 2025; and
- requests UNEP to provide a report of the review, including clearly defined and measurable targets, to be considered at the subsequent session of UNEA.

#### UNEP Programme of Work and Related Issues

##### Implementation plan “Towards a Pollution-free Planet”:

This draft resolution, submitted by Costa Rica and the EU, was introduced in OECPR WG 5 on Monday, 4 March. The resolution did not face much contention; the group agreed on text welcoming the development of the plan and recognizing it as the vehicle to implement the objectives of relevant UNEA resolutions, as well as voluntary commitments. On Monday, 11 March, the COW approved the text and forwarded it to plenary for adoption.

**Final Outcome:** The resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.25) welcomes the development of the Implementation Plan of the Executive Director “Towards a Pollution-free Planet” (UNEP/EA.4/3) in consultation with Member States and recognizes it as the vehicle for the prompt implementation of the objectives of the Ministerial Declaration, relevant UNEA resolutions, as well as voluntary commitments. UNEA, *inter alia*, requests UNEP to:

- coordinate and monitor the implementation of the plan in the context of UNEP’s current and relevant future Programmes of Work and Budgets, with inputs from Member States and other stakeholders;
- fully and effectively leverage the capacity of UNEP’s regional and sub-regional offices and UNEP’s partnerships with other stakeholders in contributing to the delivery of this implementation plan; and
- report on the progress made on the implementation plan “Towards a Pollution-free Planet” in UNEP’s reporting on the POW and budget during the meetings of the Annual Subcommittee.

**Implementation and follow-up of UNEA resolutions and related activities:** This draft resolution submitted by the African Group was taken up in OECPR WG 5 on Tuesday, 5 March.

Informal consultations took place on Wednesday, 6 March, and negotiations resumed on Friday, 8 March. Delegates agreed to delete the word “equitable” in a paragraph describing how the environmental dimension of the SDGs is to be achieved. They also agreed to the addition of a new paragraph, suggested by a regional group, requesting UNEP to report on the implementation of this resolution at UNEA-5. On Monday, 11 March, the COW agreed to forward the text to the UNEA-4 plenary for adoption.

**Final Outcome:** This resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.26) notes the need to better align UNEA resolutions with the POW and budget and to take concrete action to address issues and concerns including resource constraints that may hamper their implementation. UNEA requests UNEP to develop a monitoring mechanism, in consultation with the CPR, to track and assess UNEP’s implementation of resolutions in the framework of the POW and budget. It requests that the monitoring mechanism:

- build on and improve existing formats of reporting and monitoring;
- provide an inventory and a brief summary of implementation of UNEA resolutions via a dedicated webpage;
- identify existing linkages between each resolution and the POW and budget;
- provide links to existing reports related to UNEA resolutions;
- provide the opportunity for Member States to voluntarily report on national implementation efforts; and
- is based on available information, including existing UNEP and national voluntary reports, summarizing specific challenges that have hindered implementation efforts, including those of Member States.

UNEA requests UNEP to propose to the CPR at its 146th meeting options for an improved framework for reporting on the implementation of UNEA resolutions to be integrated with the reporting on the POW and budget.

**Keeping the World Environment Under Review: Enhancing UNEP’s Science-Policy Interface and Endorsement of the GEO:**

The draft resolution, proposed by the US, was first taken up by OECPR WG 5 on Tuesday, 5 March. Early points of contention included whether to:

- endorse both the SPM and the full GEO-6 report, or just the SPM;
- refer to the importance of stocktaking past and current GEO work before diving directly to the discussion on the GEO-7; and
- have further consultations on the proposed language of a long-term strategy on global environmental data.

Negotiations continued in the COW CG 3 on Monday, 11 March. Delegates debated language referring to UN data repositories and platforms, including the UNEPLive platform. A developing country urged caution with regard to “citizen science.”

On Tuesday, 12 March, CG 3 discussed and agreed on terms of reference for a steering committee to guide the future GEO process, including provisions for nominations of regionally representative advisors and experts to the group. They disagreed over a proposal from a group of developed countries to request UNEP to prepare “a science-policy input” to mark the organization’s 50th anniversary in 2022, with one country expressing concern over what this would entail, and suggesting moving this proposal to the resolution on preparations for UNEA-5. Two developed countries preferred to “note” rather than “endorse” the GEO-6 report. On Wednesday morning during the COW, Co-Facilitator Lukáš Pokorný reported a compromise proposal had been discussed informally and awaited approval from capitals. On Wednesday evening, delegates reached

agreement, and the COW approved and forwarded the text to the UNEA plenary.

**Final Outcome:** In the final resolution (UNEP/EA.4/L.27), UNEA, *inter alia*, welcomes with appreciation the 6th GEO report and its SPM, and requests UNEP to assure the promotion of environmental monitoring, assessment, and the primacy of a strong science-policy interface within and by UNEP. UNEA also requests UNEP to further develop and prioritize a long-term data strategy for the future GEO process, which supports:

- identification of comparable methods for data collection and analysis and promote their harmonization;
- the improvement of platforms that provide a repository function to allow open-access to up-to-date, quality-assured, credible, and relevant data;
- accelerating efforts to assist Member States to develop their national environmental data management capacities and their environmental monitoring systems;
- coordinating efforts to fully utilize Earth Observations with the Group on Earth Observations; and
- encouraging citizen science efforts and their potential to fill data gaps.

UNEA further requests UNEP to:

- prioritize the preparation of an options document for the future of the GEO process;
- prepare a proposal for science-policy input on the global environment for the commemoration of the creation of UNEP by the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm from 5-16 June 1972;
- promote greater coherence and coordination of global assessments undertaken within the UN System; and
- report to UNEA-5 on the implementation of the present resolution.

An annex to the resolution provides terms of reference for the Steering Committee (SC), stating this will be established to oversee and manage the preparation of an options document by the Secretariat for consideration at UNEA-5, outlining the key functions, scope and possible form(s) of the GEO process. The members of the SC may be nominated by 30 May 2019 by Member States and all members of specialized agencies and will be approved by the CPR.

**Proposed POW and budget for 2020-21:** The draft decision on the POW and budget was referred to OECPR WG 5, where the Secretariat presented a proposal, which was discussed and adjusted throughout the week. Since a few provisions remained undecided at the end of the OECPR, the draft decision was referred to the COW CG 3.

- Among the issues dealt with during the negotiations were:
- how best to express concern over projects and partnerships “which potentially negatively affect UNEP’s reputation and distract from its core mandates as contained in the POW”;
  - provisions on transparency in budgeting;
  - how to address the funding gap in financing UNEA sessions;
  - restrictions on senior staff positions in UNEP’s executive office;
  - linkages with various UN reform efforts; and
  - UNEP support for regional ministerial conferences and fora where UNEP serves as secretariat.

The group finished its work on Tuesday, 12 March, and the COW forwarded the text to UNEA for adoption.

