

**OCPR-6 Highlights:
Friday, 23 February 2024**

On the final day of the sixth session of the Open-ended Committee of Permanent Representatives (OCPR-6), delegates convened to engage in two parallel working groups, hoping to reach agreement on multiple draft resolutions and decisions related to chemicals and waste, biodiversity, root causes of the triple planetary crisis, international environmental governance, and administrative and budgetary matters. Despite intense negotiations and delegates working all day without breaks, no draft resolutions or decisions were fully agreed to, so they could be forwarded to UN Environmental Assembly (UNEA) for adoption. Instead, delegates agreed to transmit the latest draft texts in hopes to iron out outstanding brackets in the Committee of the Whole (CoW). With cautious optimism of the time needed to address some of the most contentious resolutions at CoW, including solar radiation modification and climate justice, delegates agreed to hold informal consultations over the weekend in hopes of finding common ground.

Working Group I

Cluster A: In the late afternoon, extensive procedural debates prevented parties from discussing resolutions on sound management of chemicals and waste (L.13) and on sand and dust storms (L.17) as several delegations opposed working on the basis of streamlined text, stating that their previous comments were not reflected and requesting reverting to the original draft. Co-Facilitator Yume Yorita (Japan) sought the counsel of the UNEP Legal Adviser who responded that it is within the purview of the Co-Facilitators to organize work as they see most appropriate but cautioned that any streamlined text that has not been agreed to, must eventually be deleted.

On highly hazardous pesticides (HHPs) (L.7), delegates debated whether to include an operative paragraph on urging parties to implement Globally Harmonized System of Clarifications and Labelling of Chemicals as agreed in Global Framework on Chemicals, on providing resources and expertise to support implementation of Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides, or to build on the Rotterdam Convention on Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain HHP in International Trade.

On air quality (L.16), delegates discussed language on cooperation networks for air quality, debated whether to include a reference to air quality goals, and sought to clarify language on providing technical assistance and capacity-building support and knowledge sharing.

Cluster B: In the late afternoon, delegates reviewed resolutions on water policies (L. 24) and ocean and seas governance (L. 20). Proponents presented streamlined drafts and stated they are willing to further work on it over the weekend and present new

draft versions on Monday, indicating availability for informal consultations over the weekend.

On water policies, many delegates raised concerns over reference to the UN Special Envoy on Water in the text, and questioned referencing in the preamble water conventions that not all Member States are parties to. There were also suggestions to reference the One Health Approach and the UN Water Conference, among other instruments and events.

On ocean and seas governance, several parties wished to properly reflect completed and ongoing negotiations on fisheries subsidies. Many comments were revolving around adding a reference to strategic importance of cooperation in the marine sector and maintaining its integrity, which a number of delegations wished to delete, and others wanted to keep.

Working Group II

Cluster C: In the afternoon Co-Facilitator Alejandro Montero (Chile) returned to discussion of the operative provisions in the draft resolution on enhancing the role and viability of regional environment ministerial forums and offices (L.8). Delegates agreed to streamline a request to Member States to strengthen the participation of major groups, stakeholders and partners, by not listing them, although some delegations insisted on possibly listing them in a footnote. Co-Facilitator Montero said that stakeholders and major groups would be mentioned in a relevant document, since it was a cross-cutting issue. Major groups supported the resolution noting that regional forums play an important role and urging that UNEP coordinate and provide financial support for participation of all major groups.

The compromise text by Co-Facilitators Montero and Karin Snellman (Sweden), entitled effective, inclusive, and sustainable multilateral actions towards climate action, was tabled as a non-paper for later consideration. The proponent of the draft resolution on climate justice drew attention to a big difference compared to the non-paper, including different action steps, and asked for time to consider the proposal. One major group suggested that while the draft resolution on climate justice could have established a forum to facilitate discussion around best practices for the most vulnerable countries to address the triple planetary crisis, the non-paper contains weak language to just explore climate action. A number of developing countries expressed concerns with the non-paper, with one stressing that UNEA is the proper venue for climate action and climate justice. Another warned that the essence on climate justice has been subsumed and demanded that common but differentiated responsibilities and equity have to come through.

Cluster D: Co-Facilitator Burnbury (Canada) opened the session on the circular economy draft resolution (L.19), and the proponent explained that text was cut from each paragraph to make it more compact and some edits were also introduced to operative paragraph four. In this paragraph, changes included strong developing country support for language for the Executive

Director to facilitate best practices and experiences of, *inter alia*, measures, standards and digital tools.

The proponent of the sugar cane draft resolution explained that some preambular paragraphs were merged in order to condense text. He also stated that the one Member State's concerns regarding the scope of this resolution was addressed along with some language taken from the Paris Agreement.

The proponent of the resolution on armed conflicts reported on the informal informals resulting in a compromise proposal reducing preambular paragraphs by half and revising operative provisions, and encouraged Member States to review it. One Member State raised concerns with discussing this in informals and said that these politically sensitive matters be discussed in the working group.

Closing Plenary

Preparation of decisions and outcomes of UNEA-6: The Chair of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (CPR) Firas Khouri (Jordan) opened the closing plenary and informed delegates that no agreement was reached on the draft resolutions and decisions, and proposed the latest drafts posted on the portal be transmitted to UNEA for further consideration in the Committee of the Whole (CoW). He requested Co-Facilitators provide updates from their respective clusters.