**Final Outcome:** In its decision (UNEP/EA.4/L.28), UNEA approves the 2020-2021 POW and budget with appropriations for the Environment Fund in the amount of USD 200 million. The decision also:

- stresses the importance of early, extensive, and transparent consultations between the Executive Director, Member States, and the CPR on the preparation of the POWs and budgets;
- stresses the need for the POW and budget to be based on results-based management; and
- decides that in the biennium overall staffing of the executive office may not exceed 30 posts, unless otherwise authorized by the CPR.

UNEA requests UNEP to:

- continue to monitor and manage the share of the Environment Fund devoted, respectively, to post costs and non-post costs, while clearly prioritizing the application of the resources of the Environment Fund to programme activities;
- ensure that country-level activities are aligned with and included in the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), where applicable, and reported to the UN Resident Coordinator and the CPR;
- include in the reporting to the CPR the information on how UNEP has implemented the UN reforms represented in UNGA resolutions 71/243 and 72/279, and to present a plan with timelines for their implementation to the CPR at its 146th meeting; and
- submit for consideration and approval by UNEA-5, in consultation with the CPR, and building on lessons learned from previous periods, a results-oriented and streamlined Medium-Term Strategy and POW that is in line with UNGA resolution 72/266 “Shifting the management paradigm in the United Nations.”

#### **Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions:**

On Tuesday, 5 March, the Secretariat presented to the OECPR the Report of the Executive Director on the Management of Trust Funds and Earmarked Contributions (UNEP/EA.4/INF/5), noting that three new trust funds have been created and 21 inactive trust funds will be closed. The Secretariat also noted that a draft decision would be posted on the meeting portal for Member State consideration.

OECPR WG 5 held further discussions on Thursday, 7 March, and forwarded the agreed draft decision to UNEA for adoption on Friday, 8 March.

**Final Outcome:** In its decision on “Management of trust funds and earmarked contributions” (UNEP/EA.4/L.30), UNEA decides to authorize three new trust funds:

- CBL - Trust Fund for the “Capacity-Building Initiative for Transparency Fund” of the Global Environment Facility;
- GPS - Trust fund in support of the Secretariat functions and the organization of meetings and consultations for the Global Pact for the Environment; and
- GPP - Trust fund for assisting the delegates from developing countries, the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states in attending the sessions of the *ad hoc* open-ended working group for the Global Pact for the Environment.

The decision also approves the extension, upon receiving a request to do so from the appropriate authorities, of 10 trust funds related to UNEP’s POW, and 26 trust funds in support of regional seas programmes, conventions, protocols, and special funds.

**Provisional agenda and date of the fifth session of the Environment Assembly:** OECPR-4 conducted a first reading of the draft decision on the agenda, date, and venue of UNEA-5 on Wednesday, 6 March, in OECPR WG 5. Delegates debated whether to refer to the roles of UNEP Governing Bodies in providing oversight and guidance for aligning the UNEP POW and budget to reform of the UN development system, with one

developing country emphasizing that the resolution should focus solely on procedural issues. The draft was further discussed informally on Sunday, 10 March.

On Monday, 11 March, consideration of this draft decision was assigned to COW CG 3, and the group discussed intersessional arrangements. A developed country argued for better defining the function and role of the annual subcommittee of the CPR, suggesting this would be the appropriate forum for beginning discussions on the POW and budget. Delegates considered detailed proposals for reviewing and improving the processes of UNEA and its subsidiary bodies, including various possibilities, such as:

- one developing country representative and one developed country representative to chair the review;
- the submission of written inputs by Member States;
- preparation of a mapping report; and
- the organization of a possible two-day meeting of the CPR.

A group of developing countries reserved on the whole text and one Member State questioned the need for the decision to be taken at UNEA, rather than being referred to the CPR.

On Tuesday, 12 March, a group of developing countries requested separating the procedural aspects of this decision from its substantive aspects relating to intersessional arrangements and a proposed review of UNEA processes. Delegates discussed whether to take a decision to convene OECPR-5 back-to-back with UNEA-5, with one group of developing countries preferring to set the dates in a procedural decision to be adopted at UNEA-4, whereas some others favored addressing this concern in the intersessional process. A group of developing countries also presented text proposing that the review of UNEA processes be undertaken in the context of the Rio+20 commitment to consolidate UNEP headquarters functions in Nairobi. Several developed country delegates proposed to forward the new proposal for discussions in the COW.

On Wednesday, 13 March, the compromise text on UNEA-5 (UNEP/EA.4/L.29) was forwarded to the plenary with no further comment, and the draft decision was forwarded the same day to UNEA for adoption.

On Friday, 15 March, at the closing plenary, Kiisler reported that, after adoption of this decision, the Secretariat would make a technical revision to the language related to a “CPR-based review process,” noting that this was not new text. The Assembly adopted the decision without comment.

**Final Outcome:** In the decision (UNEP/EA.4/L.29), UNEA expresses deep concern about “low progress” made in several areas in implementation of paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Outcome document, “The Future We Want.” The decision:

- sets the date of OECPR-5 from 15-19 February 2021, and UNEA-5 from 22-26 February 2021;
- strongly encourages submission of draft resolutions and decisions at least eight weeks in advance of OECPR-5;
- requests UNEP to prepare, in consultation with Member States, the commemoration of the creation of UNEP in 1972;
- requests the CPR Chair to present, in close consultation with the UNEA President, a consolidated proposal for deliberation at its 6th annual subcommittee meeting outlining a consensual CPR-based review process of the UNEA and its subsidiary bodies, with a view to providing concrete proposals towards the improvement of their efficiency and effectiveness, for consideration at UNEA-5;
- outlines the scope of the considerations during the review process, including, *inter alia*, the objectives of the OECPR and meetings of the Sub-Committee of the CPR, the roles and responsibilities of the Bureau of the Assembly and of



the Bureau of the CPR, and monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the POW and budget and the UNEA resolutions;

- requests UNEP to conduct a mapping exercise on these topics before the 6th annual subcommittee meeting;
- decides the review process will be co-chaired by two CPR members, one from a developing country and one from a developed country;
- requests the CPR Chair to hold a stocktaking meeting of not more than two days, under the framework of the 7th annual subcommittee meeting, with the goal of considering endorsement of the progress; and
- requests UNEP to submit an action plan to implement all subparagraphs (a)-(h) of paragraph 88 of the Rio+20 Outcome document, for consideration at UNEA-5.

### **Stakeholder Engagement**

Delegates heard statements from the Major Groups and other Stakeholders in the opening and closing plenaries of UNEA-4.

On Monday, 11 March, Khawla Al-Muhannadi, on behalf of Major Groups and other Stakeholders, reported on views that emerged during the Global Major Groups and Stakeholders Forum the previous Thursday and Friday. She said unsustainable consumption and production is driven by human greed. She called on Member States to embrace the Rio+20 non-regression principle, and expressed support for the draft text under consideration that focuses on human rights defenders and on the nexus between women and the environment.

During the UNEA-4 closing plenary on Friday, 15 March, Indigenous People, on behalf of Major Groups and other Stakeholders, said UNEA did not reach its potential despite an active and ambitious leadership, pointing to the dropped resolutions on deforestation, agricultural supply chains, and geoengineering and the “dilution” of several other resolutions. He then noted that, despite these disappointments, civil society organizations would continue working tirelessly with all stakeholders.

### **High-level Segment**

The High-level Segment opened on Thursday, 14 March. As Heads of State and Government made their way from the One Planet pavilion to the auditorium at UNEP headquarters, delegates were welcomed by a choir performance, dedicated to the victims of the Ethiopian Airlines crash on Sunday while en route from Addis Ababa to Nairobi.

UNEA-4 President Kiisler highlighted that SCP should be at the core of all countries’ efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda. Referring to GEO-6’s warning that the world has exceeded the Earth’s carrying capacity, he called for collective efforts to find innovative pathways to achieve SCP with “a deep sense of purpose, fraternity, compassion, and determination.”

Uhuru Kenyatta, President of Kenya, welcomed all participants and stressed the importance of integrating traditional and cultural knowledge in pathways to SCP. He recognized the contributions of indigenous African groups and traditional spiritual leaders to natural resources management. He underscored Kenya’s actions toward a circular economy and his country’s commitment to reinforcing the role of UNEP in Nairobi, as the global leader for protecting the environment.

Emmanuel Macron, President of France, warned that the international community is not on track to limit global warming and reduce biodiversity loss. He spoke of the vision behind the third One Planet Summit, taking place in parallel with the High-level Segment, and the forthcoming UN 2019 Climate Summit,

both of which seek to promote transformative change and avoid the “greenwashing” of existing economic practices. He cited several French-led multilateral efforts to advance these agendas, such as the intention to issue a “G7 Pledge” on environmental issues, rather than its usual communiqué, under the French G7 Presidency in 2019; and the push for the adoption of a Global Pact for the Environment at the UN, which he described as a legally-binding “compass” that would both endow citizens with a set of rights to a healthy environment as well as with the means to fight “anti-environment” behaviors worldwide.

Maithripala Sirisena, President of Sri Lanka, emphasized that all people have the right to live in a safe environment, and drew attention to society’s joint responsibility for the sustenance of the Earth. He highlighted Sri Lanka’s role in proposing UNEA resolutions on mangroves, waste management, marine plastic litter, and food waste. He outlined his country’s initiatives to protect and restore mangroves, limit motor vehicle emissions, minimize land-based sources of marine pollution, ban plastic bags, end the open burning of plastics, protect coral reefs, promote sustainable agriculture, increase forest cover, implement the SDGs, and create green cities.

Andry Rajoelina, President of Madagascar, underscored the importance of addressing climate change and presented efforts by Madagascar, a mega-diverse country, to use its biodiversity as “an engine for green growth.” He emphasized his country’s plans to shift towards renewable energy sources while doubling or tripling energy production and improving access to electricity, and the campaign to reforest 40,000 hectares a year on the island nation.

Édouard Ngirente, Prime Minister of Rwanda, welcomed the opportunity to define “new, green, clean, and climate-friendly” sustainable development models, highlighting the importance of implementing the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol. He called for innovative solutions to address water resources management and dependence on biomass, a source of cooking fuel in his country. He outlined his region’s efforts towards a circular economy, including through: the African Circular Economy Alliance to facilitate exchanges of good practices and foster partnerships; and the African Green Growth Forum 2020 to be held in Kigali, Rwanda.

Amina J. Mohammed, UN Deputy Secretary-General, highlighted the need for urgency and upscaling actions towards a sustainable future, especially in relation to biodiversity loss, climate change, and changing unsustainable consumption habits. She drew attention to the UN 2019 Climate Summit, and called for bringing youth, women, and girls to the center of such efforts, in particular through UNEP’s #SolveDifferent campaign.

Kristalina Georgieva, interim President, World Bank, said it was significant that an environmentalist such as herself was in this post, and spoke of the Bank’s efforts to reduce environmentally harmful subsidies and align its mandate of eradicating poverty and boosting prosperity with environmental concerns.

Joyce Msuya, Acting Executive Director, UNEP, said Kenya’s experience of scaling up technology-enabling payments using mobile phones was an example of how a single innovation can transform “the way we live and our economies function.” She called on everyone to apply similar ingenuity to humanity’s challenges.

**National statements:** Delegates delivered statements during the High-level Segment, highlighting their national actions to address environmental challenges and undertake SCP, including zero-waste policies and reducing food waste. Some speakers expressed satisfaction with the resolutions approved earlier in the week, welcoming, for example, the resolutions on marine

plastic pollution and sustainable mobility. Statements and video clips of the speakers can be viewed here: <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/statements>

**Leadership Dialogues:** Three dialogues took place on Thursday and Friday, comprising panel discussions and interactions with participants from the floor.

**Environmental challenges related to poverty and natural resources management, including sustainable food systems, food security and halting biodiversity loss:** On Thursday, moderator Nikhil Seth, UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), introduced panelists and questioned how to address multiple environmental challenges in an integrated manner, referring to the GEO-6 report calling for urgent actions at a larger scale. David Nabarro, FAO, noted that participants at UNEA-4 are all “systems thinkers.” He stressed the need to accept different opinions and perspectives in order to align different stakeholders, in particular on action to transform the food system. Cristiana Paşca Palmer, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, recommended mainstreaming the concept of natural capital into national planning, including through a better narrative on the role of ecosystems in economic activities. Mami Mizutori, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction, highlighted that better data is needed, noting that currently it is only possible to estimate economic costs for about 40% of climate disasters. Joshtrom Kureethadam, Holy See, said he found hope in four groups: young people, indigenous communities, religious communities, and women.

Comments from the floor raised issues, such as:

- tackling illegal fishing;
- bringing food issues into the portfolio of environment ministries;
- the role of wetlands and soil conservation in ensuring food security; and
- the development of appropriate indicators for the sustainable management of ecosystems.

Several Member States expressed their disappointment that UNEA-4 had not produced a high level of ambition and a sense of urgency on pressing issues, such as deforestation.

**Life-cycle approaches to resource efficiency, energy, chemicals and waste management:** On Friday, moderator Janez Potočnik, Co-Chair, IRP, spoke of IRP research that shows trade-offs between SDGs, and suggested that a focus on SCP is the best way to address these trade-offs. He added that circular economies should be understood as part of a greater cultural and social shift towards sustainable consumption.

Sarah Chandler, Apple Inc., said Apple’s goal was to make all of their products out of 100% renewable or recycled products, stating that the new MacBook Air has a life-cycle carbon footprint that is 47% lower than previous generations.

Stefanie Hellweg, ETH Zurich, said encompassing assessments of life-cycles were important to recognize potential trade-offs. She said that Switzerland’s life-cycle assessment of biofuels was a good example, as it was able to find out early on that biofuels also have some negative consequences like biodiversity loss.