On Cluster A, Co-Facilitator Yorita reported that all five drafts were carefully considered without being able to reach consensus on any of the drafts. She noted that solar radiation modification remains the most challenging resolution, even though Member States align on the need for more scientific information on the matter. Co-Facilitator Nana Ama Owusua Afriyie Kankam (Ghana) reported that the draft resolution on sand and dust storms is the only one where delegates managed to fully complete the first reading of the text, and if given more time they could have achieved a cleaned up version.

On Cluster B, Co-Facilitator Gudi Alkemade (the Netherlands) reported that on land degradation (L.6) discussions were fruitful and if given more time delegates could have finalized the draft. On nature-based solutions (L.10), Alkemade reported that delegates had a discussion on the revised proposal from the proponent on reviewing the criteria, guidelines, norms, and standards of nature-based solutions, and delegates agreed to work over the weekend to reach consensus. Co-Facilitator Rohit Vadhvana (India) reported that on the resolutions on water policies and ocean and seas governance delegates made good progress and provided comments that proponents will consolidate into revised texts for Monday.

On Cluster C, Co-Facilitator Snellman reported that the draft resolution on increased cooperation between UNEA, UNEP, and MEAs (L. 7) could be finalized relatively quickly; while progress on the one on synergistic approaches (L.12) had been slower so its proponents had developed a streamlined text which she hoped would form the basis for discussions at UNEA-6. Co-Facilitator Montero reported that the draft resolution on regional fora and offices had been considered up until the end of today's session, and that the first reading of the draft resolution on climate justice (L.4) had just started a day ago and the co-facilitators received a mandate to prepare a non-paper which they tabled with Member States expressing willingness to proceed on the basis of it.

On Cluster D, Co-Facilitator Bunbury said that progress had been late blooming and that they only completed a first reading of one of its resolutions; he added that not one single paragraph in any resolution in this cluster had been agreed upon. Co-Facilitator Felista Rugambwa (Tanzania) reported that there had been two informal informals that helped advance issues and welcomed the work by proponents on revised drafts.

Regarding Cluster E, Co-Facilitator Nader Al-Tarawneh (Jordan) reported on progress on the draft resolution on amendments to the instrument for the establishment of a restructured GEF (L.22), where delegates agreed on a majority

of the paragraphs. On the draft decision on management of trust funds (L.1) he said 19 provisions had been agreed to, and one delegation had bracketed the one outstanding provision. Co-Facilitator Tobias Ogwen (Kenya) reported on the draft decision on the draft agenda and dates for UNEA-7 only had the dates as an outstanding issue and said delegates are gravitating to 8-12 December 2025.

CPR Chair Khouri proposed, and delegates agreed to forward the draft resolutions that delegates had not yet agreed on to UNEA-6.

He also reported the withdrawal of the draft resolutions on: management of the Cascades system (L.5), water policies (L.18), and on Living Well in balance and harmony with Mother Earth and Mother Earth Centric Actions (L.23).

CPR Chair Khouri suggested, and delegates agreed, that, informal consultations could continue through the weekend under the clusters in a structured manner with the support of the Secretariat, led by the co-facilitators until 3pm on Sunday.

MOROCCO provided an update about work on the draft ministerial declaration, pointing to divided positions on four issues; and encouraged delegates to continue engaging. Delegates agreed to forward the draft to UNEA-6.

Consideration of a draft of Chair's summary: CPR Chair Khouri presented his draft chair summary ([UNEP/OECPR/6/8](#)) subject to finalization by the OECPR Rapporteur, and delegates approved it with minor amendments.

Closure of the Meeting: UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen noted that there are many brackets throughout the draft resolution which is not unusual at this stage, still she urged delegates to use their presence in the environmental capital of the world, as a chance to show that multilateralism and environmentalism meet here in Nairobi and to deliver future long term sustainability to present and future generations.

CPR Chair Khouri thanked delegates for enriching discussions and welcomed ongoing informal work, and together with INDONESIA wished all good health.

A MAJOR GROUPS Spokesperson said that the urgency of the planetary crises requires immediate action and pointed to some principles for addressing the different draft resolutions forwarded to UNEA.

CPR Chair Khouri declared the meeting closed at 9:40 pm.

In the Breezeways

As delegates neared exhaustion, many were hoping for a weekend to recover, including at least one Co-Facilitator who reminded participants that their mandates end with the closure of the Open-ended Working Group and the UNEA Committee of the Whole is not yet established. Yet, given the "steady but slow" progress on most resolutions, Member States expressed willingness to hold informal discussions for all clusters over the weekend. The workload that UNEA is staring down is huge: 19 draft resolutions – not one finalized for adoption – perhaps a record, as one frustrated delegate noted. This might seem overwhelming to many. One way to tackle the workload could be, as suggested by UNEP Executive Director Inger Andersen, "leaning back on 50 years of negotiated language to move forward next week." This points a good way forward for many issues that seem to be making repeat appearances at UNEA, making it all the more surprising – possibly puzzling – that previously agreed language at UNEA and other multilateral fora was renegotiated *ad nauseum* at OECPR-6. Other important issues, like climate justice, are facing significant opposition from some Member States and were watered down – to the point, as one NGO observed, that climate justice barely appears in the text. With geopolitical strife also undercutting progress on many resolutions by causing dangerous stalemates, next week will be a serious test for UNEA and the role it plays in global environmental governance.