Michael Gotsche, BASF Africa, described his company’s efforts to develop technologies enabling the chemical recycling of plastics, which would reduce plastic waste and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. He then said the technology needed policy support, as it had not yet been recognized as an official plastic recycling method.

Ministers’ interventions from the floor touched on:

- national laws aimed at banning products such as plastic bags;
- the need to look at the entire value chain and target all stakeholders;

- the importance of taking a life-cycle approach to the building sector, as the built environment is an important consumer of materials and energy and including circularity into public procurement and national indicators; and
- an example of tax breaks for repairs, in particular for household appliances such as refrigerators and washing machines.

Some delegates then encouraged countries to join their efforts to establish an ambitious international framework on chemical management after 2020.

Potočnik invited the panel to respond to these interventions.

Inga Rhonda King, UN Economic and Social Council President, noted the importance of addressing interlinkages among the SDGs when deploying a life-style approach, highlighting the relevance of SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), and SDG 13 (climate change), which will be under review by the HLPF in July 2019.

Leyla Acaroglu, Disrupt Design, underscored that life-cycle thinking is a tool for decision-makers and citizens to help them understand how economic activities affect use of natural resources.

In answer to a question from Potočnik on how life-cycle assessments can be scaled up, participants from the floor described, among others, the need for circularity in public procurement, and the importance of consumer behavior to send a strong signal to businesses and government.

Potočnik then closed the session by highlighting, *inter alia*, the potential of digital transformations in promoting better knowledge and transparency about the life-cycle of products, and that special attention should be given to lower income countries.

**Innovative sustainable business development at a time of rapid technological change:** Moderator Felix Dodds, University of North Carolina, pointed to the importance of fostering cultural and technological innovations through policy support, including further investment in greener technologies, while ensuring any transition to sustainable business is “just and fair.”

Priya Mehra, Victory Farms, spoke of her company’s strategy, as a medium-size enterprise in Kenya, to be aligned with the SDGs in feeding “accessible and affordable” fish to the Kenyan population.

Jane Nyakang’o, Kenya National Cleaner Production Centre, expressed her concerns about low level of awareness on the benefits of a circular economy among small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) and the importance of integrating circularity into policies and regulations to support SMEs moving towards a circular business model through enhanced capacity building.

Ministers’ interventions from the floor touched upon:

- the importance of bringing together cities and the private sector, including financial entities, through creating multi-stakeholder platforms and “circular” public procurement;
- policy support to foster green business, in particular among SMEs, through providing technical assistance and certificate programmes, including on bio-commerce and sustainable fisheries;
- efforts to involve public research institutes and universities as well as create an attractive business environment for start-ups, particularly in the information technology sector and mobility;
- the need to work together with the plastic industry, which has the ability to innovate, instead of just regulating it; and
- the ambivalent ways in which digitalization both facilitates and challenges the transition to a circular economy.

In the second round of discussions, Olivier Jan, Deloitte, described several influences on corporations seeking to transition to a sustainable business model, including favorable investors,

increasing knowledge on the limits in which the economy needs to operate, as well demands by millennials who “set the bar high” when deciding which company to work for or buy from.

Hugh Weldon, 2018 Young Champion of the Earth, stressed the need to provide reliable information to consumers through social media tools, such as climate impact scores, and to push policy makers to deploy a life-cycle assessment and make data easily accessible to consumers.

Heba Al-Farra, 2018 Young Champion of the Earth, noted that innovation is already happening in Africa, driven by youth and entrepreneurs, and pointed to the need for policy support to harness science and technological innovation and investment in sustainable infrastructure for innovators to scale up their business models.

Pierre Courtemanche, CEO, GeoTraceability, underscored that traceability is the best solution to connect everyone in the global supply chain and move towards a circular business model. He cautioned against the risk of digitization, in particular the use of artificial intelligence.

Ministers then elaborated on their efforts to leverage digitalization by increasing consumers’ digital skills and disseminating databases for product labeling, and encourage Member States to include youth on their delegations to the UN.

**Multi-stakeholder dialogue:** This dialogue took place on Thursday, 14 March, on the theme of “Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Consumption.” Moderator Solitaire Townsend, Futerra, invited the audience to propose words describing a sustainable lifestyle, using an app that displayed the most-used terms on a screen. Balance, caring, SDGs, and mindfulness appeared as popular terms. She invited panelists to comment on why technology solutions are not enough to produce change.

Leyla Acaroglu, Disrupt Design, highlighted the need to design policies and conversations that will produce behavioral change, while still giving people choices, and to use tools such as life-cycle assessment.

Khawla Al-Muhannadi, Environment Friends Society, recounted the efforts of her organization in raising environmental awareness in Bahrain through a website with information that was simple, clear, and implementable, and activities such as a “Child and Environment” festival, which sought to introduce value change in the young.

Von Hernandez, Break Free From Plastic campaign, critiqued the view of plastic waste as a responsibility of individuals who litter, and the failure of waste management in the Global South. He called for instead creating a culture in which plastic packaging produced by companies is no longer acceptable, noting that, while consumers can make choices, change will not happen without government leadership as well.

Townsend invited questions from the floor, which touched on the importance of: engaging youth; encouraging less consumerist behaviors; and using the power of social media to communicate the result of UNEA-4 in home countries.

João Campari, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), spoke of a commissioned study that showed a worrisome lack of awareness in society, including among the young, of the global food system’s role in carbon emissions and biodiversity loss.

Lena Pripp-Kovac, IKEA Group, said that what are needed are accessible and sustainable solutions that do not require consumers to make everyday decisions that they may fail to act on.

Desta Mebratu, African Transformative Leapfrogging Advisory Services, said sustainable consumption does not only apply to countries with high gross domestic product (GDP), but also to Africa. However, he noted that the focus on Africa should be

on wellbeing, social innovation, and building infrastructure that responds to environmental challenges.

In a second round of questions from the floor, participants asked whether those in attendance truly lived sustainable lifestyles, and why environmental philosophers, who “would be relevant in helping us answer fundamental questions,” had not been engaged in discussions throughout the week. In response, the panel touched upon: the need for further engagement of not only environmental philosophers but also of anthropologists and sociologists; the lack of policy support for promoting sustainable product designs; and examples of lifestyle changes, including commuting and buying less.

**Wrap-up Plenary:** At the closing plenary on Friday, 15 March, the moderators of dialogues and events during the High-level Segment reported back.

Felix Dodds, University of North Carolina, presented the outcome of the Leadership Dialogues, which he said all pointed to the need for a substantial shift in SCP patterns.

Leyla Acaroglu, Disrupt Design, presented the outcome of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, suggesting that there is no one single definition of a sustainable lifestyle, but that a collaborative effort by all stakeholders can “create a chain reaction if we have the courage to make it happen.”

Jian Liu, UNEP Chief Scientist, and Harry Verhaar, Philips Lighting, presented the outcome of the UN Science-Policy-Business Forum on the Environment, suggesting innovative solutions in areas such as sustainable energy must be combined with public and private leadership.

Marcin Krupa, Mayor of Katowice, Poland, reported the outcome of the first Cities Summit held during UNEA-4, highlighting it provided a good opportunity for various stakeholders, including ministers, mayors, and the private sector, to exchange on their efforts towards SCP, including their commitments to foster public-private partnerships.

UNEA-4 President Kiisler commended the success and inclusivity of these dialogues and forums.

**Ministerial Declaration:** Consultations on a UNEA-4 draft ministerial declaration were initiated by the CPR during the intersessional period under the leadership of UNEA-4 President Kiisler. During the OECPR-4 opening plenary on Monday 4, March, Kiisler stressed the high level of ambition proposed in the draft declaration and encouraged all Member States to keep this ambition, and to agree on the text by the closing of the OECPR.

During the OECPR consultations on Monday and Tuesday, 4-5 March, points of contention included: whether addition to a paragraph “reaffirming” overarching objectives of sustainable development were acceptable, as it is based on agreed language from Rio+20; and how to achieve a balance of emphasis on the two elements of the UNEA-4 theme, innovative solutions and SCP. Delegates also discussed concerns over language referring to “ensuring the access to and use of” environmental data, with many preferring to consider “promoting the use and sharing” of environmental data as a more proactive formulation.

During the OECPR-4 closing plenary on Friday, 8 March, Kiisler reported that the consultations had concluded, with delegates agreeing on an ambitious and action-oriented as well as well-balanced compromise text. The OECPR forwarded the text to UNEA for adoption.

During the UNEA-4 closing plenary on Friday, 15 March, President Kiisler presented the draft ministerial declaration, which was adopted. The US, noting their recognition of the increasingly important issue of marine plastic pollution and reducing plastics, expressed concerns about prescriptive language that singles out

a particular issue, such as single-use plastics and the language of low carbon economy, and called for addressing a common goal on environmental protection.

Republic of Congo expressed his concern about the language missed in the French version of the Declaration related to the issue of soil pollution, desertification, and sand and dust storms. Kiisler took note of this point.

**Final Outcome:** In the UNEA-4 Ministerial Declaration (UNEP/EA.4/L.1), the Ministers of Environment express dedication to address environmental challenges through advancing innovative solutions and to move towards sustainable and resilient societies through SCP. To ambitiously scale-up efforts to overcome common environment-related challenges in an integrated manner, the Ministers will:

- improve national resource management strategies with integrated full life-cycle approaches and analysis to achieve resource-efficient and low-carbon economies;
- advance SCP patterns, including, but not limited to, through circular economy and other sustainable economic models;
- promote innovation and knowledge sharing in chemicals and waste management to achieve safer and less-toxic material flows;
- promote sustainable food systems by encouraging the implementation of sustainable and resilient agricultural practices;
- implement sustainable ecosystems restoration, conservation and landscape management measures to combat biodiversity loss, land degradation, drought, soil erosion and pollution, desertification, and sand and dust storms;
- share knowledge on policies and best practices for sustainable management of metal and mineral resources;
- undertake actions to restore and protect marine and coastal ecosystems, noting that the UNEP's Marine and Coastal Strategy can contribute to collective efforts in this area;
- work towards comparable international environmental data and support UNEP to develop a global environmental data strategy by 2025 in cooperation with other relevant UN bodies;
- address the damage to ecosystems caused by the unsustainable use and disposal of plastic products, including by significantly reducing single-use plastic products by 2030, and work with the private sector to find affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives;
- encourage the disclosure of appropriate product information to consumers;
- promote the engagement of indigenous peoples and local communities; and
- promote sustainable and innovative financing opportunities and mechanisms to unlock new capital for sustainable investments and upscaling of sustainable business models.

While recognizing the effective implementation of these actions requires enabling and coherent policy frameworks, good governance and law enforcement at all levels and effective means of implementation, the Declaration emphasizes the need for concerted efforts towards achieving the 2020 goals for the sound management of chemicals and an enabling framework for international sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020 for possible consideration at UNEA-5.

Ministers also request UNEP to track the implementation of the actions in this Declaration through the regular environmental assessment processes, and provide a progress report, in collaboration with Member States, for consideration at UNEA-7.

### **Closing Plenary**

During the closing plenary on Friday, 15 March, COW Chair Fernando Coimbra noted that the COW had conducted six plenaries in the course of three days. He introduced the draft report of the COW (UNEP/EA.4/CW/L.1), with thanks to Putera Parthama, COW Rapporteur, and others who had assisted. The Assembly adopted the report without comment.

Kiisler then proposed the Assembly to adopt the proposals brought forth by OECPR-4 and the COW, and requested that delegations only make comments after adoption. He introduced 23 resolutions and three draft decisions, which had been negotiated through the OECPR and COW WGs prior to being approved and forwarded to UNEA-4.

The US disassociated itself from the adopted Ministerial Declaration, and expressed its reservation regarding references in the resolutions to several international agreements, including the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, stating that these have no standing with regard to negotiations on trade. While welcoming the resolution on gender equality and environment, he expressed his country's reservation on "outdated" language referring to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). He requested his statement to be officially recorded, and Kiisler took note of the request.

Costa Rica and Bolivia welcomed the adoption of the resolution on gender equality and the environment, highlighting that it will help raise international awareness of the vulnerability of women and girls affected by climate change and biodiversity loss.

Switzerland, supported by Morocco, Senegal, New Zealand, Mexico, Niger, Georgia, and Mali, expressed regret regarding the withdrawal of the resolution on geoengineering and its governance, due to a "small number of UNEP members" being unable to agree on the need for a UNEP-led report on the risks and potential of geoengineering technologies. He pledged to raise the issue again at UNEA-5.

Japan said the resolution on marine plastic litter and microplastics represented a significant way forward.

Ethiopia reiterated its "unwavering commitment" to achieve sustainable development in a collaborative manner.

Uganda, South Africa, and Kenya expressed their concern that the decision on UNEA-5 contained both procedural content on the organization of the conference and issues related to UNEP governance. They requested their statements be recorded.

Indonesia stressed the need for sending strong messages from the UNEA-4 outcome, namely resolutions on SCP, sustainable management of mangroves, and coral reefs, to the rest of the world.

Mauritius, noting the vulnerability of small island developing states to the impacts of climate change, called for enhanced financial and technological assistance and capacity building to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

While welcoming the "forward-looking and balanced" outcome of the Assembly, the EU, with Colombia, expressed their deep disappointment on the withdrawal on the resolution on deforestation, highlighting the importance of continuing discussion on this issue in future Assemblies, and warned against any "backsliding" on commitments.

The League of Arab States, Eritrea, and Pakistan presented their condolences to New Zealand following the terrorist attack on two mosques on 15 March. The League of Arab States welcomed the adoption of resolutions on food loss and solid waste.

**Credentials of Representatives:** Felix Werthli (Switzerland), Chair of the Credentials Committee, reported that 96 Member States had submitted formal credentials, and 22 had not communicated any information regarding their representatives to the Assembly. The Assembly adopted the report without comment.

**Election of officers:** UNEA-4 President Kiisler presented nominations from the regional groups for the positions of UNEA-5 President, Rapporteur, and other bureau members, noting the President would be nominated from Western Europe and Others Group and the Rapporteur from Africa. Delegates nominated Ola Elvestuen, Minister of Climate and Environment, Norway, as President and Nomvula Mokonyane, Minister of Environment, South Africa, as Rapporteur. He also presented nominations for the eight Vice-Presidents: Burkina Faso, Bahrain, Indonesia, Serbia, Estonia, Costa Rica, Suriname, and France. Delegates elected the nominated officers by acclamation.

Elvestuen expressed his gratitude for the outcome of the election and expressed his commitment to leading preparations for UNEA-5, saying that, “the progress will be best made when collective actions are in place.”

**Adoption of the report:** UNEA-4 Rapporteur Putera Parthama presented that the draft proceedings of UNEA-4 (UNEP/EA.4/L.31), noting that a summary of national statements would be included later. The Assembly adopted the draft UNEA-4 proceedings on the understanding that revisions would be made by the Secretariat.

**Closing statements:** Joyce Msuya, Acting Executive Director, UNEP, announced that, while the plane crash that had preceded the opening of UNEA-4 was a great loss for the environmental community, it had “galvanized rather than distracted” the efforts made during the week. Her remarks were followed by a moment of silence in honor of the victims, during which representatives of all 36 countries that had lost citizens in the crash each lit a candle in their memory.

Egypt expressed his gratitude for the commemoration.

Joyeeta Gupta, GEO-6 Co-Chair, presented key messages from the GEO-6 report. Cautioning against the world exceeding its carrying capacity, she outlined drivers leading to an unhealthy planet, including: population growth and urbanization leading to consume more; inequitable growth and welfare; and climate change causing USD 300 billion worth of damage annually. She then stressed that innovative efforts have been already taken by various stakeholders, and highlighted bottom-up innovations, such as a plastic waste footprint calculator, citizen science, and green roofs. She called for public leadership to move forward a circular economy and adopt a precautionary principle, noting that the GEO-6 report provides the evidence that “we all have to act.”

Shady Rabab, Rabab Luxor Art Collective, spoke of a project that seeks awareness among children and youth by recycling waste to create musical instruments, saying that, “music is a language that conveys a complicated message in a simple way.”

Wanjiru Waweru, entrepreneur, urged delegates stop bad habits such as using air conditioning and take the time instead to consider alternative solutions such as traditional techniques.

Solitaire Townsend, Futerra, said it was essential to shift the way we tell the story of climate change from negative to positive messages that highlight solutions, pointing to a Futerra project that seeks to turn the SDGs into possible individual actions.

Rebecca Freitag, UN Youth Delegate on Sustainable Development, critiqued UNEA-4 delegates for not realizing the planet is “sick.” Referring to the Youth Climate Strike by students worldwide on Friday, 15 March, she called for delegates to

implement the draft Ministerial Declaration, and said “you really don’t want to make enemies with us.”

A group of children then performed a plea to “make the earth a beautiful place,” as well as a “water ceremony” in which they brought water “from places they cared for.” After planting small trees with the children, Msuya, Kiisler, incoming Executive Director Inger Andersen, and UNEA-5 President Elvestuen made “a statement for the children,” in turn promising to be environmentally-responsible citizens and to restore nature to the best of their abilities.

Delegates then viewed a video message from UN General Assembly President María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, in which she said the issues considered under UNEA-4 are “existential” for the future of the planet, which justifies the existence of the Assembly. She added that every year that passes without explicit action makes the Agenda 2030 even more elusive, and welcomed the UNEA-4 theme as “timely.”

Kiisler thanked all involved, suggesting what “we have achieved today is our joint achievement,” and gavelled the meeting to a close at 7:30 pm.

### **A Brief Analysis of UNEA-4**

*“You can’t always get what you want  
But if you try sometime you find  
You get what you need”*

– Rolling Stones, “You Can’t Always Get What You Want”

Delegates arrived in sunny Nairobi facing a heavy workload for the fourth sessions of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OECPR-4) and UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-4), with a record number of 29 draft resolutions and decisions, almost twice the number under consideration at UNEA-3, on the broadest variety of topics yet. Most were confident that this session of UNEA, “the world’s highest-level decision-making body on the environment,” would produce solid outcomes with levels of ambition appropriate to the many challenges identified. Others, however, warned that weak intersessional preparations had not created the conditions to tackle this workload.

This analysis examines what UNEA-4 set out to do versus what it did and did not accomplish, and what impacts it is expected to have on UNEP itself and other processes going forward.

### ***Stretched Tight Like a Drum***

Many complained about the number of resolutions under consideration, mostly due to logistical difficulties than to a lack of interest in the variety of topics proposed. Small delegations were simply overwhelmed, and even traditionally larger delegations, such as the EU and US, experienced difficulties in juggling five separate working groups and numerous “informal informals” in the OECPR and UNEA’s Committee of the Whole (COW). When asked, however, most delegates rejected the idea of narrowing UNEA’s focus to three or four topics. “The number and breadth of resolutions this time shows clearly UNEA has become Member State-driven rather than Secretariat-driven, which is a good thing,” noted one veteran of both UNEA and its predecessor, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council.

While delegates found themselves stretched thin during the meeting, some also warned that that UNEP may already be in a similar situation. During the week, there were frequent calls to focus requests to areas in which UNEP excels or fills a gap not served by other bodies or processes, and avoid piling on new

mandates for UNEP without considering whether there will be means of implementation available. The Secretariat assisted in keeping this front and center by producing, for the first time, estimated costing figures for the implementation of the many draft resolutions proposed. “This is useful. UNEP is already stretched tight as a drum and we should not add to its burden without providing it the support it needs to meet the demands we place on it,” observed a negotiator in one of the working groups.

### ***“Not the Level of Ambition We Hoped For, but the Ambition We Expected”***

During the UNEA High-level Segment, many environment ministers were heard lamenting from the podium and on the floor that the draft Ministerial Declaration and package of resolutions fell short of the ambition and action-orientation they had hoped for. Some decried the lack of strong language on climate change in the Declaration, and others the lack of response to the alarms sounded in the sixth Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) report launched during the week, or the absence of a UNEA mandate to consider a legally binding instrument on marine plastic litter and microplastics.

On the issue of plastics, for example, delegates had to settle for less than high ambition because not all Member States are ready “to take the next step.” India and its allies tried but did not get the resolution they sought with a clear call for phase-out of single-use plastic products by 2025. However, the Ministerial Declaration does call for a phase out by 2030 and the resolution itself was not completely neutered of ambition by its opponents; it does encourage national and regional action plans on single-use plastics, and authorizes UNEP to help governments if requested. “We can run with this, and plan to,” said one proponent. In fact, several developing country delegations confided their governments are already considering action on single-use plastics and would use the UNEA resolution to request UNEP assistance and seek financial and technical help from donors.

As for marine plastic litter, while proponents did not get the mandate to establish an open-ended working group (OEWG) to lay out governance options, the mandate of the *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Expert Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics created by UNEA-3 was extended, a new multi-stakeholder forum was created and some tasks were outlined. “We can make the most of this between now and UNEA-5, and hopefully by then a change of Administration in the US will make full and open discussion of governance options possible,” said one proponent. “At least we got a head count during negotiations of who is for and against the OEWG, and now we know for certain who to work with and who to work around,” mused another. Some delegates pointed to the fact that the newly-elected UNEA-5 President is from Norway, a proponent of the OEWG on marine plastics litter, which they interpreted as increasing the likelihood of a strong push for action and ambition on marine plastic litter and microplastics at the next UNEA session in 2021.

### ***“I Shall Return”***

Some of the most contentious issues submitted for UNEA consideration were the draft resolutions on geoengineering, and on deforestation, which were withdrawn after the meeting failed to achieve consensus, despite arduous negotiations into the closing hours of UNEA-4. The proponents vowed to continue the debate at UNEA-5.

Several developing countries resisted the resolution on deforestation and agricultural supply chains submitted by the EU, which they saw as a direct attack on their most important

commodity exports. Some argued the issue should be left to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), not UNEP.

As for the governance of geoengineering, submitted by Switzerland and supported by a coalition of 11 developed and developing country cosponsors, some questioned whether this was an issue in which UNEP could play a useful role, while others appeared suspicious that the request for UNEP to compile information on activities elsewhere was simply the prelude to a later request for UNEP to take on a coordination or governance role.

While delegations interested in the two topics complained about a handful of countries blocking consensus on any compromise proposal, the proponents themselves professed not to be discouraged. Both the EU and Switzerland said it was useful just to “get the conversation started” on these topics and getting others interested in further exploring the issues involved, and both promised to re-introduce the topic at UNEA-5.

### ***Something for Everyone***

Despite some disappointment, many participants did express satisfaction with the outcomes. The negotiators themselves tended to look at the results more philosophically. “When you are dealing with a universal body like UNEA, nobody gets everything they want,” explained one veteran. “Yes, on some of the resolutions we sacrificed some of the action and ambition originally sought because of attempts to appease a handful of countries that did not want UNEP action on a given issue. But in most cases we started or kept alive forward momentum, and that counts for something.”

Several expressed satisfaction that the environment-poverty and gender-environment nexuses had been thoroughly discussed, and the resolutions adopted. Others focused on other resolutions with possible tangible project benefits. For example, a Latin American delegation noted that UNEP had already undertaken some pilot projects on sustainable mobility in their region, but the UNEA-4 resolution on this topic would make it easier to get ongoing UNEP assistance and to seek help from donors for Latin American electric mobility projects.

Several delegations highlighted the resolution on sustainable consumption and production (SCP), part of the theme for UNEA-4. They were happy not only to have the first UN-endorsed language on circular economy and “industry symbiosis,” but also endorsed the number of SCP tasks outlined for UNEP over the next biennium. Although UNEP placed a high cost estimate for this resolution (over USD 25 million), some donors privately indicated willingness to step up funding in this area now that there was an agreed resolution guiding work in the near-term.

### ***Signals, Guideposts and Hazard Warnings***

UNEA-4 is also notable for signaling the way forward. For example, on single-use plastics, UNEA-4 sent a strong signal that most countries think such products should be reduced or phased out, and the plastics industry has been put on notice. However, the UNEA discussions did highlight important concerns that should be borne in mind when seeking reduction or the phase out of such plastics, such as making exceptions for essential uses in the medical sector, and ensuring that the alternatives are affordable and no more harmful than the plastic they replace.

In other areas, UNEA-4 set clear guideposts for work in other UNEP-related bodies. This is particularly true for the chemicals and waste sector, where UNEA and its predecessor, the Governing Council, have a long history of adopting resolutions that spark the birth of new treaties or agreements, such as the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions. In the case of UNEA-4, the chemicals and waste resolutions

issued a clear call to the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) OEWG meeting in April 2019 in Montevideo, Uruguay, and the fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) scheduled for October 2020 in Bonn, Germany, to develop and agree on a post-2020 platform for the sound management of chemicals and waste, and to consider the development of a science-policy interface as part of that effort. UNEA also called for UNEP to fully support the understaffed, overworked SAICM Secretariat's work toward that end, and for UNEP to produce by April 2020, in time for ICCM5 consideration, an analysis of existing regulatory and policy frameworks and their ability to address chemical and waste issues toward the achievement of the 2020 goal on sound management of chemicals, in particular regarding lead and cadmium.

However, there was also a "possible hazard" warning sign at UNEA-4 about future UN work on sustainable development. Several delegations expressed concern that references to universal UN agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, had become contentious, suggesting that this could be an omen of weakening commitment or even backsliding on these multilateral commitments. With the One Planet Summit happening in parallel to UNEA-4 and receiving perhaps more media attention, some delegates wondered whether the future of multilateralism was in "coalitions of the willing" or in "club diplomacy" groups such as the G-7, rather than in universal membership forums such as the UN.

The appeal of UNEA-4, which attracted almost 5,000 participants, more than in previous years, seems to suggest otherwise. "UNEA is very important for us," a representative of a group of developing countries confided, "but the process needs improving." As UNEA matures into the "world's parliament on the environment" that was envisioned, some Member States reflected that greater maturity will be needed on the part of Member States as well, with one delegate reflecting that, "countries need to be disciplined" in how they use this process, particularly as the calls for action and change emanating from the GEO-6 report, which was released in parallel to the negotiations, become increasingly dire: "We need to change for the better, for ourselves and for the environment," one GEO-6 author sought to hammer in the minds of the audience. "Without this, we cannot sustain ourselves. We simply *have* to change—for ourselves and for the generations to come."

## Upcoming Meetings

### Second Substantive Session of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group Towards a Global Pact for the Environment:

The second session of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Working Group will discuss options to address possible gaps in international environmental law and environment-related instruments, as appropriate. **dates:** 18-20 March 2019 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UNEP **email:** stadler.trengove@un.org **www:** <https://www.unenvironment.org/events/conference/towards-global-pact-environment>

### Third Meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG3) of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM):

The OEWG will meet to consider the results of the first two meetings of the intersessional process addressing the possible post-2020 platform for addressing chemicals and waste, and to prepare for the Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5). **dates:** 2-4 April 2019 **location:** Montevideo, Uruguay **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460

**email:** saicm.chemicals@unep.org **www:** <http://www.saicm.org/About/OEWG/OEWG3/tabid/5984/>

**Basel Convention COP 14, Rotterdam Convention COP 9, and Stockholm Convention COP 9:** The 14th meeting of the COP to the Basel Convention, the ninth meeting of the COP to the Rotterdam Convention and the ninth meeting of the COP to the Stockholm Convention will convene back-to-back. **dates:** 29 April - 10 May 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** BRS Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8271 **fax:** +41-22-917-8098 **email:** brs@brsmeas.org **www:** <http://www.brsmeas.org/2019COPs/Overview/tabid/7523/>

**Seventh Session of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Plenary (IPBES 7):** The seventh session of the plenary of IPBES-7 will consider, *inter alia*: the report of the Executive Secretary on the implementation of the first work programme for the period 2014-2018; the global assessment of biodiversity and ecosystem services; review of the Platform at the conclusion of its first work programme; the Platform's next work programme; and institutional arrangements. **dates:** 29 April - 4 May 2019 **location:** Paris, France **contact:** IPBES Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-0570 **email:** secretariat@ipbes.net **www:** <https://www.ipbes.net/event/ipbes-7-plenary>

**49th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC):** This meeting will approve the 2019 Refinement to the 2006 IPCC Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories. **dates:** 8-12 May 2018 **location:** Kyoto, Japan **contact:** IPCC Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch>

**CITES COP18:** The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) will be held in Sri Lanka, directly following the 71st meeting of the CITES Standing Committee on 21 May 2019. **dates:** 22 May - 3 June 2019 **location:** Colombo, Sri Lanka **contact:** CITES Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-81-39/40 **fax:** +41-22-797-34-17 **email:** info@cites.org **www:** <https://cites.org/>

**56th Meeting of the GEF Council:** The Global Environment Facility Council will approve projects to realize global environmental benefits in the GEF's focal areas, provide guidance to the GEF Secretariat and implementing agencies, and discuss its relations with the conventions for which it serves as the financial mechanism. **dates:** 10-13 June 2019 **location:** Washington DC, US **contact:** GEF Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-473-0508 **fax:** +1-202-522-3240/3245 **email:** secretariat@thegef.org **www:** <https://www.thegef.org/council-meetings>

**HLPF 2019:** The Forum will address the theme, "empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality." It will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 4 (quality education), SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG 10 (reduced inequalities), SDG 13 (climate action), and SDG 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), in addition to SDG 17 (partnerships for the Goals), which is reviewed each year. Among other items, the Forum will consider the Global Sustainable Development Report (GSDR), which is issued every four years. **dates:** 9-18 July 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for SDGs **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

**51st Session of the IPCC:** The 51st session of the IPCC is expected to approve the summary for policymakers of the special report on the ocean and cryosphere in a changing climate. **dates:** 20-23 September 2019 **location:** Principality of Monaco

**contact:** IPCC Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-730-8208/54/84 **fax:** +41-22-730-8025/13 **email:** IPCC-Sec@wmo.int **www:** <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

**UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development under UNGA Auspices:** The UN General Assembly (UNGA) will hold a meeting of the HLPF at the level of Heads of State and Government to consider, among other items, the GSDR issued every four years. **dates:** 24-25 September 2019 **location:** UN Headquarters, New York **contact:** UN Division for SDGs **fax:** +1-212-963-4260 **email:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/contact/> **www:** <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/summit2019> and <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/hlpf/2019>

**UNCCD COP 14:** The 14th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification will examine new scientific data, including Earth observation data on trends in land degradation dating from 2000 gathered from 120 of the 169 countries affected by desertification. Delegates will also receive the first report on desertification and climate change prepared by the IPCC. **dates:** 7-18 October 2019 **location:** New Delhi, India **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898/99 **email:** [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int) **www:** <https://www.unccd.int/>

**Montreal Protocol MOP 31:** The 31st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer will address, *inter alia*, implementation of the Kigali Amendment, linkages between HCFCs and HFCs in transitioning to low global warming potential alternatives, issues related to energy efficiency while phasing down HFCs, and critical and essential use exemptions. **dates:** 4-8 November 2019 **location:** Rome, Italy **contact:** Ozone Secretariat **phone:** +254-20-762-3851 **fax:** +254-20-762-0335 **email:** [ozoneinfo@unep.org](mailto:ozoneinfo@unep.org) **www:** <http://ozone.unep.org/meetings>

**Third Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury:** COP3 is expected to discuss, *inter alia*, waste thresholds, releases, interim storage, contaminated sites, open burning of waste, review of Annexes A and B, and harmonized customs codes. **dates:** 25-29 November 2019 **location:** Geneva, Switzerland **contact:** Secretariat of the Minamata Convention **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** [MEA-MinamataSecretariat@un.org](mailto:MEA-MinamataSecretariat@un.org) **www:** <http://www.mercuryconvention.org>

**2019 UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 25):** The 25th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 25), the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), and the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) will convene to review implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Convention. **dates:** 2-13 December 2019 **location:** Santiago, Chile **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** [Secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:Secretariat@unfccc.int) **www:** <https://unfccc.int>

**Convention on Migratory Species Conference COP13:** The 13th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals will convene to review implementation of the convention. **dates:** 15-22 February 2020 **location:** Gandhinagar, India **contact:** CMS Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2401 **fax:** +49-228-815-2449 **email:** [cms.secretariat@cms.int](mailto:cms.secretariat@cms.int) **www:** <http://www.cms.int>

**CBD COP 15, Cartagena Protocol COP/MOP 10, and Nagoya Protocol COP/MOP 4:** The 15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15), the tenth Meeting of the Parties (COP/MOP 10) to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

and the fourth Meeting of the Parties (COP/MOP 4) to the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing are expected to address a series of issues related to implementation of the Convention and its Protocols, and adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework. **dates:** October 2020, exact dates to be confirmed **location:** Kunming, China **contact:** CBD Secretariat **email:** [secretariat@cbd.int](mailto:secretariat@cbd.int) **www:** <https://www.cbd.int/>

**Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5):** The top decision-making body of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) will meet to, *inter alia*, consider a possible post-2020 platform for addressing chemicals and waste. **dates:** 5-9 October 2020 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** SAICM Secretariat **phone:** +41-22-917-8273 **fax:** +41-22-797-3460 **email:** [saicm.chemicals@unep.org](mailto:saicm.chemicals@unep.org) **www:** <http://www.saicm.org>

**UNEA-5:** The theme of the fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly will be decided by the Committee of Permanent Representatives. UNEA-5 will be preceded by the fifth meeting of the OECPR from 15-19 February 2021. **dates:** 22-26 February 2021 **location:** Nairobi, Kenya **contact:** UNEP Secretariat of the Governing Bodies **email:** [unep-sgb@unep.org](mailto:unep-sgb@unep.org) **phone:** +254-20-7623431 **www:** <http://web.unep.org/environmentassembly/>

For additional meetings, see <http://sdg.iisd.org>

## Glossary

CG	Contact Group
COP	Conference of the Parties
COW	Committee of the Whole
CPR	Committee of Permanent Representatives
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GC	Governing Council
GEO	Global Environment Outlook
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
HLPF	High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
ICCM	International Conference on Chemicals Management
IRP	International Resource Panel
MEAs	Multilateral environmental agreements
OECPR	Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives
OEWG	Open-ended Working Group
POW	Programme of Work
SAICM	Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPM	Summary for Policy Makers
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
WG	Working Group